

Rethinking Youth!



On March 28th, 32 diverse youth practitioners of Bangladesh gathered at BRAC for a brainstorming exercise to trace the existing gaps in youth intervention designs and find out what can be done together to reach common goals.

About Innovation Forums...

BRAC Social Innovation Lab hosts monthly innovation forums to provide a platform for innovation discourse by engaging innovators in fun cognitive exercises, brainstorming problems, co-creating crazy ideas to inspire social innovation.

We asked...

REALITY CHECKS:

WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST ONES?

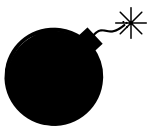
INCENTIVE STRUCTURES:

WHICH ONES ARE MANDATORY?

SUSTAINABILITY:

WHAT WORKS AND WHAT DOESN'T?

The Highlights...



THEY BURN OUT, EASILY

It's easier to get the youth excited on working on new initiatives, they have immense energy, but they get bored easily. They are hard to keep engaged. You need to continue putting new offers on the table to prevent drop outs.



SOME CONTINUE, MOST DO NOT

Commitments are hard to manufacture when it comes to working for a social cause. Many join initiatives to add to their job experience, many intend to have a good time with friends while doing good to the society, most leave just when their friends do. The 'cool factor' dies out quick or gets replaced by cooler alternatives.



MONEY IS AN INCENTIVE, BUT NOT ALWAYS

Money can work as a short term incentive, but in the long run the youth, whether volunteering for your cause or seeking support from you, tend to look for mentorship and career linkages from their involvement.



GAINS SHOULD BE CLEAR, VISIBLE TO ALL

The benefits your project offers to the youth should be clearly articulated and made visible to them and their parents/teachers. You need to promote their stories and work through social and electronic/print media, offer certificates, recommendations for their growth. They need to see who they will become once they join you, make sure to write the case studies well!



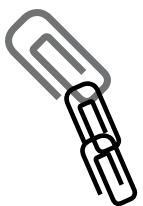
BE INCLUSIVE FOR IMPACT, AT THE COST OF SLOW RESULTS

To achieve long term impact, look for the ones left out in the existing system of competition. Do not just feed the fed, even if that creates faster results. Prioritise your weakest intakes equally, in fact more if necessary.



YOU CAN MAKE YOUR SERVICES FREE, AND BE SUSTAINABLE

Being sustainable can mean designing shared revenue channels with partners who see a different market opportunity in the same model you offer. Facebook, Google, Youtube is able to make end services free to their consumers by providing alternative value offerings to other organisations.



CREATE MENTORSHIP CHAINS, INVOLVE THE ALUMNI

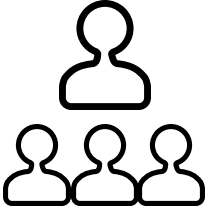
With time, allow them to seek mentorship from external organisations, alumni members and themselves. This offers incentives to aim for the next step, set long term vision, and gain more support from each other.



STICK TO ONE OBJECTIVE, TILL YOU ACHIEVE IT

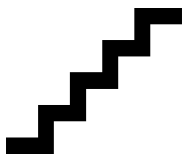
You will go to bed every night with ideas that are hard to resist, however you need to set your priorities right, until you have achieved impact. Multiple youth interventions in Bangladesh are struggling to put their focus together.

"FOUNDERS' SYNDROME" CAN BE DEADLY



Own your project, but not too much. Build the hype around your project and team overall. Extensive focus on founders' tend to undermine the project success and the potential of the team. Delegate tasks and put your team on the forefront.

START, KNOWING WHERE YOU WANT TO END IT



You need to have an exit strategy and you need to plan it right from the start. This will help you iterate other strategies, adapt your model and look for partners. Hand over your project before it dies out, communicate changes to your stakeholders.

Thoughts from the moderator...

"It's easy to fall prey to the lure of a flashy model where everything seem to fall in places. But sometimes all you need is to put some structures in place and keep things simple to make it work. Synergy and collaboration are all words as long as it stays on whiteboards or in the concluding parts of our grand speeches. The people who are working in this sector and people that we are working for are both young and full of hope about the future. It's just connecting the individual dots and making the picture whole is what might be missing right now." - Rakib Avi, Programme Manager, BRAC Social Innovation Lab

Host an Innovation Forum with us...



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