



Arranged By

POCAA (Platform of Community Action and Architecture) brings together individuals interested in working with low-income communities, focusing on community-driven design and social infrastructure in Bangladesh. Engaging with vulnerable communities in Dhaka and youth groups, POCAA uses tools like community mapping and profiling to co-create solutions. Their philosophy, "Let people be the solution," emphasizes elevating community architecture and sharing best practices.

Co.Creation.Architects, based in Jhenaidah, is dedicated to integrating marginalized human and natural communities into urban and rural design. They provide technical support for community-led housing, public spaces, and landscape initiatives, blending action research with practical solutions.

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Imagine diving into a hands-on learning experience that blended community engagement, design, and real-world problem-solving. POCAA's 10-day session in Jhenaidah, held from February 29 to March 9, 2024, focused on community engagement, design, and problem-solving. Organized with Co.Creation.Architects and local partners, it brought together 17 young professionals and community youth.

Participants immersed themselves in the local culture, learning participatory design from experts and collaborating to address neighborhood challenges. The program emphasized creating a community streetscape linked to the river and safe, accessible spaces for women and children. The course fostered hands-on learning, co-creation, and global perspectives, culminating in a creative exhibition of the group's collective efforts.

A B O U T T H E C O U R S E



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DESIGNING PLACES THROUGH CO-CREATION WITH COMMUNITIES

Crafting Community by a Hands-On Journey in Jhenaidah





Weaving the Dreams
Workshop days and Community Engagement Activities in Pictures from Kolabagan, Jhenaidah.

"Let people be the solution"- community leaders were the mentors here. Along with them the team got engaged with hands-on sessions, got letters from the community on that blue letterbox where community people wrote letters on how they want their future Kolabagan to be. From making maps and models together, to exhibit the whole programme on streets.

WORKSHOPS

Learning From Community Led Approaches

The workshop in Jhenaidah focused on community-led projects showcasing how low-income groups, especially women, achieved their goals through co-creation. Participants visited projects such as the Bhennatola and Mohishakundu housing initiatives, which demonstrated effective community collaboration and empowerment. They also explored the Shelai Center, a women-run sewing hub, and various community ghats, highlighting their essential roles. Additionally, participants engaged in a hands-on rammed earth construction session, learning practical building techniques.



Community Engagement Sessions

During the sessions in Kolabagan, Jhenaidah, three groups focused on different aspects of Kolabagan's development: its relationship with the town, its people, and nature. They conducted surveys and community activities, engaging various local stakeholders. Children, elderly, and women shared their ideas through mapping, discussions, and creative projects. This engagement aimed to gather input for design interventions to enhance connectivity, safety, and community cohesion.



Find the whole video on the 10 day long workshop along with the architects' talk and the community reflection.

SHARING SESSIONS

Session on Mapping
Led by architect Suhailey Farzana, this session emphasized how simple maps, even made from leaves and twigs, can foster dialogue between communities and stakeholders. It highlighted the importance of maps in community engagement and design interventions.



If the process is not just for the people but with the people, they can express the kind of environment they want. As professional architects, we can then understand what we can do and organize everything accordingly."

Session on Paying Attention
Architect Khondaker Hasibul Kabir explored the concept of attentiveness in design. He stressed process over outcome, encouraging participants to focus on unbiased observation and organic research rather than predetermined goals.

Session with Tanzil Shafique
Tanzil discussed active participation, the role of collective identity, and aesthetics in community projects. He also addressed top-down vs. bottom-up approaches in participatory design.

Session with Witee
Witee shared his journey into community architecture, emphasizing the importance of nature, collective participation, and mapping in community-led design processes.

"As I am not from an architectural background, I had no idea about maps, plans, or how to map things out. We sat and made models all night. So, this whole process was very interesting for me, coming from a non-architectural background. And I am even considering taking architecture as a major now."

- Participant, During the Session with Locales

EXHIBITION!

The workshop outcomes were exhibited at Wazir Ali School Auditorium, showcasing maps, drawings, and models. Attended by over 100 community members, the event featured a walking tour highlighting design interventions to improve Kolabagan, including street markings and landscaping. Invited guests included government officials, the Mayor, and the Minister.

