

Students from three schools get into social activism

Mumbai: Hoping for better roads, a healthier society and a balanced ecology for Mumbai? Six teams from three schools have conceptualized projects on themes, such as health, sanitation, employment and environment, to achieve these.

A team of four class IX students of Podar International School, Santacruz, have created a cross-subsidiary model to make available quality fruits and vegetables to lower income groups at affordable prices. "We would see people in Dharavi looking weak; they could not afford quality food. So, we thought of addressing the issue," said Sakshi Haria, one of the group members.

Through four sales, the team bought 600kg of vegetables at wholesale rates. "We sold 300kg

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in a slum in Matunga at a price that was slightly cheaper than the market price and the rest through home delivery to middle- and upper middle-class homes at a price lower than their market rate. This way, the loss we incurred in the sale at the slums was nullified in the other sale," said Rushil Pingali. The other two in the group are Mahesh Shah and Sakshi Haria.

To fix pothole-ridden roads, a team from Ryan International School, Kandivli, suggested a cheaper and durable solution—use plastic in construction of roads. "Using one part of plastic for every nine parts of bitumen results in smoother and better roads. It will also save Rs 60,000 per km of road constructed. We have collected low-density plastic waste, such as carry bags and biscuit wrappers," said Vignesh Pai, a class IX student. The team has got BMC's permission to use the material on a 50m stretch at Thakur Village. "After monsoon, we will ask the BMC to compare their road with ours," said Saurav Hiremath. The third team member is Andriya Tiwary.

These six projects from the city are among the 25 shortlisted from across the country for IndiaFirst's Happy India national