
CHARITY CHAMPIONS GENDER EQUALITY

A charity set up by the partner of a DFK International member firm is launching a new book as it continues to champion diversity and gender equality in Bangladeshi schools.

HerStory Foundation was set up by Zareen Mahmud Hosein, a partner of Snehasish Mahmud & Co, two years ago to empower women and girls and show that opportunities are not constrained by gender.

The foundation creates books telling the stories of successful and empowering women which it then uses in schools to break down gender stereotypes and start discussions around equality.

It also works with teachers to incorporate equality into the curriculum, help create lesson plans around equality to ensure young girls are encouraged to follow their dreams and not let gender hold them back.

The charity is now preparing to launch the next book in the HerStories series as it continues to work with young people from private, government funded and religious schools.

It is also working with the government to launch a skills development app to show the various career paths available and demonstrate that females are not confined to certain job roles.

Zareen said: "When I became a chartered accountant there were very few women in the profession, so there was not a female network.

"This inspired me to launch the charity to try and reach out to women and girls to show that their gender should not hold them back.

"We particularly wanted to reach out to young people, which is when we began creating our books which are based around the stories of inspirational women.

"We take the books into schools and work with both girls and boys aged between 10 to 14-years-old to develop their soft skills and create discussions around gender and equality to break down gender stereotypes.

"The books are produced in both English and Bangla, meaning we can target a wide audience and also add extra educational value for those learning English.

"The sessions have been extremely well-received by the children as targeting them at a young age means they are very receptive."

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A worldwide association of independent accounting firms and business advisors

Executive Office: Temple Chambers | Suite 120 | 3-7 Temple Chambers | London EC4Y 0DA
Tel No.: +44 20 7436 6722 | E-mail: exec@dfk.com | Website: www.dfk.com

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Zareen added: “Bangladesh is currently going through a lot of change and people are very receptive to this, so we are seeing positive feedback from the adults we are working with including teachers and parents.

“Teachers across all of the different types of schools we have worked with have been accepting of the message we are trying to spread and parents are keen to hear more about how we are incorporating diversity into the curriculum.

“We are keen to see more females go into vocational or technical job roles and are spreading the word about how to achieve this. We’re now extremely excited to launch our next book to inspire even more young people.”

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Picture Caption: HerStory reading circle at a local school



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