Mobile Photography
by the Left Behind Youth
San San Shila took a beautiful photograph of a girl who was about to fly a kite. "I have been a dreamer since my childhood. This photo has that dreamy quality. The subject of the photo, the little girl, maybe from a disadvantaged community, but she still has the little joys and dreams in life. This is depicted through her getting ready to fly a kite, she dreams of touching the sky with it."
Mobile Photography
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FOREWORD

As development workers, we know the importance of giving voice to the people who are left behind. Their stories are so unique in their own ways that it is hard for anyone from the outside actually to portray them accurately. But unfortunately, these voices almost always get little exposure.

The initiative by UNDP Bangladesh’s Human Rights Programme is a timely initiative to develop the storytelling capabilities of the left-behind communities, that too in the attractive visual language field. The project itself has been doing wonders working relentlessly to empower vulnerable and marginalized groups, including women and girls, children and young people, ethnic and religious minorities, people with disabilities, Dalit and other minorities.

I would like to congratulate the youths who attended the training and sent photos for this photobook. Their works are truly unique, and their viewpoints give us a fresh perspective on the struggles faced by their communities. For example, a photograph by San San Shila from the Rakhine community particularly struck me. It portrays a young girl about to fly a kite. It epitomizes the aspirations to reach the sky and talks about the little joys and dreams in life. These are the stories that need to be told.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to development partners, particularly the governments of Sweden and Switzerland, for supporting this initiative. I would also like to thank all colleagues involved with this publication and particularly noted photographer, Prito Reza, who facilitated the process whole-heartedly. His coaching and mentorship enabled youths to develop and sharpen mobile photography skills within a short period of time during the time of the pandemic.

Lastly, I am sure that youths from left-behind communities will find this book inspiring and an encouragement to develop various skills.

Sudipto Mukerjee
Resident Representative
UNDP Bangladesh
MESSAGE

I am very lucky to be a part of this work! When I was first approached for mobile photography training for a group of underprivileged young people, I was amazed though the task was challenging during the time of the pandemic.

Even though I love to take on challenges those young people have made my job easier. Their curiosity, dedication, commitment, love for the community above all sense of responsibility demonstrated by youths from the left-behind community simply amazed me. I have again realized if someone has willpower and works hard, no task is difficult. This group of young people has proved it through the works presented in the photobook. Hats off to them! I honestly feel privileged to share my knowledge with these youths and I have learned so many things from them as well. We all had a great time together while capturing and sharing images. I believe these trained mobile photographers will make us proud soon.

I have no word of thanking UNDP for considering me for the wonderful opportunity. I would also like to extend my special thanks to colleagues from Human Rights Program and UNDP Communications team members for their support and collaboration.

Prito Reza
Photographer & Trainer
Mobile Photography

On occasion of
International Women’s Day 2021

Photographs are contributed by a group of left behind youths, using their mobile phones on the lives of women in their communities. A total of 26 young female and male participants principally from left behind community attended a mobile photography workshop.
BADAL HAJONG
Youth representative
Hajong Community
Sunamganj

It always amazed me how a photographer captures live stories from different perspectives and angles that I never assumed. After mobile photography, now I can think and try to capture and live moments. Photography skills gained during the training helped me to capture some good snaps during COVID-19 response targeting Hajong and another left behind communities.
আগিয়া এক মহজ ময়, আমি
ছলীদেরও আগিয়ার ইচ্ছা রেহ, আমি
ফিন সমাজের কল্যানের নিমিত্তে আমিকে হইবে

Photo: Badal Hajong
BARSHA HAJONG

Youth representative
Hajong Community
Netrokona

I have been able to share the culture and tradition of my community vividly after attending the training on mobile photography. It gives me immense pleasure to promote Hajong tradition through photography.

Photo: Barsha Hajong
BITHIKA DAS
Youth representative
Dalit Community
Khulna

I previously had a notion that good images are only captured through an expensive camera phone. After attending this training, my notion completely got changed. I am now capturing lives and livelihoods of my own community using my phone.
BIVUTI BHUSON MAHATO

Youth representative
Mahato Community
Pabna

I have an interest in photography and love to take a snap of every moment that I think is significant. I believe that a photograph adds different meanings to a moment. After attending the two-day long training, I was assigned to take some snaps of struggling women who are contributing to society. It was not an easy job, though - I always tried to find out the story behind the photo.

Photo: Bivuti Bhuson Mahato
CHAMPA DAS

Youth representative
Rishi Community
Satkhira

Photography training that I received with the support of HRP, UNDP functionally helped me immensely to understand diverse techniques in capturing real-life images. I have been able to post powerful images representing the state of women living in my community.
HASI RANI DEBI

Youth representative
Monipuri Community
Sylhet

This was an opportunity that we did not get it very often. Therefore, I grabbed the opportunity instantly when I was offered! Now, I am so proud to be a part of it. I have been able to take some good snaps of my community.

Photo: Hasi Rani Debi
MD IMON ALI MONDOL

Youth representative
Sirajganj

It has been an unprecedented event in my life. Hailing from northern Bangladesh, I have been able to witness changes that occurred in the lives of people living in chars; and this training has taught me how to take good snaps with a mobile camera.
MD OMAR FARUK RABBY

Youth representative
Transgender
Sirajganj

Training and subsequent guidance from a renowned photographer has enhanced my skill in mobile photography, particularly light and angle. Since I belong to a disadvantaged community, mobile photography is an empowerment tool for me.

Photo: Md Omar Faruk Rabby
MOLI BISWAS

Youth representative
Mal Pahari Community
Rajshahi

I am from Malpahari tribe, a small ethnic community, very thinly dispersed in northwestern Bangladesh. Paharia is an Indo-Aryan word referring to people living in hills or mountains and I have thoroughly enjoyed taking part in the mobile photography training.
MONIRA SULTANA

Youth representative
Sirajganj

I have a sense of empowerment after attending the training. I can take snaps of the impoverished condition of the community with my little device which I did not realize before attending the training.

Photo: Monira Sultana
PROSENJIT BARMAN

Youth representative
Barman Community
Gazipur

Training provides men an opportunity not only to capture good images but to understand the situation of people from left-behind communities where I also belong to. I am now an apprentice lawyer and have a dream to stand beside people from disadvantaged communities.

Photo: Prosenjit Barman
MD MUKTABIUR RAIHAN

Youth representative
Satkhira

We are fortunate to have benefited from the mobile photography training organized by UNDP and to have received training from a high-quality trainer with diversified experience. I, along with my fellow group members have become more inclined to use photography in greater social awareness-raising work.

Photo: Md Muktabiur Raihan
REJAUR RAHMAN LEMON

Youth representative
Transgender
Keraniganj

I have been able to share the culture and tradition of my own community after attending the training on mobile photography. It has given me immense pleasure.

Photo: Rejaur Rahman Lemon
SABITTRE HEMBRAM

Youth representative
Santal Community
Rajshahi

I have been able to sharpen my photography skill and I feel very confident now. With mobile, I can take strong images of social issues and post them on online platforms. During the pandemic situation, I have found images very powerful to convey the messages.

Photo: Sabittre Hembram
SAN SAN SHILA

Youth representative
Rakhaine Community
Cox’s Bazar

I was quite interested in photography but didn’t have much knowledge about it. I used to take random photos. This training has helped me to develop a new skill, especially taking snaps focusing on my community. I have got the chance to represent the Rakhine community’s women, which is quite an inspiration for me.

Photo: San San Shila
SREE SUMON KUMAR

Youth representative
Robidas Community
Bogura

Mobile photography training offered by UNDP is a milestone in my life. Training and real-life experience have worked for me in a real-life situation. I have shared this experience among the students and youth of the Adivasi and Dalit communities and looking for an opportunity to organize a workshop on mobile photography in Bogura in the near future.

Photo: Sree Sumon Kumar
Young photographers with trainers.

Photo: UNDP