

InvokED 2026 Brings Global and Grassroots Leaders Together as Shikshagraha Announces 2026 Awardees

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Shikshagraha, a people-powered education movement working to strengthen leadership across India's public education ecosystem, today announced the winners of the Shikshagraha Awards 2026, honouring three grassroots education leaders whose work has driven measurable, community-led change in government schools and local learning spaces. The awards were presented at InvokED 5.0, a two-day global dialogue on education leadership, organised by Shikshagraha, ShikshaLokam, and Mantra4Change, and held on 6–7 February 2026 at the Prestige Centre for Performing Arts (PCPA), Bengaluru.



The Shikshagraha awardees with the jury members at their felicitation at InvokED 5.0, 2026

Instituted by The Shibulal Family Philanthropic Initiatives (SFPI), the Shikshagraha Awards recognise leaders working both within and beyond formal education systems who are addressing systemic challenges from the ground up. Each award includes a monetary grant disbursed over two years, a trophy and certificate of excellence, structured mentorship, national visibility across Shikshagraha platforms, and opportunities to engage with policymakers, funders and peer networks. The awards are designed not only to recognise excellence, but to help practitioner-led solutions travel further and influence system-level change.

Shikshagraha Awardees 2026

Batskhem Thabah (Meghalaya) – Revitalised a near-abandoned village school into a thriving, community-run learning hub by rebuilding community trust and embedding indigenous knowledge into everyday classroom practice.

Kumari Guddi (Bihar) – A state-level educator advancing adolescent empowerment through menstrual health education, child protection initiatives, disaster preparedness and inclusive, activity-based learning models across schools.

Nellori Subrahmanyam (Andhra Pradesh) – Reimagined rote science instruction through inquiry-led, hands-on pedagogy, reaching thousands of rural students and strengthening scientific thinking and real-world problem-solving.

SD Shibulal, Co-founder of SFPI and Co-founder and Former CEO, Infosys, said, *“The Shikshagraha Awards do more than recognise individual excellence; they invest in it. By combining recognition with mentorship and sustained support, we aim to build a pipeline of leaders whose ideas and evidence can reshape education systems for millions of children.”*

Strategic partnership with Childaid Network Foundation

Shikshagraha also announced a strategic partnership with the Childaid Network Foundation, a trust-based philanthropic network that has worked across India’s North East since 2006. Childaid’s two decades of local experience through its partners, working with 1,600 government schools and reaching roughly 200,000 children, will be combined with Shikshagraha’s national convening power to mobilise partners, resources and government relationships toward an ambitious shared goal of scaling impact to two million children.

Martin Kasper, Founder & President, Childaid Network Foundation, said, *“Partnering with Shikshagraha is a strategic inflection point for Childaid Network Foundation. We hope that together we can leverage the advanced education networks and policy advocacy to help translate our twenty years of local learning in North East India into scale, mobilising partners,*

resources and government engagement to reach two million children.”

InvokED 2026: A convening for collective leadership

The Shikshagraha Awards were a central highlight of InvokED 2026, a global dialogue on education leadership that convenes policymakers, practitioners, international partners, philanthropists and young leaders to exchange evidence, surface practice-led solutions, and catalyse collective action towards education equity. The convening is designed to bridge the gap between system-level thinking and classroom realities through a mix of plenaries, fireside conversations, curated “braindates”, dialogue corners, and hands-on practice showcases.

Key sessions and themes at InvokED 2026 included:

- Fireside Chat – **“Leadership in the New Age”**: Wendy Kopp, CEO & Co-founder, Teach For All, in conversation with Shabnam Sinha, on evolving leadership models, networked collaboration and the relationship between global strategy and grassroots practice.
- Systemic leadership and teacher agency: Panels and showcases exploring how district and school leaders can enable teacher-led innovation and meaningful community partnerships.
- 21st Century Skills in the Classroom: Learning experiences that can enable students to drive their own learning, with a focus on practices that develop critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving, key skills for the 21st century
- Technology and evidence in action: **“Brain Dates”** and panels examining how AI-enabled tools and data systems can support, rather than displace, grassroots pedagogy.

- Vision for a Billion Futures: Insights from across the Global South, focused on accelerating large-scale education improvement for a billion learners.

InvokED's format intentionally blends storytelling with evidence, pairing short, practice-rich showcases with closed-door roundtables where state officials and frontline educators explore pathways to scale. This approach helps surface implementable insights while building the relationships required to translate ideas into policy action and funding priorities.

InvokED 2026 brought together senior leaders from government, philanthropy and global education networks, including officials from the Department of School Education & Literacy and the Department of Higher Education, international education practitioners, and members of the Shibulal Family Philanthropic Initiatives.

About ShikshaLokam

ShikshaLokam is an NGO founded under the aegis of The Shibulal Family Philanthropic Initiatives. The organisation works to restore the agency of education leaders in the K-12 public education ecosystem. By doing so, leaders' ability to continuously improve is enhanced, they are able to solve the school improvement challenges on their own, and the vision of all our children getting access to quality education as a fundamental right, will be realised.

As an education leadership catalyst, the organisation co-creates education leadership missions, and builds open-source digital capabilities to enable leaders, along with the

government and civil society. ShikshaLokam is a co-builder of the [Shikshagraha](#) people's movement, which aims to bring the government, the CSO, and the community together to improve all 1 million public schools in India. Every year, the organisation spotlights education leadership at [InvokED](#) – a global dialogue, and through the [Shikshagraha Awards](#) which honour exceptional leaders in education.

Today, in eight plus years, ShikshaLokam has co-created continuous learning and improvement programs and solutions, impacting more than 450,000 lakhs leaders across 27 States & UTs, with 19L+ micro-improvements triggered by education leaders to enable enriching learning experiences for children.

In Jan 2023, ShikshaLokam received The Collective Social Innovation Award 2023 by The Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship, a sister organisation of World Economic Forum, for catalysing collective action to enable systemic education transformation in the Punjab state.

Learn more at shikshalokam.org

