

BANGALORE MIRROR

ON SUNDAY



(From Left) Vridhi V, Udit G, Khushi Jagadeesh, Aprameya, Dhruv Shivakumar and Hans Sakala are some of the class six students who are studying Essentials of becoming a Budding Entrepreneur

ELECTIVE SUBJECT

At Indus International School, 20 per cent of the students have opted for Enterprise, an elective which gives them hands-on experience about the business world. From designing a business plan to executing it, and doing a trial test for six weeks, the students are tested in various areas. "Many of the students come from business families, and are keen to take up either business studies or enterprise," she says. While they started Enterprise for students between class 9 and 12 three years ago, the plan is to include it for grade 8 soon.

For those students not taking it up as an elective, the school offers an Entrepreneurship club. The 25 hour club, which meets once a week, usually has students who haven't opted for enterprise or business studies. As part of it, they have worked with the gardener to understand the process of compost, and tending to the garden. "They sold the produce to visiting parents and teachers and the amount collected was given to the betterment of the community school," says Preeti G Prabhu, head of middle school.

TYCOONS in the making

These 11 year olds are being trained in business skills to help them turn successful entrepreneurs

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They are eleven-year-olds who are being trained – systematically – to be job creators of the future, in this city of 4000 start-ups and which has ten new ventures coming up every month. Investment, finance, budgeting, loans...this is the commonly used parlance among class six students of Jain Heritage School, which has introduced Essentials of becoming a Budding Entrepreneur, a mandatory course for class 6, 7 and 8, and has

a total of 180 students gearing up to become entrepreneurs in the not so distant future.

Although barely able to pronounce the quadrisyllabic 'entrepreneur' the students gave some teeny-tiny advice to this reporter on entrepreneurship: "to run a successful business, be assertive, not aggressive"; "learn to adapt in a group"; "communicate effectively".

Eleven-year-old Hans Sakala has already charted out his future plans. "I want to open a continental restaurant," he says confidently. But he is more than his talk. He has begun laying the foundation on which he'd build his business. Two weeks ago, he began "individual cooking lessons" at Hojo in Elements Mall to pick up the basics in continental cuisine. "The chef is training me in preparing dishes like grilled fish, poached fish, grilled vegetables," says a confident Sakala. "And through this course in class, I'm getting to know the business aspects."

During their first lesson on Friday (August 7), each of the students had to elaborate on their positive qualities, which would help them in their business. Sakala, who boasts of being "helpful and responsible" says that in

and his team. Their preliminary lessons also included games which involved finding an object, even as contradictory instructions are being given). "It was to tell us the importance of taking the right decision," says Dhruv Shivakumar, another class six student. Looking at himself as a CEO of a company, Shivakumar, who emphasises the importance of discipline and loyalty in a business says, "I cannot get away by not paying my employees. And at the same time, I need to be able to acknowledge in case I make a mistake. This is important for the growth of a company."

Some students like Khushi Jagadeesh and Vridhi V are still unsure if they are going to be starting a venture of their own. But they say: "We are learning topics like income, banking, investment and taxes – all of which can be put to use even in a science lab," Vridhi says.

The module is divided into three sections spread over three years where the tweens and teens will learn about: Save and spend; Your money will rule your life!; Budgeting; Burning money!; Income: Pay Me!, Banking services: Road Trip!, Loan & Interest: Breathing without Air!, Taxes: Tax Me!, Investment: Pay me while I sleep!, Insurance: Don't forget the parachute; E-Retailing, Social media & Cyber Bullying, Consumer Rights (for class 7); Human Resource Management, Recruitment & Selection, Salary & Appraisal (for class 8).

Archana Vishwanath, the principal of the school says: "We want the students to be job creators. And the course is to instill confidence in them." But she does admit that bringing down the course work to middle school level was a challenge. Working with a team from JGI, they were able to blend in a program of finance, marketing and human resources to "open minds of students to the joy of entrepreneurship" at a time in their lives when they are full of imagination.

The students will learn to brainstorm, create a product, make a business plan, learn about selling products, trading et al. "These methods, we hope will lead to self-awareness, where the students interested in setting up a start-up will be able to identify their goals and draw on their experiences," Vishwanath says.

Initially, Vishwanath did wonder how the students would react to the program. But after the first session the students had just an important question for her: When will the next class begin?

a restaurant set-up, these qualities are essential to cater to the fine needs of customers. "You have to know what's happening in every sphere and be quick in helping out," he says.

The "value added program", which is held every Friday is conducted by B Deepak Kumar (founder & CEO of Stock Market Institute, a JGI Venture),