SheSTEM: Career Knows No Gender

Empowering Future Female STEM Leaders

Concept Note

November 3, 2024

Kingdom of the Netherlands 24

Fireside Chat

LightCastle PARTNERS POLICY ExCHANGE *Catalyzing Growth Solution* a2i *Innovate for all* 10 MINUTE SCHOOL DEVLEARN

Venue: Prof. Dr. Abdullah Farouk Conference Hall, Faculty of Business Studies. (10th floor, Eastern wing)
Organizers: SheSTEM Consortium in collaboration with Department of Management Information Systems (MIS), University of Dhaka

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1. SheSTEM Background

The SheSTEM project is designed to address the significant underrepresentation of women in STEM fields in Bangladesh, where female participation in these roles stands at a mere 14%. This disparity reflects deep-seated gender inequalities in both education and the workforce, hampering the country's potential for inclusive economic development. Research indicates that nearly half of all girls interested in STEM lack exposure to female role models, and by age 16, only 25% of girls envision scientists as women. Societal biases that favor boys in mathematics and girls in reading and domestic tasks lead to a marked decline in interest and self-confidence among young girls.

By creating supportive educational environments, promoting female role models, and enhancing teaching methods, SheSTEM aims to foster skills, engagement, and inclusion in STEM careers among university students. This comprehensive strategy will empower more women to pursue and excel in STEM careers, thereby advancing gender equality and driving economic growth in Bangladesh.

2. SheSTEM Overview

SheSTEM, supported by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, is a collaborative effort among five esteemed consortium partners – 10 Minute School, a2i, DevLearn Consulting, LightCastle Partners, and Policy Exchange Bangladesh. This initiative aims to bridge the gap between public university students and public/private businesses – fostering skills, engagement, participation, equity, and inclusion in STEM careers. The overarching objective is to not only encourage a greater number of women to pursue STEM fields but also ensure their continuous progression, empowerment and success in these areas.

3. Objectives

The objectives of the Fireside chats are as follows:

1. **Inspire Female Students:** Present accomplished female STEM professionals as role models to inspire and motivate female students.
2. **Bridge the Industry-Academia Gap:** Provide insights and practical advice on navigating a STEM career from education to professional life.
3. **Encourage Networking:** Foster a sense of community and encourage networking opportunities between students and professionals.
4. **Highlight Career Opportunities:** Showcase the diverse opportunities available in STEM fields and discuss pathways to success.

1. Speakers & Guests

Sector	Speakers & Panelists
Industry Leaders	**Industry Resource** Md. Shariful Islam System Analyst (Digital Co-ordination Branch) Information and Communication Technology Division Shaela Quader, SMB Account Specialist, X (Formerly known as Twitter) Farah Tanjeem General Manager - Technology Strategy & Transformation Yasas Vishuddhi Abeywickrama Chief Operating Officer, Doerscircle Ex-Meta
Academia Members	*Dr. Rabeya Sultana* *Professor & Chairperson* *Department of Management Information Systems (MIS)* *Dr. Md. Abdul Hannan Mia* *Professor and Professional Master's Program Coordinator* *Department of Management Information Systems (MIS)* Dr. Mohammad Anisur Rahman Professor *Department of Management Information Systems (MIS)*

2. Session Plan

Time	Agenda	Speaker
03:00 PM - 03:15 PM	Arrival & Registration	
03:15 PM - 03:30 PM	Welcoming Remarks and Program Brief	*Dr. Rabeya Sultana* *Professor & Chairperson* *Department of Management Information Systems (MIS)* *Mollah Mizanur Rahman* *Joint Project Director, a2i*
03:30 PM - 04:30 PM	Moderated Discussion	**Industry Resource** Md. Shariful Islam

	- Introduction by Moderator - Discussion with Speakers on career journeys, challenges, and insights - Key themes: Overcoming barriers, career progression, work-life balance, further education, experience	System Analyst (Digital Co-ordination Branch) Information and Communication Technology Division Shaela Quader SMB Account Specialist, X (Formerly known as Twitter) Farah Tanjeem General Manager - Technology Strategy & Transformation Yasas Vishuddhi Abeywickrama Chief Operating Officer, Doerscircle Ex-Meta **Moderator** Md Sahariar Hasan Jiisun Head of Resource Mobilization, a2i, ICT Division
04:30 PM–04:45 PM	Open Q&A Session - Students interact with speakers, ask questions, and seek advice	
04.45 PM-05:00 PM	Learning, Insights and Way forward	Dr. Mohammad Anisur Rahman Professor *Department of Management Information Systems (MIS)*
05:00 PM -05:40 PM	Closing Remarks and vote of thanks	*Mushfiqua Zaman Satiar* *Senior Policy Advisor* *Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Bangladesh* *Md. Afzal Hossain Sarwar* *Policy Analyst, a2i* *Dr. Md. Abdul Hannan Mia* *Professor and Professional Master's Program Coordinator* *Department of Management Information Systems (MIS)*
05:40 PM -6:00 PM	Networking & Snacks	

1. Guiding Questions

Shaela Quader, SMB Account Specialist, X (Formerly known as Twitter)	■ How has the increasing demand for STEM talent, particularly in data analytics, impacted career opportunities for women in STEM?

Yasas Vishuddhi Abeywickrama Chief Operating Officer, Doerscircle Ex-Meta	■ What are the most important skills and mindsets that STEM graduates should develop to stay competitive in today's job market? ■ How can women in STEM leverage mentorship and networking to overcome barriers and advance their careers?
Md. Shariful Islam System Analyst (Digital Co-ordination Branch) Information and Communication Technology Division	■ What are the key qualities and skills you look for in fresh STEM graduates when hiring for roles in the ICT sector? ■ How can the government and academic institutions work together to better prepare STEM graduates for emerging opportunities in the job market? ■ What role does innovation and technology play in creating new opportunities for women in STEM careers?

2. General Questions

■ How can students better connect with industry professionals and mentors to gain insights and prepare for their future careers?
■ What advice would you give to young women who aspire to build successful careers in STEM fields?

3. Format

1. **Opening Remarks:** Introduction to the SheSTEM program and the importance of promoting STEM careers, with a focus on diversity and inclusion.
2. **Speaker Introductions:** Brief introductions highlighting the speakers' expertise and roles in the industry.
3. **Fireside Chats:** Questions exploring the speakers' career journeys, challenges faced, and insights into the evolving landscape of STEM careers.
4. **Interactive Q&A Session:** Students ask questions directly to the speakers, with a focus on career advice, opportunities, and overcoming barriers.
5. **Closing Remarks:** Key takeaways and actionable advice from the session, followed by a vote of thanks.
6. **Networking and Lunch:** Informal networking to build connections between students and professionals.

4. Moderator Notes

1. **Engagement:** Ensure each speaker shares their perspectives on broader issues like gender diversity, career progression, and opportunities in STEM.
2. **Time Management:** Keep the discussion on track, allowing equal time for the panel discussion and audience Q&A.
3. **Audience Interaction:** Encourage students to ask career-focused questions that relate to the broader STEM landscape.

4. **Summarization:** Conclude the session with a recap of key points, focusing on practical advice for young women pursuing careers in STEM.