

The lockdown has been hard on everyone, but 16-year-old **Vanika Sangtani** realised that it brought with it a particularly new challenge. Staying at home with parents for hours together resulted in more misunderstanding and conflicts. When she spoke to her peers, she found out that this was a common problem. They loved their families, but there was this huge gap and her friends felt that their parents were not understanding them.

Vanika wanted to understand what the problem was. So she observed the behaviour and started researching it. She found out that the primary issue was that a lot of the parents were not exposed to the process of learning and understanding, like the kids were. She explains, "We go to schools and colleges and we are constantly learning with our peers and that's why we're being more accepting. A lot of our parents didn't have that. That's why there's a huge gap. Also, they find it difficult to adapt to the modern world. For



# WHERE AGE IS JUST A NUMBER

Vanika Sangtani speaks to *Blessy Mathew Prasad* about the AgEd team and how they are conducting workshops for senior citizens on relevant topics

instance, my grandmother had to constantly depend on me or my brother to use any gadget."

Vanika felt that this issue could be resolved if the elders had a platform where they could sit with people their age and learn. "A lot of people that age live a very routine and mundane life. That is why a lot of them become disinterested and frustrated. So I wanted to give them mo-

tive to live happily every day. That's how we started AgEd," she says.

AgEd is a digital school where they have separate classes for mothers and grandmothers. They have around 100 mothers and 35 grandmothers across the globe. The sessions are conducted on Zoom. Vanika explains, "If you want your mother to be a part of the AgEd community, you can enrol her into the induction workshop which is a seven-day workshop where we touch upon different topics, but basically highlight the need to learn. We talk to them about self-love, and use games and other activities to make them feel comfortable."

Vanika wants one message to resonate through her work. The fact that everyone has a talent and if they want to change the world, they need to use that. "Changemaking is as easy as following your heart and sharing it for the greater good," Vanika concludes. Vanika is one among 19 teenagers across the country who were selected as part of the Ashoka Young Changemakers initiative.



## Going by the Constitution

According to Article 41 of the Constitution of India, it is important to secure the rights of senior citizens to employment, education and public assistance



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One of the most beautiful moments with my mother was when I did a session on kindness and gratitude  
Vanika Sangtani

## Some light on pension

Atal Pension Yojana, National Pension System, Pradhana Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana, Varishtha Pension Bima Yojana are some of the pension programmes for senior citizens in India