

THE JURY OF LOVYOUZINDAGI KICKS OFF THE COUNTDOWN TO THE GRAND FINALE ON OCTOBER 15

All entries have been assessed, creative minds shortlisted and the stage is all set to make the world more inclusive. LovvYouZindagi's jury has set the ball rolling for the finale with their verdict which will be made public at a grand event on October 15 at ITC Royal Bengal. The creativity contest for young adults with the theme of mental health saw an overwhelming response from kids and young adults of Calcutta with noteworthy entries in categories like mini-documentary, photography, short essay, tagline, radio jingle and poster making.

Excited about the finale, psychotherapist Minu Budhia, founder-director Caring Minds, said, "In the beginning, I was really sceptical about how many would participate. But I thought if it fails, let it fail, I will still try because it is through failures that we rise. I'm thrilled to say that within one week we were flooded with entries. It gives me so much hope for the future to see that our applicants know that it is okay not to be okay and that they are already taking positive steps to maintain good mental health on a daily basis. The celebrity final judging round was equally tough and I would like to extend my thanks to all the judges who have patiently and dedicatedly gone through all entries. It was lovely to see that they were as excited as I was about the entries. They all agreed that it opened up a whole new perspective and a whole new way to dialogue with the youth of today about their mental health."

Pictures: Rashbehari Das



Fascinated by the entries, Swati Sarawagi, director, Swarnim International School and Caring Minds advisory board member, said, "Some of the entries were really fascinating and we had a hard time judging. Of the six categories, I thought that the documentary and the photography entries were brilliant. Lovv YouZindagi will create a ripple effect in the society. I'm looking forward to the unveiling of the results." Adding, Rajeev Agarwal, Caring Minds advisory board member, said, "Each entry was equally good and it was extremely tough to score them. Frankly, there was not much of a difference between the top 10 entries and the contestants who didn't make it to the list of finalists... it was neck to neck. And therefore everyone who participated should be proud of themselves."



Actor Rituparna Sengupta appreciated the method of channelling the creativity of young minds. She said, "Minu puts her whole heart, mind, and energy into everything she does just like she did in her book, and she is doing the same with this initiative. It is so commendable. As a creative person, I fully appreciate that their creative skills are being used as a platform to make the youth feel heard. We should make them feel very special and encourage them further."



Nick Low (left), British deputy high commissioner, talked about the importance of mainstreaming mental health conversation and lauded Budhia's efforts. He said, "It's been a lot of fun, hugely entertaining, and a wonderful way to tackle such an important issue. In a way, it is disappointing that we still have to do exercises like this to talk about mental health when it should be part of everyday conversation. I must say bravo to the entrants and Minu and her team — they have made it a tremendous success. Sorting through scores and scores of entries and doing a part of the difficult work for us must have been a challenge because the entries we saw were so good. However, for us too choosing from the selected entries was no easy task!" Prof Suranjan Das, vice chancellor, Adamas University, was impressed by the entries. He said, "We've marked so many in 8s, 9s, and 10s because the entries are extremely touching and strong. However, as I see it, what is not important is winning, but participation. Especially in a contest that deals with such an important, delicate topic in such a unique and creative way. I have one message — please be aware of your own mental health. There is always a solution to be found. Please talk, discuss, read, understand, and most importantly, reach out when you feel you need help."



US consul-general Melinda Pavek (right) was impressed with the entries. She said, "Being a judge was more difficult than I expected. There were deep meaning and really good thoughts, ideas and creativity in the shortlisted entries. Creativity is the only tool that can be used to understand the mind of the youth. Any time you take a moment to reflect on what you're thinking and why you're thinking it you're likely to uncover information about yourself. It can really open up your eyes to see the patterns of your own behaviour, which is important for good mental health."

Actor June added: "I'd like to thank Caring Minds and Minu Budhia for making me a part of this great initiative. I really look up to her as she has swum against so many challenges in life. She is seen as an icon, where mental health is concerned. It was really quite difficult to judge as the entries are so from within, and they're so expressive. But I feel scores are not important, what is important is that they have expressed themselves. I had tears in the corners of my eyes while seeing some entries. If I had had my way, I would have given them all a 10 on 10. I wish all the participants all the best."



The jury poses with Minu Budhia, founder of Caring Minds and the force behind LovvYouZindagi