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Thinking global, acting local to bring change

Group of young professionals is attempting to shape Ahmedabad, one project at a time

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You don't always need a cape and a costume to change your city. A group of youngsters have come together to form the local chapter of the World Economic Forum (WEF)-supported Global Shapers. Like its international counterparts, this chapter is also made up of change-makers between the ages of 20 and 30 from various fields.

"We're attempting to put our varied skills together to bring change in the city. We try to find ideas that can be replicated on a global level," says Kanan Dhru, who curates the group that's internally called "the Shapers".

The 13-member team is currently focused on four projects. The first is Citizen Superheroes, a mobile app that aims to bring transparency to government processes. Since Nirmit Parikh — who designed the app — recently moved to the US, vice-curator Dhaval Shah explains how it works. "It app allows citizens to inform the authorities of a problem with just a text message. It will also be an efficient management tool, since it allows authorities to keep track of complaints and action taken," he said. The group recently met Municipal Commissioner Gurusprasad Mohapatra to discuss the app.

The second is Kanan's *Law for the Lay*, a children's handbook on basic laws and rights. "We're using simple cartoons about a boy who explores his surroundings, including a circus next



SHARAD KUMAR

(Clockwise from top) Kanan, Jatin, Manish, Ritam, Wricha, Dhaval and Prakshal form Global Shapers, Ahmedabad

WHO ARE THE SHAPERS?

Global Shapers are localised hubs of highly-motivated youngsters who are deemed to have exceptional potential and a commitment to bettering their communities. WEF supports these hubs by providing links between local hubs at both the national and international level, and encouraging Shapers to participate in WEF events.

door, and understands different laws and rights," she says.

Nirmeet Kacheria is leading Kalabhan, an art appreciation initiative. "There is a lot of art in society but people don't have the capacity to understand it. Engineering and law students, for example, have no exposure to art," he says, adding, "Art appreciation helps you pay attention to detail and become more tolerant as you learn others' perspectives." The group

has planned sculpture and performing arts workshops from July.

With Pen Pals, the group aims to use non-refillable plastic pens to create awareness. Wricha Johri and Prakshal Mehta are leading the project. They say, "We will be creating utility products with the pens using as little energy as possible. These will not be pieces of art but usable products." The group held an exhibition of these utility items on June 5.