

Project New Boundaries for Youth (ProjectNBYOUTH) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and a youth driven leadership initiative aiming to spread awareness and inspire youth about local health, education, and environmental issues in their communities so that they can participate and work to bring about positive changes towards a sustainable future for their communities.

The Organization: I founded ProjectNBYOUTH in 2015 in the summer after my sophomore year. I am currently a junior at MICDS (Mary Institute and Saint Louis Country Day School) in St. Louis. My academic interests are mostly focused on STEM disciplines (Science, Engineering, Technology and Math), with emphasis on health care, global health, and youth leadership initiatives in community awareness projects, both locally and internationally. I have pursued my passion for community service internationally since 2013 in countries like India and Peru. When I volunteered at rural clinics in India in July 2013, I saw first-hand the paucity of emergency medical services, poor sanitation, and inadequate community awareness. These factors inspired me to work towards these causes and the idea of ProjectNBYOUTH was born. In June 2015, I attended a leadership Institute for Global development at Brown University in Providence, where my ideas about ProjectNBYOUTH received positive responses from both my faculty mentor at Brown and fellow attendees. I am also fortunate to have the support of excellent mentors in Saint Louis – Dr. Jacaranda van Rheenen from Washington University in Saint Louis, Dr. Chaya Gopalan from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, and Dr. Tanya Roth, faculty at MICDS, who have guided and encouraged me in every step of the way.

The Issue: Waste management is a key component in environmental protection and sustainability. Improper waste management, which is a growing problem globally, has an enormous impact on health, safety, local economy, society, and the global environment. In urban cities like Bengaluru, India, the waste management crisis is reaching a critical point. Bengaluru, a city of 10 million, produces about 4000 tons of waste every day. Nearly a fourth of this is plastic waste. Specialists predict that if only enough public awareness and measures can be generated, total waste in the city can be capped to less than 25 percent of the current quantity. Youth in Bangalore can be empowered to practice the 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) and spread the word to their communities.

2015 Event: Youth and waste management in India-Individual students or teams of 2 to 3 students (from grades 8 OR 9 OR 10) had to study the topic of hazards of improper waste disposal on the environment (with facts related to local problems) and possible interventions, then write a short essay. Students were also expected to implement a small project within their school or local community such as setting up an environmental club at their school or distributing brochures to local households about the topic to raise awareness in the general public, or discuss the 3Rs and methods to implement them in their school assembly or in other nearby smaller schools. Proof of action project included a second write-up (about the project) and 5 to 10 action pictures. Submission were graded based on a rubric provided to students.

The process: I am the recipient of the 2015 Keds Brave life grant award that has helped kick start the youth sanitation awareness project in Bangalore. I had no prior experience whatsoever about establishing an organization. My summer of 2015 was consumed by writing emails seeking mentors, drawing templates of the competition details for my pilot project in Bangalore, many trial and error attempts in establishing a website, hundreds of phone calls and emails trying to contact schools in Bangalore, and trying to understand the variation in infra structure and effective communication to reach the students and teachers inviting them to participate in the competition. At times the process seemed almost impossible to execute and so many times I doubted how effectively if at all, I could conduct this event in a different country without my physical presence there. It was countless hours of work that finally paid off with about 20 teams from various schools registering for the competition. However, the real fruition of the project was evident in the quality of essays and action projects submitted by the participants.

The submissions: It was exciting to see well researched essays by high school kids in Bangalore with creative and practical approaches to the garbage disposal crisis and waste management in Bangalore. Student teams' projects ranged from waste management workshops and installation of composters in schools to production of creative YouTube educational documentaries that were shown in school assemblies. Many teams reached out to local smaller schools to educate students about the issues of sustainability, while some teams even held awareness campaigns and rallies in the communities, and others filed complaints to the local municipality and arranged for streets to be cleaned up. Some groups of students even went door to door to hundreds of households and educated the public about the issue on hand. The interest of the students and the enthusiasm to bring about a change was clearly evident in their projects.

The awards ceremony: The winning top four schools were announced on our website, received prizes in the form of award certificates and cash prizes to winning students and plaques to winning schools. All participants received a certificate commending their participation. It was held in Bangalore on 1-6-2016. The administration at KMV Red Hills high school (the school which had the highest number of participants) was kind enough to allow us to hold the award ceremony at their school auditorium. We were also able to contact some local community leaders like a Member of the State Legislative Assembly to be one of the chief guests. Dr. Gopalan was in India at that time and was at the event to distribute the prizes. She was excited to see the enthusiasm in the students to take a proactive step in this issue and the positive response from the community to ProjectNB YOUTH for conducting the event that could be a small step towards solving this giant problem of waste management crisis around the world.

Next steps: I want to conduct this annual competition in Bangalore with increasing student participation each year. I hope to spread this event to other cities in India and eventually to other countries and create a domino effect of constructive thinking and action in youth about their issues. I am inspired to promote youth driven community projects with the conviction that my work will impact the global community. Peer-influenced projects gain maximum momentum, especially in the youth. I value this opportunity as a platform to promote socially responsible leadership in youth across the world. I learned a lot about the global issues of environmental sanitation and sustainability through this process, but more than that I learned that I am able to sustain in face of challenges to pursue a cause that I believe in.



Nidhi Bhaskar

Website: www.projectnbyouth.com

YouTube video of waste management crisis in Bangalore (Action Project of the second prize winners): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VlJaHhI95x8&feature=em-share_video_user

Some Action Project Pictures:

<p>Workshop on Waste Management</p>  		<p>After the brochure was ready, we took our first step of educating our school mates. Our next step was to go door to door campaigning, educating as many people as possible about segregating waste at source.</p>
<p>Workshop on Waste Management</p>  <p>Aditya Shankar of class VI C, under the guidance of Mrs. Pushpa Varadarajan conducted workshop on 4th November 2015 Waste Management as part SWATCH BHARATH ABHIYAN. Workshop included PPT with a clear DO's & DONT's plus how to convert waste into wealth. The Highlight of the workshop was the Model (Prototype) of a machine which could convert Wet Waste into Electricity</p>		<p>Many people responded positively as they felt that they could give back to society.</p>
 		<p>As part of our project, Chirag (centre) also made arrangements for us to engage people living in 'Wilson Vintage' an apartment complex consisting of 120 apartments, where his cousin Pooja (facing us) also lives. We interacted with a few people. We received a mixed response. Some were sceptical, some cynical but the children in the age group of 10 to 12 were enthusiastic.</p> 
 		<p>We first explained the importance of waste segregation.....</p> <p>Then we reinforced those concepts by playing a game. It was interesting for the kids as well as for the elders as they chose appropriate bins to put the articles in.</p>  

Campaign against using plastic carry bags



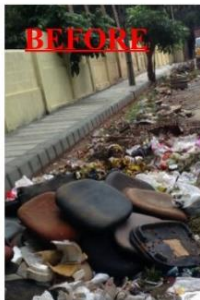
Campaign against using plastic carry bags

Environment club members of Army Public School K. Kamaraja Road, Bengaluru, headed by **Mrs. Pushpa Varadarajan** conducted **Awareness campaign & took out a rally** at Kamaraja Road, Russel Market Shivajinagar, & Army family quarters on 6th November 2015. Cotton & Paper bags were distributed public to spread awareness on the ill effects of using plastic carry bags. General public as well as vendors appreciated the work & assured to reduce use of plastic carry bags.





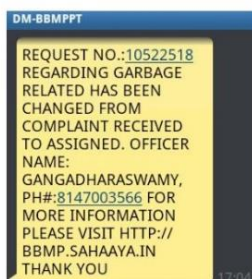
We did it by clearing a garbage dump



Our visit to a government school to spread awareness among kids!!!



**COMPLAINT NUMBER AND
BBMP VEHICLE**



We interacted with them by showing them a video....we explained the ways of segregating waste.....we also discussed the “reduce-reuse-recycle” with them....



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