MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

October, 2026

October 2026: Application Open for SSTx Circle of Kindness- Health Innovation Lab

WHAT'S INSIDE THIS EDITION

— **School for Social Transformation (SST)** Edition 11: Dates Finalised
— **Ignite @ Kerala Social Enterprise Conclave**
— **Confirmation of UNCCD Accreditation and Observer status**
— **Changemaker Residency at Changemakers Ashram**
— **5 Ways to Change Systems: Lessons for Social Entrepreneurs**
— **Founder's note, fundraiser update & an impact story**
—**Ignite @ Kerala Social Impact Collective**
— **SSTx Circle of Kindness: Application Open**

HIGHLIGHT

HIGHLIGHT OF THE MONTH

Felicitated by Member of Parliament

Our Co-founder, Sulfeekar Ali, who leads the Centre for Youth Impact and Training (CYIT), was recognised for his contribution as a facilitator at a scholarship distribution event and training programme in Mavoor, Kozhikode organized by the Non-profit collective Dyuthi.

He also engaged Gen Z participants and teenagers through sessions on socio-emotional learning and becoming active, contributing citizens.

Member of parliament Shafi parambil felicitating Sulfeeker ali

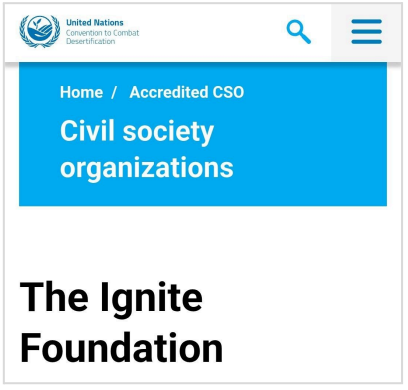
UNCCD ACCREDITATION

Accreditation confirmed for UNCCD Observer status

Happy to share that, following the participation of our co-founders Jaseel and Ijas at COP17 of the United Nations, the UNCCD has granted accredited observer status to The Ignite Foundation.

As an accredited observer, we are now in a position to send more youth to Conference of Parties (COPs)

https://www.unccd.int/cso/ignite-foundation



COMING UP NEXT MONTH

— Application Form of 11th Edition of SST
— Learning Camp and AI+ camp by Ignite Alumni
— SSTx Circle of Kindness Health Innovation Lab
— Social Work Students camp at changemakers Ashram
— Changemaker Residency at Changemakers Ashram

UPDATES FROM US

A round-up of what happened this month across programs, the Changemakers Ashram, and partnerships.

PROGRAMS

SST 11th Edition In December 2026

*The 11th edition of the **School for Social Transformation (SST)** will take place in December 2026, with applications opening in the first week of November.*

*Those interested in participating can now fill out the **Expression of Interest (EOI) form** to receive updates and prepare for the application process.*

Here is the interest form: https://forms.gle/avyaCk6VvrrDGzeaA

CSIE

Masterclass on Social Entrepreneurship

Through the Centre for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CSIE) at The Ignite Foundation, we invite universities, colleges, and non-profit organisations to host a masterclass on Social Entrepreneurship.

*Our previous sessions have been conducted at institutions including NIT Calicut, IIM Calicut as part of ICA-AP hackathon, and Digital University Kerala. Interested in hosting a session at your institution? Write to **jaseelck@theigniteindia.com** to express your interest.*

RESIDENCY

Inviting interest: Changemaker Residency

Changemakers and young people working on social impact projects can now explore a residency at Changemakers Ashram to develop their ideas and plans into actionable steps. .

Interested? Write to **naji@theigniteindia.com** to express your interest.

ALUMNI PROJECTS

SUPPORTED BY SST COMMUNITY ACTION SEED FUND AND MENTORSHIP

A Step towards cleaner community

On 12 October, Interns and Changemaker Residents at Changemakers Ashram organised a community-led environmental restoration activity in collaboration with Chakkittappara Grama Panchayat, led by Jaffar and Mufasir. The initiative was inaugurated by ward Member Bindu Balakrishnan, with former Perambra Block Panchayat member Girija encouraging youth participation. The Ward Member assured support for installing waste bins and awareness boards at the site. This activity is part of an ongoing youth-led effort to promote cleanliness and community participation in Chakkittappara.

Interns cleaning a local water source in Chakkittappara with the support of the Local Self-Government.

INSIGHTS

FROM THE TEAM

5 Ways to Change Systems: Lessons for Social Entrepreneurs

Sometimes, social problems persist despite our best efforts to solve them. An organisation may provide educational support to children, but poverty, transport costs and a lack of teachers continue to affect their learning. Addressing these challenges requires looking beyond immediate needs to the systems that produce them.

Drawing on Donella H. Meadows' *Leverage Points: Places to Intervene in a System* (1999), here are five approaches social entrepreneurs can explore.

1. Change the Information Flow: Share information that helps people make better decisions. For example, providing farmers with market prices can improve their bargaining power.

2. Change the Rules: Challenge policies, procedures or practices that create barriers. Working with local authorities to improve market access for small producers can benefit more than one enterprise.

3. Change the Goal: Shift the outcomes a system prioritises. For instance, move from measuring waste collected to reducing waste generation and promoting reuse.

4. Change the Mindset: Question assumptions that sustain existing problems. Rural entrepreneurship initiatives can challenge the belief that young people must leave their communities to build meaningful careers.

5. Enable Self-Organisation: Help people organise and develop their own solutions. Supporting farmers to establish cooperatives can strengthen collective bargaining, resource sharing and decision-making.

These approaches are interconnected, not separate steps. For social entrepreneurs, the starting point is to understand what keeps a problem recurring and identify where changing the system could create lasting impact.

Read the complete article: 5 Ways to Change Systems: Lessons for Social Entrepreneurs

— Jaseel C K, Co-Founder, The Ignite Foundation

OPINION

GUEST / FOUNDER PERSPECTIVE

Social Work: Where Compassion Meets Professional Practice

Social workers are often seen as people who help others out of kindness. Helping a neighbour in distress is an act of care, and it does not require a social work qualification.

But when we address complex social problems, work with vulnerable communities or support people through institutions, good intentions alone are not enough. Mental health, child protection, community development and social justice require more than compassion. They require professional knowledge, ethical judgement, appropriate methods and an understanding of the systems that shape people's lives.

Social work brings these together, with its core principles and values of human dignity, social justice, self-determination and respect for diversity.

1. Compassion with Professional Knowledge: Empathy is essential, but social workers also need knowledge of human behaviour, social environments and evidence-informed practice to respond appropriately.

2. Help with Dignity: Professional social work supports people to exercise their agency rather than treating them as passive recipients of help.

3. Individual Support with Systemic Understanding: A person's difficulties may be connected to poverty, discrimination, family dynamics or institutional barriers. Social workers consider both individual circumstances and wider social conditions.

4. Care with Ethical Responsibility: Confidentiality, informed consent, professional boundaries and accountability help ensure that support does not unintentionally cause harm.

5. Personal Commitment with Collective Change: Social work goes beyond helping individuals navigate difficulties. Social work may begin with the heart, but professional practice requires knowledge, skills, ethics and accountability.

Compassion makes us care; professional social work helps us respond responsibly and work towards lasting social change.

— Asif Ali, Co-Founder, The Ignite Foundation

Testimonials

Testimonial from Janisha, participant of of Koodanoridam, Age with Dignity

ജീവിതത്തിൽ ഭയങ്കര ബിസി ആയി ഇങ്ങനെ ഓടിക്കൊണ്ടിരിക്കാണ്. രാവിലെ 4 മണിക്ക് തുടങ്ങുന്ന ഓട്ടം തീരുന്നത് രാത്രി 12 മണിക്ക് ആണ്.

അതിന്ടെ ഇടയിൽ ഇവിടെ വന്നു ഇങ്ങനെ ഇരിക്കാനും മനസ്സ് തുറക്കാനും, ചിരിക്കാനും, ഉള്ളിൽ ഉള്ളതൊക്കെ ഒന്ന് സംസാരിക്കാനും പറ്റുന്നത് വലിയ സന്തോഷവും ഭാഗ്യവുമാണ് - ജനിഷ ചേച്ചി

(Life has become so busy, running around like this all the time. The rush that starts at 4 in the morning only comes to an end at midnight. In between all this, being able to come here, sit like this, open my heart, laugh, and talk about everything that is within me is such a joy and a blessing.)

FUNDRAISER

Support Composting at Changemakers Ashram

As part of our efforts to make Changemakers Ashram a waste-free space and gradually move towards our wider goal of making it carbon neutral, we are planning to set up a **composting system at the Changemakers Ashram.**

With interns, volunteers and young changemakers regularly staying at the Ashram, managing the waste we generate responsibly is an important part of practising sustainable living. The composting facility will help us process biodegradable waste generated in the kitchen and on the campus, turning it into useful compost for our farming and gardening activities.

We invite individuals, institutions and well-wishers to support us in setting up this composting facility and help us move one step closer to a waste-free and carbon-neutral Changemakers Ashram. **You can send your contributions through GPay/PhonePe to or card at https://razorpay.me/@theignitefoundation**

TQRCG

SCAN TO GIVE

Event spotlight

Have an idea to improve health and wellbeing in your community? HEALTHACON brings young problem solvers together to understand real health challenges and turn ideas into practical solutions.

Fully Funded Hackathon with up to ₹2.5 lakh seed funding for implementation. Priority application deadline: 5 November 2026, 11:59 PM IST

Apply: https://healthacon.com/#apply

Are you an MSW student looking to learn beyond your classroom and connect with fellow social work students?

Join our Three-Day Social Work Students Camp this December at Changemakers Ashram.

Explore social work practice through community engagement, practical counselling workshops, fellowship, self-reflection and understanding your role as a social worker.

For MSW students. To know more and register, call +91 9539246962.

Next Elderly Gathering | 8 November 2026

The next community gathering for Elderly at Changemakers Ashram is happening on 8 November 2026.

Interested in volunteering, partnering, facilitating activities, or connecting with the initiative? Get in touch at +91 80757 05520.

IMPACT STORY

IMPACT

SUPPORTED BY SST COMMUNITY ACTION SEED FUND AND MENTORSHIP

Connecting Children with Nature Through Birds: Anisha's Biodiversity Education Initiative

Anisha is an alumna of the 9th edition of the School for Social Transformation (SST 9.0), held in 2026. As part of her SST journey, she developed *Bridging the Gap Between Students and Biodiversity*, an initiative to introduce students in Alagappanagar Grama Panchayat, Thrissur, to local biodiversity and encourage their interest in nature and conservation.

As part of the initiative, Anisha conducted two biodiversity education sessions for students, using educational games and a nature walk to introduce them to local birds and plants. Through observation, interaction and simple biodiversity documentation activities, children had an opportunity to explore and learn about the natural environment around them.

Beyond working with children, Anisha also facilitated a session on the environment and birds for people aged 60 and above at Changemakers Ashram. This extended the initiative's focus on environmental awareness across different age groups.

I feel children can connect with the environment through the beauty of birds, their colours and their sounds. It is also a way to help them move beyond digital devices and mobile phones and reconnect with nature.

-Anisha

The initiative highlighted the importance of experiential learning in environmental education. Rather than limiting learning to classroom-based information, activities such as nature walks, bird observation and educational games offer opportunities for people to experience biodiversity directly and develop a personal connection with nature.

Anisha plans to continue conducting similar sessions for children, helping them recognise the biodiversity around them and build an interest in environmental conservation from an early age.

Through her SST project, she has taken a step towards making environmental education more accessible, engaging and rooted in everyday experiences.

GALLERY

Chakkittappara Grama Panchayat member and the Panchayat Health Inspector visited Changemakers Ashram. Changemaker residents shared impact stories of The Ignite Foundation's alumni and introduced them to the work being carried out by the organisation.

Our Co-founder Ijas Hakkim, at the District Planning Commission meeting of the Government of Kerala in Kollam. He emphasising the need to create spaces for young people to engage with social issues and contribute to addressing local challenges.

A knowledge-building session on the Right to Information (RTI) Act and civic engagement, led by Jaffar, an alumnus of the School for Social Transformation (SST), at Changemakers Ashram.

The Centre for Youth Impact and Training (CYIT) reached more than 10 colleges in October through its training programmes, focusing on emotional well-being and the theme 'From Self to Society'

Ijas Hakkim represented The Ignite Foundation at the first meeting of the Kerala Social Impact Collective, an initiative to envision Kerala's future and create a shared space for social impact organisations across the state.

Social work interns from colleges across Kerala sorting books at the Changemakers Ashram library and preparing a catalogue of newly added books.

The Ignite foundation at Social enterprise conclave by ksum, govt of kerala

Written by ijas hakkim, co-founder, The ignite foundation

Twelve of the 200 participants at the Social Entrepreneurship Conclave 2026 were alumni of The Ignite Foundation. For us, this was a proud moment.

It was more than a number. It was a reflection of the work we have been doing over the years to strengthen Kerala's social entrepreneurship ecosystem by identifying, nurturing and supporting young changemakers. Seeing our alumni participate in a state-level platform dedicated to social entrepreneurship was a reminder of how far this journey has come.

The Social Entrepreneurship Conclave, organised by the Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM), Government of Kerala, on 30 September 2026 at Hyatt Regency, Thiruvananthapuram, brought together social entrepreneurs, startups, investors, government representatives, academia, NGOs and ecosystem partners. The conclave aimed to strengthen Kerala's social entrepreneurship ecosystem through collaboration, knowledge exchange, mentorship, market access and partnerships.

Programmes such as the School for Social Transformation (SST), Changemakers Ashram and the Winter School on Social Entrepreneurship have been central to The Ignite Foundations efforts to introduce young people to social challenges, encourage community-led solutions and support them in taking their ideas forward. The presence of 12 alumni at the conclave reflects the growing community of changemakers emerging from these initiatives.

Building the ecosystem, not just individual enterprises.

We believe that strengthening social entrepreneurship requires more than supporting individual entrepreneurs. It requires learning opportunities, mentorship, peer networks, institutional support and spaces where people can connect and collaborate. This understanding has shaped our work at The Ignite Foundation and the initiatives we have developed over the years.

Through the Centre for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CSIE), we have been working towards creating a dedicated space for learning, research, collaboration and ecosystem engagement around social innovation and entrepreneurship. Our participation in the conclave was also an opportunity to bring this work into a wider conversation and connect with other actors working towards similar goals.

There is still much to be done. Young social entrepreneurs need accessible incubation, patient capital, relevant mentorship, market linkages and sustained ecosystem support. Organisations working at the grassroots level also need to be recognised as important contributors to this ecosystem.

We are proud to see the young people we have worked with become part of Kerala's growing social entrepreneurship movement. Let's keep building. Let's keep igniting change.

About us

The Ignite Foundation is a non-profit organisation based in Kerala, India, that equips young people to become active citizens and community problem solvers. We work with aspiring social leaders, non-profit founders, and social entrepreneurs in the early stages of their journey, helping them understand local challenges, develop practical solutions, and build initiatives that respond to social and environmental issues.

Our flagship programme, the School for Social Transformation (SST), is a six-month experiential leadership programme that combines online learning, a ten-day residential immersion, mentorship, and changemaker incubation. Participants explore their own values and leadership, engage directly with communities, identify local challenges, and develop initiatives that they can implement with continued guidance and peer support.

Another vertical, the Centre for Youth Impact and Training, focuses on education for social change by promoting active citizenship, social responsibility, and youth participation through workshops and training programmes for schools, colleges, civil society organisations, and institutions.

At the centre of this ecosystem is Changemakers Ashram, located in Kozhikode, Kerala. The Ashram serves as our residential learning and incubation space, where programmes, learning camps, and community collaborations take place. It is envisioned as a space for experimentation in grassroots innovation, enabling young people to work alongside communities, test ideas, and develop responses to local social and environmental challenges.

The Ignite Foundation works with individuals at the beginning of their leadership journey, before they establish organisations or social enterprises. Rather than providing long-term incubation for established ventures, we focus on helping emerging changemakers build the knowledge, confidence, networks, and practical experience needed to take the first steps towards creating lasting change in their communities.

The Centre for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CSIE) is an initiative of The Ignite Foundation focused on strengthening the social entrepreneurship ecosystem. Conceptualised as a Social Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Accelerator at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) in 2024, the Centre is currently in its early stage of development. CSIE brings together aspiring social entrepreneurs, practitioners, educators, researchers, and ecosystem stakeholders through education, research, innovation, and ecosystem development. The Centre currently hosts the Winter School on Social Entrepreneurship, the Design Thinking Fellowship for Social Change, and the Social Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub, an online platform that curates learning resources and knowledge on social entrepreneurship. https://csie.theigniteindia.com

Get Engaged

Volunteer
Join our volunteer community at **Changemakers Ashram, Kozhikode**.
Write to: **teamigniteindia@gmail.com**

Facilitate
Interested in facilitating an upcoming **Social Work Student Camp**?
Contact: Thufail, +919539246962

Donate
Support a scholarship, fellowship, or seed grant for emerging changemakers.
Write to: **ijasporedom@gmail.com**

Partner
Bring **School for Social Transformation (SST)** or **SSTx** to your campus, institution, or community.
Write to: **call2naji@gmail.com**