
BLUE GOLD INNOVATION CHALLENGE

Final Report





ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to begin by expressing our deepest appreciation to the Blue Gold Program for the opportunity to contribute to the country's development in such a structured way. This experience has certainly been an eye-opener for us as we have learned more about the complexities of life beyond what is generally portrayed.

This publication was made possible with a financial contribution of the Netherlands Government and we are grateful for their contribution and support in helping 25 emerging social entrepreneurs grow with their social businesses. We would also like to thank BWDB & DAE, DLS, DOF for their presence in our community events, support and advice throughout the project.

The BGP Teams of Patuakhali and Khulna deserves a special thanks, as they have been unimaginably helpful. We consider ourselves lucky to have received their guidance and wisdom and pledge to put it to good use. Next, we would like to thank the people of Southwest Bangladesh, for the depth of insight we have managed to glean from them.

Last but not the least we would like to thank the participants, local partners, the group of advisors & mentors and members of Social Business Youth Alliance Global who have enriched our experience and all other stakeholders.



Kingdom of the Netherlands





DISCLAIMER

This report was prepared by SBYA Global for the project titled Blue Gold Innovation Challenge, organized in conjunction with the Blue Gold Program and with financial contributions by the Netherlands Government. This report has been completed in accordance with the template approved by the concerned organizations (Blue Gold Program & the Netherlands Government). We have closed this project and consider this report final.

This report represents the views and expressions of SBYA Global and YY Goshti, and do not necessarily represent the views of the Netherlands Embassy in Dhaka or the Blue Gold Program. The conclusions and recommendations contained within this report have neither been accepted nor rejected by the concerned organizations. Until such time as the concerned organizations issue correspondence confirming acceptance, rejection, or non-consensus regarding the conclusions and recommendations contained in this report, they should be regarded as information only. For more information please contact SBYA Global at connect@sbyaglobal.org.



INTRODUCTION

The Blue Gold Innovation Challenge (BGIC), was organized in collaboration with Blue Gold Program with financial contribution from the Netherlands Government. The purpose of this project was to find innovative business solutions which addresses water resource management, agriculture and sustainable development of south west region of Bangladesh (Patuakhali and Khulna).

The south west of Bangladesh is a remote region where agriculture is the main source of income and farmers are both depending and dependent on water. Accelerating the development inside the target demographics requires new innovative approaches focused



Blue Gold Innovation Challenge Launching

on the empowerment of communities, the management of water resources, improvement of agriculture practices and the creation of business opportunities. Innovators, students, startups and organizations were able to apply with business ideas which would be implemented to improve the lives of the people in the target areas.

BGIC was a 12 month long program to help the top would be entrepreneurs launch their own social business ventures. Of the 25 applicants accepted into the program who received training, mentorship and resources to build their business model the top 7 applicants were also provided prototyping funds.

The project involved 2 cohorts, each lasting 6 months. The first was held in Patuakhali and the second in Khulna. The entrepreneurs have continued to receive support from the consulting organizations to help them establish their operations.



PROJECT DATA

Project Name

Blue Gold Innovation Challenge



Partners

Blue Gold Program



SBYA Global



Financial Contributions

The Netherlands Government



Implementing Organization

YY Goshti (Business Incubation arm of SBYA Global)



Project Location

Patuakhali, Khulna,

Project Period

December 01, 2016, to November 30, 2017

Project Cohorts

02 (Patuakhali Cohort, Khulna Cohort)

Total Project Budget

BDT 3,324,000/-

Project Funding Source

Innovation Fund – Blue Gold Program



SCOPE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to outline the activities of the Blue Gold Innovations Challenge, which things were achieved, the challenges faced and may still exists. We hope this report gives off a clear idea on how a project of this sort works and which steps to take and which pitfalls to prepare for.

MILESTONES (TIMELINE)

Event	Description	Date
Cohort 1		
Official Contract Signing	Official contract signing between BGP and SBYA Global, followed by disbursement of funds.	Dec 1, 2016
Appointment of employees	Official Appointment of Mr. S. M. Khairul Islam as Project Director, Ms. Namista Tabassum as Senior Program Manager, and Mr. Shah Waseef Azam as Program Manager for Blue Gold Innovation Challenge.	Dec 1, 2016
BGIC Soft Launch	BGIC was launched through the YY Goshti Facebook page, with promotional materials propagated on all social media channels.	Dec 6, 2016
BGIC Launching Ceremony	Launching Ceremony was held, including press release to various media channels. Website launched and promoted in all promotional channels.	Dec 17, 2016
Inspire: Knowledge Session 1	A day long workshop was held within the Patuakhali town area, where three speakers provided knowledge sessions to students, young professionals, entrepreneurs and representatives from local organizations. Local media personnel were present.	Dec 30, 2016
Inspire: Local Promotion	The YY Goshti team worked with local youth leaders to promote BGIC 2016 in the Patuakhali area. This included meeting with local entrepreneurs and posters being hung all over Patuakhali.	Dec 31, 2016
Inspire: Knowledge Session 2	A day long workshop was held within at a local university. Three speakers provided knowledge sessions, including professors from the university. The event was attended by honors and graduate students, as well as faculty and university administration members.	Jan 1, 2016
Ideate Phase: Online Idea Submission	The online application portal for the Patuakhali Cohort launched. Application forms available in both English and Bangla for the convenience of applicants.	Jan 1, 2016
Application Drive 1	Field visits to Patuakhali with local entrepreneurs, students and NGOs to find appropriate applications for BGIC.	Jan 29 - Feb 2, 2017
Application Drive 2	Field visits to Patuakhali with local entrepreneurs, students and NGOs to find appropriate applications for BGIC.	Feb 5-8, 2017
Online Submission Portal Closes	Online application portal for both Bangla and English Application closed.	Feb 14, 2017



Application Screening 1	28 top ideas selected for first screening, interview conducted over phone.	Feb 20, 2017
Application Screening 2	Top 20 ideas chosen after interview, and forwarded to Blue Gold Program and Team for comments.	Feb 23, 2017
Finalist selection	Top 15 ideas chosen for the BGIC Innovate Phase	Feb 27, 2017
YY Innovation Camp (Patuakhali)	Knowledge session held in Patuakhali to train Patuakhali Finalists	Mar 7-10, 2017
YY Innovation Camp (Dhaka)	Knowledge session and Pitch Coaching held in Dhaka to train Dhaka Finalists	Mar 25, 2017
Pitch Camp (Patuakhali)	The Patuakhali finalists were trained in pitch deck building and pitching their business ideas.	Mar 27-30, 2017
YY Pitch Day	12 finalists presented their ideas in front of a live audience and a panel of judges.	April 02, 2017
Cohort 2		
Personnel Changes	Official Permanent Leave of Ms. Namista Tabassum as Senior Manager, and appointment of Ms. Nishat Farzana Sinthy as Communications Manager.	June 1, 2016
Ideate Phase: Online Idea Submission	The online application portal for the Khulna Cohort launched. Application forms available in both English and Bangla for the convenience of applicants.	Aug 1, 2016
Inspire: Knowledge Session 3	A day long workshop was held at the BMA Bhaban Auditorium attended by the general citizens of Khulna including entrepreneurs, youth activists and local businessmen.	August 18, 2017
Inspire: Knowledge Session 4	A day long workshop was held at the Khulna University of Engineering and Technology for the students of the university.	August 20, 2017
Inspire: Knowledge Session 5	A day long workshop was held at the Khulna University for the students of the university.	August 21, 2017
Online Submission Timeline Extension	The time for the online submission was extended due to floods and other natural calamities.	Sep 14, 2017
Online Submission Portal Closes	Online application portal for both Bangla and English Application closed.	Sep 14, 2017
Finalist Selections	After deliberations with the BGP team the finalists were announced.	Oct 06, 2017
Innovation Camp	Held at the Tiger Garden International Hotel Conference room.	Oct 16-19, 2017
Pitch Camp	Held at the Tiger Garden International Hotel Conference room.	Oct 21-22, 2017
YY Pitch Day	Held at the Tiger Garden International Hotel Tulip (Ballroom).	Oct 22, 2017
Final Report Submission & Closing	This is the final official deliverable milestone as per the agreement marking the end of the project period and would effectively close the operational obligations on the parts of SBYA Global and YY Goshti.	Nov 30, 2017



PATUAKHALI COHORT SUMMARY

The activities concerning the Patuakhali cohort started almost immediately after the launch held on Dec 17th, 2016. After this, the BGIC team arrived for the first Inspire phase in Patuakhali and conducted 2 sessions on Dec 30th, 2016 and Jan 1st, 2017. The 1st session was held at the Patuakhali Press club hosting 150 participants. The 2nd session was held at the Patuakhali Science and Technology University hosting 67 participants. The online application portal was officially launched on Jan 1st. Hard copies of the application form were also distributed for those without internet access.



BGIC Inspire Session at PSTU

Next, we conducted 2 application drives between Jan 29th & Feb 8th because a good number of applicants were disconnected from the internet. We closed all incoming applications Feb 14th and proceeded to screen the top 28 ideas from the submissions. After phone interviews the top 20 ideas were sent to the Blue Gold Program in Dhaka, who selected the top 15 ideas who were invited to attend the Innovate Phase.

Once the 15 ideas were declared, we initiated the Innovate Phase between March 7th and April 2nd. The first phase of the training was conducted during March 7th to 10th for the Patuakhali Ideas. Another session was conducted on March 25th for the Dhaka based ideas. These ideas were more developed and so we held 1 daylong session for the entrepreneurs because they could comprehend the information much faster.



BGIC Innovate Session - Patuakhali

Next a Pitch Camp was held for the Patuakhali applicants during March 27th – 30th. At this time our trainers helped them build pitch decks, practice their pitches, gave out pointers on areas of improvement and polished any remaining bumps. This was followed by the YY Pitch Day held on April 2nd in Dhaka. The event, held at the EMK Center, hosted nearly 60



guests including entrepreneurs, businessmen, academicians, NGO representatives among others. The Patuakhali and Dhaka applicants all pitched on the same stage and by the end of the night 1 winner and 1 runner up was declared from each district for a total of 4 winning projects.

Of the 4 winning projects, SunFarm has already launched its first batch of Sunflower oil, which is currently undergoing field tests and certification. Tanu's Farm house is in the process of introducing new agricultural products to the region. Crowd farmer is further developing its model to fit the unique demographic and Pomato is preparing to launch while leveraging the resources made available by the Blue Gold Program.

List of selected Participants

<p>Name: Tanjila Akter Tania Bio: Applicant is a student at Patuakhali Government Women's College with experience in working at her family farm.</p>	<p>Venture: A sustainable model farm to grow vegetables like broccoli, capsicum, cherry tomatoes, strawberries and lettuce, as well as 2500 chickens, whose eggs and meat will be packaged and sold to locals through super shops/stores.</p>
<p>Name: Tanjida Akter Bio: Applicant is a student at Patuakhali Government Women's College with experience in working at her family farm.</p>	<p>Venture: A business producing fishfingers, fish chips and other snacks from pond fish and selling from her own store near the school.</p>
<p>Name: Tofayel Ahmed Bio: Applicant finished his HSC from Patuakhali Jubilee School. He is a student activist, and helped his seniors and peers come up with business ideas.</p>	<p>Venture: A business of making fruit conserve/jam from easily harvested fruits in Patuakhali like guava, and sell them as complementary to snack foods and sandwiches, employing locals in the business.</p>
<p>Name: Gourab Sarker Bio: Applicant is a student from the agricultural department of Patuakhali Science and Technology University (PSTU).</p>	<p>Venture: A business of using intercropping method to harvest sun-flowers, extracting oil and advancing supply chain development, and using sun-flower crops to reduce soil salinity.</p>
<p>Name: Iqbal Hossain Bio: Applicant is a mechanic and fish farmer with business experience of selling his fish to local buyers.</p>	<p>Venture: A business producing fish cakes, fish chips and other snacks from harvested fishes from his own farm, thereby creating employment by hiring people in the food processing phase.</p>
<p>Name: Nirodh Paul Bio: Applicant is a student of Barisal University (BU) interested in working in water resource management.</p>	<p>Venture: A solar water treatment device to turn any water into safe drinkable water, using green technology to promote better health for locals.</p>
<p>Name: Shourav Islam Bio: Applicant is the CEO of Unifox Digital, an online marketing and software development company.</p>	<p>Venture: An e-traceability Software recording data of fish farming. The mobile based software enables - finding fish and tracking it from hatchery till shipment.</p>



<p>Name: Md. Olyul Islam Bio: Applicant is Deputy Manager (Program) at Bangladesh Institute of ICT in Development (BIID).</p>	<p>Venture: A business to create a mung bean brand by organizing and promoting mung bean production among farmers in Patuakhali, and targeting SME investors for technological development in this industry.</p>
<p>Name: Sadman Sadek Bio: Applicant is Co-founder of Nari Shakti Unnayan Shangstha (NSUS).</p>	<p>Venture: A business of commercial harvesting of Pomato seedlings - a hybrid form of potato and tomatoes using grafting method to produce a new kind of crop that can be grown readily in coastal areas.</p>
<p>Name: Arif Md. Waliullah Bhuiyan Bio: Applicant is the Founder and Business Development Manager of Light of Hope.</p>	<p>Venture: Sputnique, a solar-powered portable projector that can be taken to remote areas to provide farmer's training, sessions and other awareness activities in the agriculture value chain.</p>
<p>Name: Sadhli Roomy Bio: Applicant works at Pineapple Ideas, a team of Tech, Business and Agro Sector Experts.</p>	<p>Venture: An Ecommerce Matchmaking Platform for Farmers where customers directly crowd fund the farmers by booking their crops in advance.</p>
<p>Name: Tashfiq Ahsan Bio: Applicant is an Adviser at EDGE Consulting Limited, a Market Research Consultancy Firm.</p>	<p>Venture: A water supply business for irrigation services to provide desalinated water to water scarce regions, by establishing plants using Reverse Osmosis Desalination Technology.</p>
<p>Name: Natasha Kabir Bio: Applicant is the Founder of BRIDGE Foundation, a non-profit organization.</p>	<p>Venture: A platform for selling arts, motifs, and cuisine created by the disabled and the <i>rakhaine</i> community in Patuakhali to help minorities access to income generation and better living standards.</p>



BGIC Patuakhali Cohort Entrepreneurs with EKN Team



KHULNA COHORT SUMMARY

For the Khulna cohort, the Blue Gold Innovation Challenge (BGIC) conducted three on-location activity “Inspire: Knowledge Sessions” consecutively at BMA Bhaban, Khulna University and KUET in Khulna, Bangladesh on August 17, 20 and 21. It was attended by Young Professionals, Representatives from local NGOs & NPOs, and local media personnel of Khulna. The events inspired people from the local community to apply for the BGIC program. It attracted more or less 450 people and a majority of them were persons interested in becoming entrepreneurs.



BGIC Khulna Cohort Innovate Session

BGIC Applications were open from August 1 to September 1. Later the deadline was extended till September 14 as per the request of potential applicants to give a chance to the people of flood affected areas. From Khulna we got 40+ applications among which 10 were shortlisted to compete for the ultimate challenge and to be eligible for attending the innovation camp, pitch camp and pitch day.

The "Innovation Camp" of Blue Gold Innovation Challenge took place on October 16 - 19, 2017 at Tiger Garden International Hotel, Khulna. The finalists had to attend all the training days to be eligible to pitch in front of the judges. Followed by a one day break, the finalists started working on making their presentation slides where the facilitators helped them with designing and putting things together.

The Pitch Day of Blue Gold Innovation Challenge - Khulna cohort took place at Tiger Garden International Hotel on October 22, 2017. Each finalist got 5 minutes for presenting their business plan and 2 minutes for Q&A session. The event was attended by 55+ people. The audience included students, teachers, stakeholders, innovators, entrepreneurs, NGOs and local people.



BGIC Khulna Cohort Innovate Session

The event ended with the declaration of three winners. With a motto of “everyone deserves to drink organic”, the entrepreneur Rajoana Jannat will produce organic aloe vera juice for the people of Khulna region by engaging households in



the BGP Polder areas. Fahim Uddin Shuvo produces best quality organic fertilizer by collecting and recycling food waste concentrating on commercial kitchens aiming to help farmers have better production. Abdullah Al Musabbir wants to start a poultry consultant and service providing company, Tech-Gen, which will launch smart poultry farm service providing bio-gas based electricity production plant, fertilizer production system, automatic temperature and humidity controlling system to the poultry farmers at the cheapest cost.

List of selected Participants

<p>Rajoana Jannat: BIO: Applicant is a student of Manarat University interested in working in food and health.</p>	<p>Growing Aloe vera in polder areas and producing organic healthy organic juice.</p>
<p>Nirodh Paul BIO: Applicant is a student of Barisal University (BU) interested in working in water resource management.</p>	<p>Producing soluble honey cubes for tea as a sugar substitute with honey collected from Sundarban, Khulna.</p>
<p>Abdullah Al Noman BIO: Applicant is a student of Unicorn Machinery School (UMS) interested in working in water resource management.</p>	<p>Establishing combination farming using a very small pond for fish, ducks and oysters using own technologies for people who don't have land for ponds and also launching automated fish feeders.</p>
<p>Shourov Barua BIO: Applicant is a student of Khulna University of Engineering & Technology (KUET) interested in working in water resource management.</p>	<p>Supplying salinity resistant rice paddy developed by professors of Dhaka University to the farmers of Khulna region and also building a service providing consultancy farm named Nun Vaat which will teach the farmers about the most efficient & technological based cultivation method.</p>
<p>Mortoza Morshed BIO: Applicant is a student of Khulna University of Engineering & Technology (KUET) interested in working in water resource management.</p>	<p>Connecting farmers to ultimate buyers via online marketplace where farmers can deal with their buyers through a helpful team.</p>
<p>Khairul Alam BIO: Applicant is a student of Ahsanullah University of Science & Technology (AUST) interested in working in water resource management.</p>	<p>Initiating a fish market which can source fishes from local people and ship to end customers via online.</p>
<p>Fahim Uddin Shuvo BIO: Applicant is an architect and dedicated entrepreneur working on food waste and bio-fertilizer.</p>	<p>Introducing modern and scientific approach towards efficient waste management system focusing on recycling of waste to create organic fertilizers.</p>



<p>Ananda Kumar Biswas BIO: Applicant is a student of Khulna University (KU) interested in working in water resource management.</p>	<p>Creating educated farmer generation for agricultural entrepreneurship development involving GOs and NGOs in training farmers to become educated in new farming techniques.</p>
<p>Tasnimul Rifat BIO: Applicant is a student of Khulna University of Engineering & Technology (KUET) interested in working in water resource management.</p>	<p>Making water purifier that washes off the salinity of water to improve mass agricultural production.</p>
<p>Shah Azim BIO: Applicant is a student of Agriculture Training Institute interested in working in water resource management.</p>	<p>Producing organic and healthy syrup from Longan fruit and utilize the unused lands of BGP polder areas.</p>



BGIC Khulna Cohort Pitch Camp



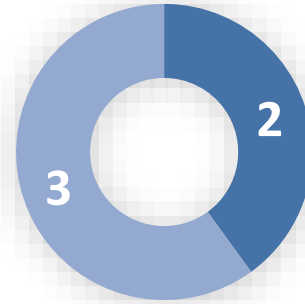
Project Impact Data

Number of People Reached

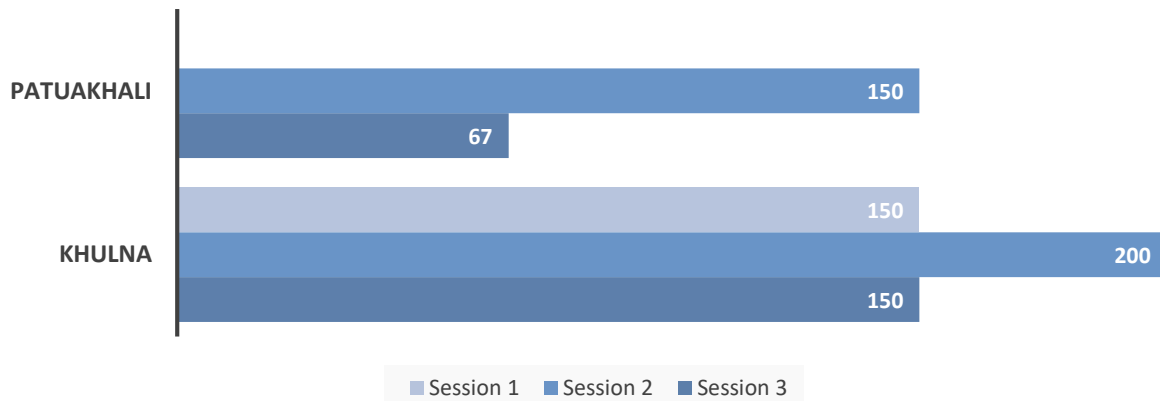


Number of Inspire Sessions

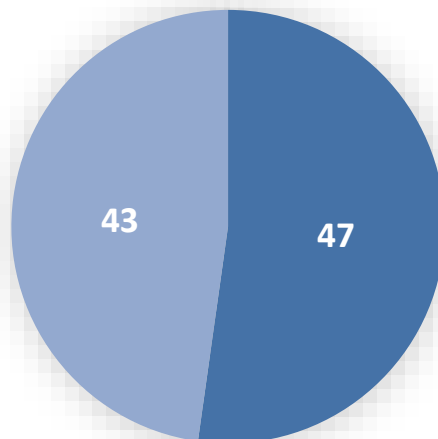
■ Patuakhali ■ Khulna



Number of People in Attendance



■ Patuakhali
■ Khulna

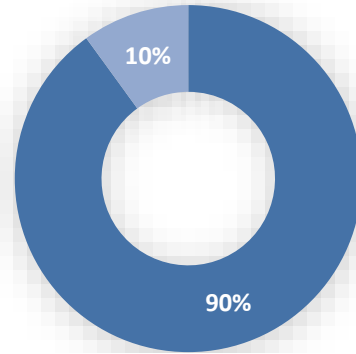


Number of Applications



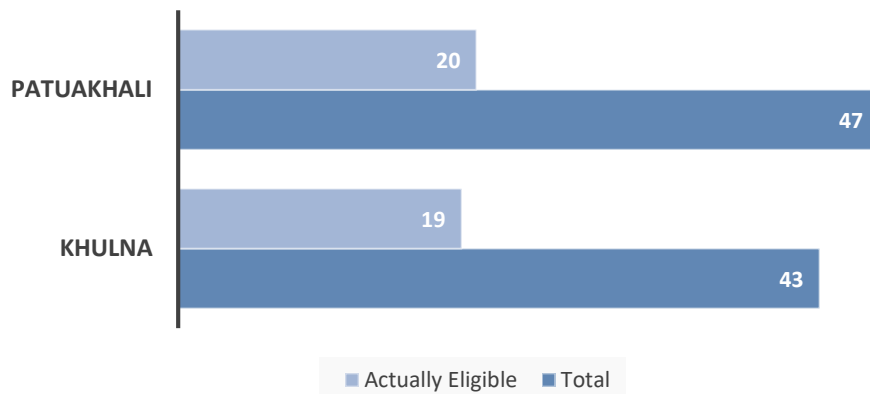
Gender Split in Applications

■ Male ■ Female



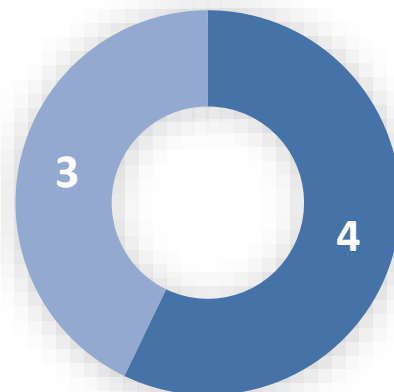
Applicant Age Range	Min	Max
	17y	33y

Application Eligibility



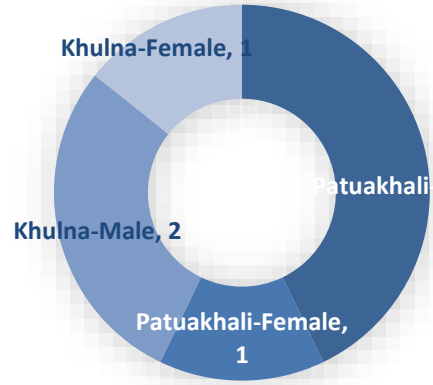
Winners

■ Patuakhali
■ Khulna

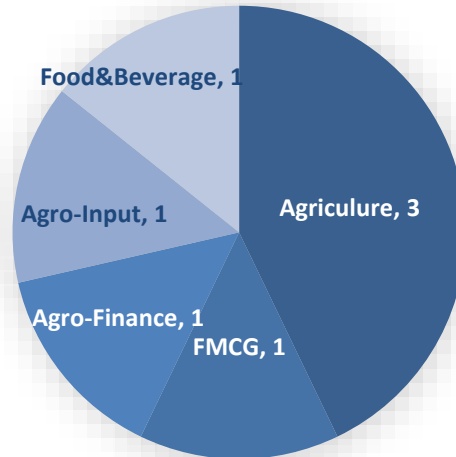




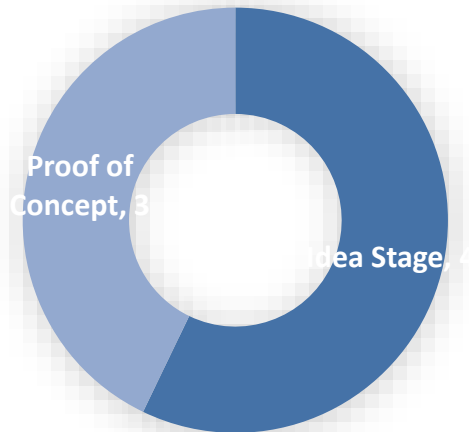
Gender Split among Winners



Industries Among Winning Ideas



Stages of Development





CHALLENGES

However the road to the completion of both the cohorts was not always an easy task. There were countless challenges we faced while implementing our planned actions. Here are some of them which YY Goshti and BGP should take into consideration for further development.

Major Cases:

1. **Lasting Results:** Applicants with pre-existing operations or business plans have performed better during the pitch as well as after the fact regardless of whether they won or not.
2. **Polder Involvement:** There seems to be some complications regarding involvement of Polder Inhabitants in BGIC. Entrepreneurs typically come with a mindset and making sure that their work can impact the BGP Polder significantly was a challenge.
3. **Entrepreneurs Commitment:** Throughout the entire project we have struggled to keep all the innovators committed to their project. Some of them were student or fresh graduates who always had a fear of failure and they were pressurized by their families to go for a conventional job. On the other side innovators with an existing project were pretty easy to work with.

Minor Cases:

- **Familiarity Issues:** Though the application form was kept as simple as possible, with a Bangla format also available, many potential applicants still faced problems understanding what content to add when filling up the form.
- **Audience Targeting:** Getting the right audience for “Inspire: Knowledge Session” is always challenging. The districts we targeted are the places where not a significant number of events take place. So the people come over to attend the program without having a proper idea of what BGIC is because it is free.
- **Perception Problems:** The attendees of the Knowledge Session sometimes fail to understand the purpose of BGIC for multiple reasons. Either because they are not the right people for it or simply because everything is new to them. There was a barrier in communicating with locals regarding the nature and benefit of BGIC.
- **Migrating Tendencies:** The local lifestyles are changing, with more people migrating to Dhaka city for jobs rather than working locally.



- **Conversion Rates:** Very few from the Knowledge Sessions later apply for the BGIC. Mostly it is always the other people who get to know about it through our online platforms or peers and apply thereby.
- **Finding Collaborators:** Tagging along with the effective local organizations is difficult at times. We always ended up collaborating with local people whom we could connect to within our network. There was not enough organizations who could help in terms of finding right kind of innovators.
- **Connectivity & Gaps:** Though social media has a great contribution in making things easier and reaching maximum audience, it was challenging to reach potential applicants because they are not active on social media or even if they are, they stay miles away from the fact that these opportunities exist and where to go for grabbing them.
- **Connectivity Issues:** Since our target group was in Patuakhali and Khulna, the team faced some problems helping potential applicants from Dhaka due to the distance. They didn't seem comfortable with frequent online calls and some assistances can only be delivered with a face to face discussion.
- **Exposure Lacks:** The number of applications is never satisfactory in terms of quality. Most of the time we get the same ideas over and over again with no innovation at all. We feel this is because life in these areas seem pretty self-contained and not too open to foreign ideas.
- **Further Lacks:** It is hard to bring innovation in the business plans since it takes a lot for the participants to start something in spite of not having family support or proper education and not to mention proper living standards.
- **Infrastructure Support:** Idea stage entrepreneurs from Dhaka comes with some kind of innovative mind set because of the ecosystem or infrastructure that we have in Dhaka e.g. competitions, case challenges, hackathons (this is what we have experienced in last 3 years). While working in Patuakhali and Khulna we have realized that Blue Gold Innovation Challenge is the first of kind and the major challenge for us was to create a positive mind set within the involved youth group. They have had a different kind of lifestyle while they were never inspired to start a venture or solve a problem. We have spent a long time during the Inspire and Ideation sessions doing it for our selected entrepreneurs but we think it will take some time in the concerned geographies to have the right kind of mind set to bring innovative solutions.



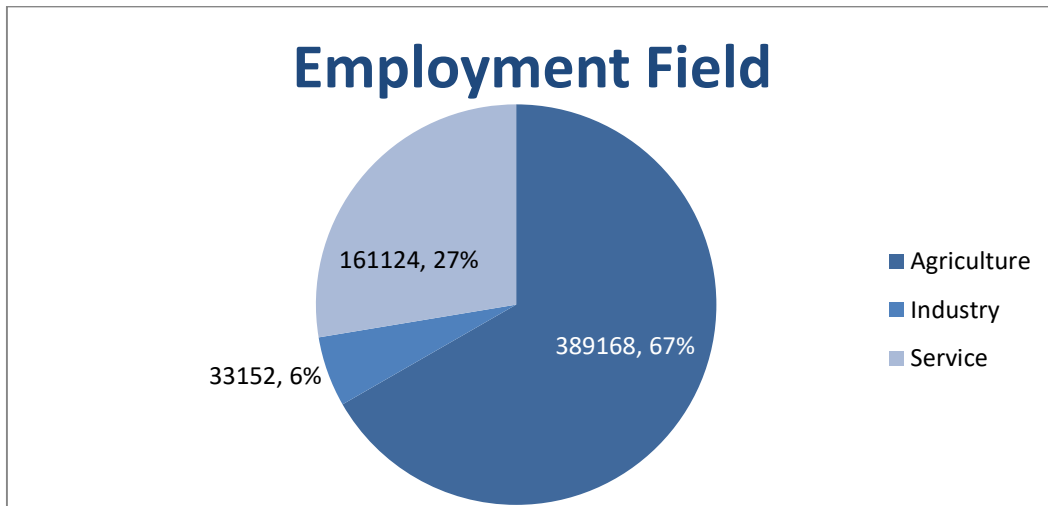
- **Course Concentration:** The shortlisted applicants cannot adopt everything because of simultaneous and continuous learning under pressure. Also most of the curriculum is new to them so they often fail to relate and integrate those with their business plans.
- **Take-back Tendencies:** 1-2 shortlisted applicants always withdraw their participation due to exam, some other commitments or just because they cannot get over their fear of starting an actual business.
- **BGP Resources:** We were very happy to see our colleagues from BGP Participating in the Pitch events. Their comments, questions and feedbacks were really valuable. In fact we have seen that best performers of the boot camp were grilled with these questions and queries and information. These people bring in hands on experience of working in the BGP Polder areas. It would have been nice we could have them during our Boot camp and Training's for a longer period of time. We have had visits from BGP or EKN but it would be nice if we can get BGP resources as part of the Facilitating team.



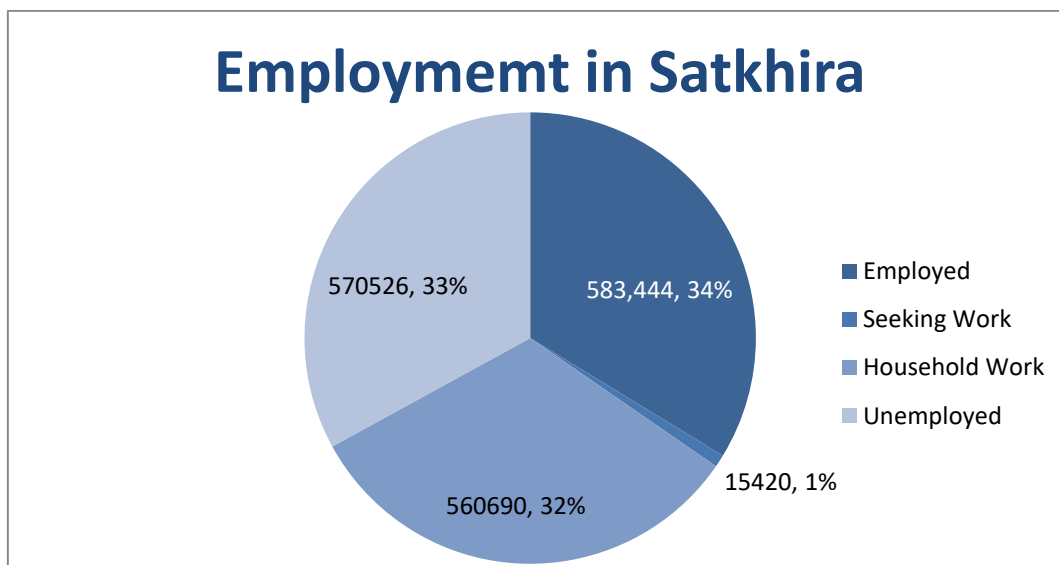
FUTURE PROSPECTS

BGIC in Satkhira

Upon discussion with Blue Gold Program we can implement our previously planned third cohort in Satkhira. Satkhira has a huge potential in agricultural development and water management. It has a population of near about 18,65,000. Their main source of income is agriculture covering 66.56% of the total income.



Most of the people of Satkhira depend on pisciculture, locally known as 'gher'. They have their main fruits as mango, blackberry, jackfruit, banana, papaya, lychee, coconut and guava. Since these fruits are not available all throughout the year, we can push business plans to make different items out of these to give them an innovative form.





In Satkhira there are 86 dairies, 322 poultry farms, 3046 fisheries, 3650 shrimp farms, 66 hatcheries and one cattle breeding center. The main exports are shrimp, paddy, jute, wheat, betel leaf, leather and jute goods.

Unfortunately, this potential and important area has been experiencing changes of physical environment and the socio-economic phenomena with the expansion of shrimp culture. Satkhira district was once famous for its crop production. Particularly this district is self-sufficient in respect of food production. But due to climate changes and recently happened natural disasters the physical environment of the district has been devastated enormously. There has been some damage in cereal production due to increasing shrimp cultivation in agricultural saline belt. Total area of the district is about 3 lac 75 thousand hectare and total saline affected agricultural land is about 1 lac 88 thousand 896 hectare against that shrimp cultivation has covered about 54 thousand 586 hectare of land.

There has not been flow of water from upper stream and there is no preserver for holding flood water so surface water salinity has been increasing. There are about 215 ponds in Satkhira district which could be well protected with raising its boarder to neutralize the salinity. Water logging has also been a severe problem in the district. Due to shrimp cultivation salinity in the soil has been increasing and agricultural production has been hampered. Vegetable production has also decreased and consequently nutrition level is going down. Soil fertility is diminishing as well. Agricultural land has already been decreased and employment in the sector has gone down. As a result a good number of local poor people are forced to migrate for not having alternate profession of agriculture. There is a rising scarcity of drinking water too.

To end this crisis YY Goshti and BGP can once again work together. For example salinity resistant rice paddy can be cultivated in this area. This business plan has been introduced in Khulna cohort and the applicant made it to the finale. But due to few misleading information out of nervousness, he could not make it to the ultimate winners. So there is a lot of scope in Satkhira where BGIC can be brought into limelight to develop the socio-economic condition of this region.



Khulna Second Cohort

After having done 2 cohorts we now have a better understanding of what kind of projects and initiatives would best suit the region. And so we have been contemplating the possibility for another cohort in Khulna. This term however, we do not plan on restricting applications to new ideas from Khulna.



As we have seen, external ideas who have remodeled their idea for Khulna have had greater impact and innovation potential. Therefore, we would propose leveraging our entrepreneur network to bring more innovative projects from all

YY Goshti Development Resources Network

around Bangladesh. We would then during the Innovate session, remodel their existing plans to suit the needs and characteristics of Khulna. If this pans out, we could also help make new versions for Patuakhali and Satkhira as well.



SUCCESS CASES

E-TRACEABILITY

E-Traceability provides an IT solution to educate, collect, crosscheck, and analyze social, environmental data to benchmark/rank producers against sustainable standards. This allows buyers to track orders of shrimp to maintain fidelity, watch for adulteration attempts and check for delays or unexpected hindrances that could foil the order (because shrimp without adulterating preservatives tend to rot much faster). E-Traceability has arranged for funding for external sources and is currently prepping to launch operations. They have already piloted to project with admirable results in Khulna region.

REGEN

Regen provides high quality organic fertilizer for agriculture and urban garden needs. They use tried and tested organic procedures to make high output vermicompost from food waste produced by cities, primarily food businesses.

Their initiative will help urbanize forestation and reduce the carbon footprint made by the prepared food industry. Regen is currently structuring their business model and prepping for a live prototype. They also plan to apply for the Innovation Fund from the Blue Gold Program.



Regen – From Food Waste to Plant Food



LIGHT OF HOPE

Light of Hope produces a portable and independently powered product called Sputnike - a solar-run mobile projection unit that can be used to provide training and education to rural schools and for farmers in the agriculture value chain, anywhere anytime. This would help them connect more easily to new techniques and advancements around the country and even the world.

SUNFARM

SunFarm is a social business enterprise that produces sunflower oil and improves lives of the farmers of south west Bangladesh. SunFarm cultivates sunflower in unused saline land of southern region and produces healthy oil for customers which eventually ensures economic solvency to the local farmers. SunFarm integrates honey production within the sunflower fields which gives a second earning opportunity for the farmers.

POMATO

Pomato produces hybrid grafted plant made from tomato and potato plants for the coastal Bangladesh, produced by Grafting method to increase the yield, profitability and improve the nutrition status of the coastal community. Currently in saline tolerant area farmers can't cultivate profitable crops like Tomato. But they can grow Potato as potato has more saline tolerance than Tomato. But as our Pomato plant has Potato as rootstock the plant can survive on saline area like ordinary Potato plant. Hence by cultivating our Pomato seedling the can harvest profitable Cherry tomato as well. In the field trial Pomato showed 37% more yield vs potato and tomato planted separately in the same land size.



TANU'S FARMHOUSE

Tanu's Farmhouse is sustainable model farm to grow fruits and vegetables like broccoli, capsicum, cherry tomatoes, strawberries etc. this venture is based in Patuakhali and the main aim is supplying exotic fruits in the local market. It is also an attempt to create employment opportunity in the region.

Tanisha Tanu, a 19 year old girl from Patuakhali district of Bangladesh did not like the way women and girls were treated in her area. She wanted to bring a change in their life by becoming partners with them and growing vegetables and fruits for commercial sales, thus giving them a scope to earn money. Through her Farmhouse her mission is to help girls like her achieve financial freedom and break free.



Tanu's Farm House – Bringing New Food to Patuakhali



REFLECTION OF YY GOSHTI'S EFFORTS

Ever since YY Goshti started working on Blue Gold Innovation Challenge, its sole purpose was to bring innovation in agriculture, water management, value chain and sustainable development. However, once operations began in the field level, the real scenario of the southwest region of Bangladesh was revealed. Not only is the literacy rate very poor there, the people are also very reluctant to go out of track and start their own businesses.

This, however, makes sense given the circumstances they live in, where the first thing that matters is money that comes easy. So firstly we wanted to bring a change in their mentality before commending them to bring a change in the region, more particularly in people's lives. We took care of the fact that in each knowledge session



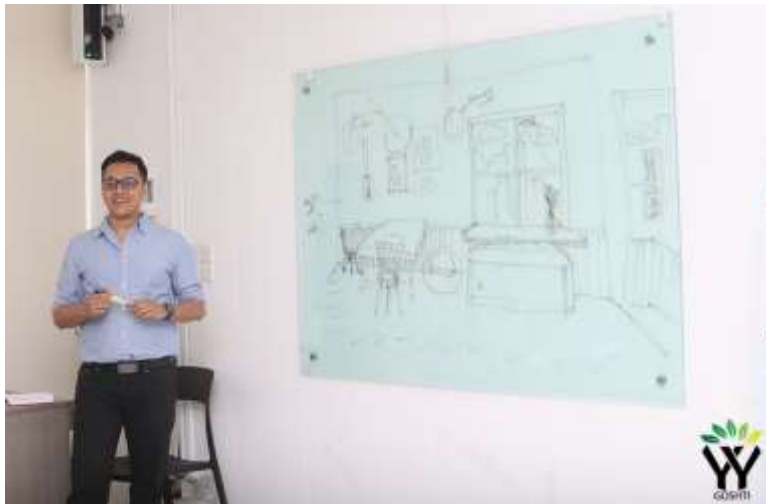
YY Goshti Development Resources Network

we could give them a proper sense of independence, sensibleness, what they can achieve through starting their own business, how it can have a better impact on their livelihood and most importantly how it will lessen the dependency on barely available current jobs.

YY Goshti's constant efforts have been to inspire and encourage them by bringing some real life examples of rural people already doing businesses incubated by YY Goshti itself. The extent to which those people are working hard and making money on their own somewhere started fascinating the audience we were getting for our each Knowledge Session. We always tried to bring the relevant speakers from the pool of entrepreneurs who themselves are very inspiring for the community and are well-known for their work. So in between inspiring them for starting businesses and applying for BGIC, YY Goshti managed to earn their trust as well by continuously repeating the support it would provide to the applicants who could prove themselves outstanding in their business idea and its implementation. From both the



cohorts we got decent amount of responses despite having many challenges and obstacles.



YY Goshti Development Resources Network

Also the idea of improving the lives of people living in polder area gave them a new dimension of working opportunity. This led to attracting applicants from Dhaka and other parts of the country who came up with their ideas to work in these two districts. We believe this is the reflection of our efforts that we could start the

initiative and till now a lot of people from Patuakhali and Khulna contact with us to know about similar opportunities and how they can get along with YY Goshti.



Team YY Goshti

CONCLUSION

There is still much work to be done in the region, and luckily a lot of good people to do it with. Development is a slow process that needs careful considerations and continuous effort. But change has to start from somewhere. All that is necessary is a measured and tactile effort to address the root causes and establishing sustainable solutions to break the chain of misfortune and grow as a nation as part of the world village.

We see bright prospects for the people of the region. They are strong, spirited and fighters. They might be struggling now, but with a little help and support they can change how the region grows and how its people become self-sufficient and begin to contribute to the national and global economies.

YY Goshti will continue to support innovative initiatives with all necessary incubation facilities to any and all who wish to take the dive and start a new venture. We invite all comers to reach out to us and we will do our best to accelerate the startup phase and help establish them in the competitive market as a warrior for social good.

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