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City designer selected for INDEX award

Staff Reporter

- *Poonam Bir Kasturi is the winner*
 - *It focusses on `design to improve life`*
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Bangalore: Bangalore-based designer and educationist Poonam Bir Kasturi now has the distinction of being the first Indian to be nominated for the coveted international INDEX award, which focusses on "design to improve life".

The cost-effective, do-it-yourself kitchen-waste terracotta composter that Ms. Poonam has designed and irreverently named "Daily Dump", has made it to the final list of nominations of the INDEX award, considered one of the biggest international design honours.

Daily Dump now competes with an eclectic group of nominees that range from an Antarctic research station with low environmental impact (United Kingdom) to a Bluetooth hands-free phone to prevent cell-phone related car accidents (China) and computerised clothing for the visually impaired (Finland).

Ms. Poonam says she was prompted to design the composter when she realised that all her well-intentioned attempts to help Bangalore's urban environment came to naught. The kitchen waste that she meticulously segregated from the dry waste such as paper, she found, only ended up mixed together in the municipality truck or piled up at street corners.

This was when she decided to deploy her design skills to create a product that could deal with the problem of garbage "at source". That is, a product that could help families manage their own household waste, in their own the home.

And "Daily Dump", a product of the combined skills of Ms. Poonam and the potter communities she has worked with over the last three years, has caught on in Bangalore with 500 terracotta pots being sold.

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