

Volunteer & Mentor – Signal Shala, Thane (2019–24)

At Signal Shala, India's first school for children of pavement dwellers and street vendors, I taught students from vernacular and under-resourced backgrounds subjects that blended creativity with technology. Beginning as part of my robotics outreach, I introduced them to CAD design, Python programming, Scratch, and Tinkercad, breaking down complex concepts into simple, playful lessons.

Over time, I groomed a team of students who went on to participate in the **First Tech Challenge**, a national-level robotics competition, where they showcased their designs and coding on par with peers from far more privileged schools. Beyond technical training, I focused on making every student feel included—translating lessons into Marathi, using hands-on analogies, and ensuring that no one was left behind during team projects.

My association with Signal Shala grew deeper when I piloted a **cognitive assessment tool** tailored for children with limited literacy. Designed as a game-like experience, it allowed us to map strengths and identify areas for growth without relying on language-based tests. The insights guided vocational pathways in carpentry and sewing for several students, linking education with opportunity.

Signal Shala has been more than a volunteering space—it has been a place where I learned how empathy and innovation intersect. Watching students who once sold objects at traffic signals confidently explain their projects on a robotics stage reinforced my belief that access, not ability, defines potential.



