

Hindustan Unilever takes vocational training route

BS REPORTER
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Vimala Chatta, a Class-II dropout, earns Rs 3,000 a month as a tailor with Alok Industries. And, Deepak Pargi has started his own studio at Surangi and his monthly income is Rs 4,500.

Chatta and Pargi are among 400 beneficiaries of vocational training courses offered at iLEAD centres set up by Hindustan Unilever (HUL) in partnership with Aide et Action, a non-government organisation, at 35 villages in Dadra & Nagar Haveli.

The centres, which will train 1,080 youths in three years covering 72 villages of Silvassa, offers courses in tailoring, basic computers, electrical wiring, photoshop etc. The project is part of HUL's new initiative called Project Samruddhi to create sustainable villages in Dadra & Nagar Haveli. The project is aimed at community uplift through its social, economic and environment-related activities in partnership with leading NGOs Aide et Action and Vanarai, according to a HUL press release issued here today.

As of now, 60 per cent of the trained students have been suc-



The shirt was made by iLead students under Project Samruddhi. It is being sent as a competing entry to the Limca Book of Records as the largest shirt made in India

cessfully placed in different organisations like Hindalco, Biopac, Powerica, Alok Industries, ITW, Sterling, Bhilosa, Reliance Global, etc, in and around Silvassa.

In order to gain entry into the Limca Book of World

Records, the students have now come together to stitch the largest shirt of India which measures 55 feet in height and 38 feet in width. The shirt, funded by HUL, was unveiled today.

Pankaj Gupta, general operations manager, HUL, said

Project Samruddhi was an excellent example of how partnerships could be leveraged in shaping the sustainability agenda. "We will continue to scale up the programme in line with our belief of 'Doing Well by Doing Good'," he said.

Apart from capability building, HUL, in association with Vanarai, has embarked on a long-term project of water harvesting, which is aimed at increasing water availability in the area.

The community has so far built 157 Vanarai bunds since 2003, when the project was started. This enabled the community to sow a second crop of vegetables, gram and wheat, thereby increasing their annual income by Rs 35,000-40,000.

The highlight of this programme is that due to improved availability of water, farmers are able to grow second crops consisting of wheat, pulses, and seasonal vegetables. Continuous contour trenches reduce the velocity of water and stop soil erosion, increasing moisture-holding capacity of soil, its fertility, as well as supporting water percolation and ground water recharge. Till date, 14 wells and 17 bore wells have been recharged.