MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

August, 2026

August 2026: The Ignite Foundation at United Nations COP 17

WHAT'S INSIDE THIS EDITION

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— **5 Reasons Why Social Entrepreneur Well-being Matters**

HIGHLIGHT

HIGHLIGHT OF THE MONTH

At Conference of Parties (COP) 17

The Ignite Foundation was part of the civil society organisations (CSOs) representing India at the United Nations COP17, held in Mongolia. Our co-founders, Ijas H. and Jaseel CK, participated in civil society organisation meetings, plenary sessions, and discussions involving intergovernmental and civil society actors during the COP.

We were the only CSO from Kerala and one of the youngest CSOs from across the globe to be part of COP17. The participation was followed by receiving the accreditation status from UNCCD for The Ignite Foundation early 2026.

SOCIAL EXPERIMENTS @ CHANGEMAKERS ASHRAM

Community Connect

A series of community engagement activities are happening around Changemakers Ashram in Chakkittappara, with further activities currently being planned and continued. These include community space beautification, children's camps, gathering spaces for older people, intergenerational conversation spaces, farming experiments as part of environmental and climate engagement, land restoration, and volunteering activities.

COMING UP NEXT MONTH

— Updates from Social Impact Collective- a cooperative of Changemakers from our Alumni network
— Learning Camp and AI+ camp by Ignite Alumni
— Pragya Rise Experiential learning camp at Changemakers Ashram
— Updates of Winter School on Social Entrepreneurship
— Changemakers Residency at Changemakers Ashram

UPDATES FROM US

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

PROGRAMS

SST 11.0 applications: Interest form is out

*Participants can now fill the **Expression of Interest form** for the application to the **11th edition of the School for Social Transformation (SST)**. The programme will take place at **Changemakers Ashram in the second week of October 2026**. We will get back to interested participants with further details, and they will have more time to complete the **Pre-SST Community Activity**, which is a compulsory part of the selection process.*

Here is the interest form: https://forms.gle/avvaCk6VvrrDGzeaA

CHANGE MAKERS ASHRAM

Volunteering Opportunity @ Changemakers Ashram, Chakkittappara

*Volunteer for **2 to 5 weeks** and engage in various activities at Changemakers Ashram. **Free accommodation will be provided** during the volunteering period. If you are interested in contributing, learning, and experiencing the Ashram, write to **ijasporedom@gmail.com**.*

EDUCATION 4 SOCIAL CHANGE

With MLA Constituency

Under the leadership of Sulfeekar Ali P. K., who leads Level 1 Engagement at The Ignite Foundation, sessions covering Career Planning, Social Consciousness and Active Citizenship have so far been delivered in two MLA constituencies in Kerala, engaging young people on career choices, social responsibility, and active citizenship. Two more MLA constituencies are expected to be covered in the coming months.

ALUMNI PROJECTS

SUPPORTED BY SST COMMUNITY ACTION SEED FUND AND MENTORSHIP

Bringing Civic Values to Community Conversations

Salwa, a participant of the 9th edition of the School for Social Transformation (SST 9), organized two community engagement initiatives focusing on constitutional values and democratic participation.

The first was a quiz and discussion session at a local gathering with around 30 participants, covering the Constitution, the Preamble, constitutional rights.

The second was an interactive session with 80 Higher Secondary students of GHSS Vazhakkad in Malappuram on the importance of the Constitution in our daily lives.

Salwa, SST 9 participant, facilitating a session on constitutional values and their relevance in everyday life at GHSS Vazhakkad.

INSIGHTS

FROM THE TEAM

5 Reasons Why Social Entrepreneur Well-being Matters

There is an unwritten rule in social entrepreneurship that we rarely talk about. To be a committed changemaker, you are expected to sacrifice. Somehow, being tired becomes a sign that you care. But exhaustion is not a strategy for social impact.

1. Well-being Helps Prevent Burnout
Burnout is not simply a personal failure. It can also be a structural hazard in organizations where people are expected to continuously do more with limited resources. **Protecting your physical energy and mental space is therefore not a luxury. It is a form of risk management.**

2. We Need to Move Beyond the "Hero" Culture
Social change should not depend on one person's ability to keep sacrificing themselves. **Sustainable leadership means moving from individual heroics towards resilient teams, systems, and institutions.**

3. A Rested Mind Is Better at Solving Complex Problems
Social problems are rarely simple. Solving them requires creativity, patience, listening, and the ability to look at a problem from different perspectives. **A rested mind does not guarantee a good solution. But an exhausted mind makes good problem-solving harder.**

4. Your Team Learns From How You Work
Organizational culture is often shaped by what leaders do, not what they say. **You can care deeply about the mission without sacrificing your entire life to it.**

5. Social Change Is a Marathon, Not a Sprint
The work of social change is inherently long-term. **That makes longevity one of a changemaker's greatest assets.**

Well-being is not something that comes after impact. It is part of the infrastructure that makes sustained impact possible.

— Naji Mahfood, Co-Founder, The Ignite Foundation

OPINION

GUEST / FOUNDER PERSPECTIVE

Start Small, Build Smart: Why First Experiments Matter in Social Entrepreneurship

What if your idea is bigger than what you can do right now?

Imagine! You want to improve education in your village. But you don't have funding. You don't have a large team. You don't have an office. And you certainly don't have a ten-year plan. Does that mean you are not ready to start?

Not necessarily. Many entrepreneurial ventures, including some well-known social enterprises, did not begin with a detailed business plan or a clearly defined long-term strategy.

They began with something much smaller—a personal experience, an observation, a few people, a little money, or simply a strong desire to do something about a problem.

The important thing was that someone started. The size of your first action does not determine the size of your eventual ambition. In fact, starting small can make a big ambition more realistic.

Read the complete article: Start Small, Build Smart: Why First Experiments Matter in Social Entrepreneurship
— Jaseel C K, Co-Founder, The Ignite Foundation

Testimonials

Testimonial from Roshna K, Program Manager at The Ignite Foundation, reflecting on the community gathering and Onam celebration at the Changemakers Ashram

"For a moment, the differences disappeared. What remained was a shared meal, shared laughter, and the warmth of being together. Many people, many flavours, yet one taste that stood above all...love.

One of my dreams was to see the Ashram embraced by the people around it. Today, when I saw the courtyard filled with people coming together as one community, it gave me a deep sense of hope and confidence.

Each one of you chose this space as your own, and somewhere along the way, you became my home too.

My heart is full of gratitude. Thank you for the love, trust, and belonging you have brought into this place."

[Roshna, who was instrumental in creating community connect around the Changemakers Ashram, is now transitioning to a new role and moving out of The Ignite Foundation. We wish her all the best]

FUNDRAISER

Help Us Organize Learning Camps for Children in Chakkittappara

As part of our community engagement efforts in Chakkittappara, our interns will be organizing learning camps for children at Changemakers Ashram. The camps will combine fun and learning through nature activities, painting, reading, games, and other creative activities, providing children with an engaging space to learn, explore, and connect.

Each child's participation in the learning camp will cost approximately ₹500. We invite individuals, institutions, and well-wishers to support this initiative and help us make these learning opportunities accessible to more children in the community.

If you wish to support a child, you can contribute ₹500 towards their participation.

You can send your contributions through GPay/PhonePe to or card at https://razorpay.me/@theignitefoundation

TQRCG

SCAN TO GIVE

Event Spotlight

Nauka Foundation is organizing Pragya Rise, a **15-day residential program for youngsters aged 18–25 at the Changemakers Ashram from 15th-25th September 2026.** Built entirely on experiential and reflective learning, this program is not a break from life, but rather a vital step towards engaging with reality more honestly and effectively. Interested candidates are encouraged to take action as applications are now officially open. You can submit your application by visiting the registration form at: https://acesse.one/z9vierf

IMPACT STORY

IMPACT

SUPPORTED BY SST COMMUNITY ACTION SEED FUND AND MENTORSHIP

Mental Health Awareness and Support for Unorganized Working Women

Muthalamada Panchayat is home to many women working in the unorganized sector, including agriculture, construction, coconut mills, tailoring, and pencil manufacturing. Their work is often affected by employment insecurity, financial difficulties, and family responsibilities.

SST 9 alumna Maheswari organised a mental health awareness and stress-management session for women workers at Muthalamada Panchayat, with the support of a certified counsellor.

The session introduced participants to mental health, anxiety, stress, and simple techniques for managing short-term stress. Participants also practised breathing exercises and received information about nearby mental health services and counsellors

The activity emerged from a study conducted as part of the SST Community Action Project, using case studies and Focus Group Discussions with women in Muthalamada Panchayat.

The study found that job insecurity, financial difficulties, low wages, and family responsibilities were contributing to stress, anxiety, sleeplessness, and emotional pressure among the women
-Maheswari

The discussions also revealed limited awareness about mental health and available support services.

Following the session, Maheswari created a WhatsApp community connecting the women with counselors, social workers, and psychologists.

The community continues to share mental-health resources, service contacts, and awareness materials, creating an avenue for continued support beyond the initial intervention.

GALLERY

Our Co-founders Ijas H and Naji Mahfood were welcomed by the hosts of the Asia-Pacific Youth Summit in China. They will present our new initiative, the *Kerala Social Impact Collective*, at the summit.

Photo from an interfaith dialogue hosted by the Brahma Kumaris, UNCCD, and the Buddhist community of Mongolia. Our Co-founder Jaseel C. K., along with Ijas H, summarised a group discussion during the program.

The community around Changemakers Ashram came together for an Onam celebration and community gathering. Building connections with the surrounding community is at the heart of our experiment at Changemakers Ashram, where community living and collective action are central to the experience.

The Centre for Youth Impact and Training (CYIT) has been part of events organised by Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) in Kerala. K. A. Thulasi, Minister for Welfare of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Backward Classes, Government of Kerala, felicitated our co-founder, Sulfeekar Ali P. K., during one such event.

A session on the basics of social innovation and entrepreneurship was offered by the Centre for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CSIE) at The Ignite Foundation for students of Digital University Kerala. The session was facilitated by Jaseel C. K.

Sandra Ravi, SST 8 participant, facilitating a legal awareness session for women workers at Nanminda Grama Panchayat in Kozhikode

The Ignite foundation at Cop17

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

Representing The Ignite Foundation as an accredited observer organization gave us the opportunity to experience global climate policy conversations from inside the room. We walked through plenary sessions, participated in civil society spaces, defended the importance of CSO participation, and shared our experiences of working on hyper-local land restoration and social innovation. But perhaps the biggest takeaway was something much simpler:

We need more of us in these rooms.

India has the world's largest youth population. Across the country, young people, grassroots organizations and social enterprises are already working on climate change, land degradation, drought and livelihood challenges. Yet many of these voices remain absent from global policy spaces.

Three things stayed with us:

- **Policy needs reality.** Global frameworks are discussed in conference rooms, but implemented in villages, coasts and cities. Grassroots voices can help bridge that gap.
- **If we don't speak, who will?** Communities carry lived experiences and local knowledge that need to be part of decisions affecting them.
- **Global spaces create possibilities.** The connections, ideas and partnerships we encountered showed how much local initiatives can learn and grow through global engagement.

Getting there wasn't easy. Accreditation, funding and logistics came with their own challenges. But being there made the effort worthwhile.

To young changemakers and organizations in India: don't self-reject. Apply. Participate. Share your work. Build connections. Claim your space. **Our local work can have global significance. Sometimes, it just needs a global microphone.** Let's keep building. Let's keep igniting change.

What began years ago as simple grassroots volunteering has gradually evolved into social work, community-driven climate action, and social entrepreneurship. This opportunity is a recognition of that collective journey and the tireless efforts of our entire team.

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**