

# INNOVATORS AGAINST GENDER BASED VIOLENCE COMPETITION BOOTCAMP

August 5 & 6, 2019  
Dhaka, Bangladesh



"For the longest time we have been trying to play our part in bringing about change regarding Gender Based Violence (GBV) in whatever capacity we possessed. UN Women is giving us the perfect platform to work for an initiative that can actually help in this regard" said Manshiah Anis. She and her team are one of the 11 finalists of the Innovators against Gender Based Violence Competition, who intend to work with students using behavior modelling & active learning in schools to transform gender norms, toxic masculinity and gender biases.

In March 2019, UN Women launched the Innovators against Gender Based Violence competition for young women innovators to provide them with an opportunity to unleash their potential to find innovative solutions to advance gender equality. Supported by Global Affairs Canada, UN Women is seeking innovators with ground-breaking ideas and solutions to empower women, especially within the area of preventing and eliminating violence against women. The competition was open to women, only between 18 and 35 years old, in order to give better opportunities to young women to find innovative solutions to prevent and end violence against women.

4 Sessions

10 Mentors

11 Teams



The competition closed on April 30, with 75 Applications from all over the country. The applications were shortlisted, and 11 finalists were selected in July 2019. As a part of the competition, a boot camp was conducted on August 5 and 6, 2019 at Daffodil International University. The boot camp was designed with interactive sessions and activities to enhance participants' knowledge on gender and innovation. 24 female participants, 6 session speakers and 6 mentors engaged in various activities throughout the 2-days boot camp.



## Day 1

Day one began with an activity packed session conducted by Tasaffy Hossain and Nawrin Nujhat, of Bonhishikha-Unlearn Gender, on gender concepts and gender-based violence. The interactive session focused on identifying attributes that are stereotypically attached to specific gender and unlearn gender stereotypes and fight unconscious biases. "It's important to intervene at an early stage to change gender discriminatory mindset" said Team Birr (Courageous Men in Bangla) at the end of the session; they plan to work with boys and men to change their mindset about gender norms. Ho Chi Min, a gender and sexual rights activist, engaged the participants to understand different forms of gender diversity, equity and sexuality; and how the participants should address the violence and discrimination against people of alternative gender identities in their initiatives. For many of the participants, this was the very first time that they learnt about gender identity and sexual orientation- it was intriguing and fostered further reflection.

Participants then attended a session by Saif Rashid, Founder and Managing Director of Apon Well-being, spoke about social business enterprises. Most of the participants felt this session was vital. One of the 11 finalists, Team Alok, who will campaign against domestic violence at grassroot level stated: "Though we all had innovative ideas, we now have felt the acute need to fine tune our idea; we know we might fail and thus, we need to create a revenue model for our sustainability."

The day ended with Shammi Shawkat Quddus, Customer Insight Manager at Google, leading a session on Design Thinking, referring to the cognitive, strategic and practical processes by which solutions are developed. Addressing the participants, she said "Don't be a hammer looking for a nail. This is a solution centric way to solve a problem where you would essentially try to fit your pre-set solution to every problem. Rather focus on user-centered problem-solving method to create human-centric designs."



## Day 2

The second day started with a session on Integrated Market Communications for Social Behavioral Change Communication conducted by Bijon Islam, CEO, LightCastle Partners. The session engaged participants to think about the communication method that would be optimal for their audience and implement them to bring desired behavioral change. He stated, "Adaptive changes are difficult to make hence you must take into account your direct and influencing audience to foster behavioral changes".

Throughout the second day of the boot camp, participants created poster presentation to introduce their ideas to the mentors. Then the mentors, with expertise in different fields, sat one-on-one with teams giving them valuable feedback on their idea pitch.



The importance of mentor session was also echoed by Nuzhat Jahan Sarwar: "There were active learning sessions throughout the boot camp that helped us to get a better understanding of the gender issues ever so prevalent in our country. Furthermore, the comprehensive session with the mentors allowed us to refine our solution and solve the feasibility issues that we previously faced."

She and her team intend to work with students using behavior modelling and active learning in schools to transform negative gender norms, toxic masculinity and gender-biases.

The day ended with an intense mock "pitch deck" from the 11 teams". They were given feedback according to their target beneficiaries, communication, revenue models and above all the benefits of the solution for the women and girls. This was done so that they had sufficient technical input to redesign their ideas to make it more human centric.





Sonia Shahid, a participant from boot camp at the end of the workshop: stated "Thank you for supporting our new startup idea - it enhanced my knowledge about gender-based violence and sexual harassment policies. Among other things I was familiarized with the importance of building an inclusive, women-centric business model with financial sustainability." Sonia's initiative, sanc.tum - aims to make the corporate culture in Bangladesh more inclusive and free from sexual harassment against women.

This bootcamp was essential to support young women's ideas and entrepreneurship. It was structured to help participants efficiently improve their innovative thinking and transform their concept of gender; while immersing themselves in activities that will help them practice new innovation skills on real opportunities. It was expressed by all the participants at the end of the bootcamp.

The bootcamp will be followed by 2 pre-incubation sessions on 22 and 29 August 2019 where they will be further groomed for the next stage of the competition- the Pitch Deck on September 5, 2019, where they will do a brief presentation and a quick overview of a business plan to a judging panel for the opportunity to win further incubation support.

