

MEDIA RELEASE

ShikshaNext: Rs 170 Cr multi-partner initiative launched to strengthen learning through EdTech and AI for children across India

- The initiative will enable over 13 million children to access meaningful, technology - and AI-enabled learning opportunities by 2029.
- The initiative is anchored by **Reliance Foundation** and the **Gates Foundation** as **Founding Strategic Partners**, with **Central Square Foundation** as **Managing Partner**, and is also funded by **Michael & Susan Dell Foundation**.

New Delhi, February 20, 2026: ‘ShikshaNext’, a bold, multi-donor, multi-year initiative aimed at improving learning outcomes for children from underserved communities by leveraging EdTech and AI, was launched on Wednesday. This three-year, Rs 170-Cr initiative was launched in the presence of **Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Hon’ble Minister of Education, Government of India**, and **Shri Sanjay Kumar, IAS, Secretary, Ministry of Education**, on the sidelines of the **India AI Impact Summit** in New Delhi.

ShikshaNext aims to enable **more than 13 million children across India** to access meaningful, technology- and AI-enabled learning opportunities by **2029**.

ShikshaNext is supported by a coalition of philanthropic organisations and ecosystem partners committed to strengthening learning outcomes through technology. The initiative is anchored by **Reliance Foundation** and the **Gates Foundation** as **Founding Strategic Partners**, with **Central Square Foundation** as **Managing Partner**, and is also funded by **Michael & Susan Dell Foundation**. ShikshaNext combines catalytic philanthropy and deep expertise, creating a shared focus on execution and impact.

Delivering the keynote address, **Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Hon’ble Minister of Education, Government of India**, who launched **ShikshaNext** outlined the pathway towards a **Viksit Bharat 2047**, emphasising the role of technology and AI in enhancing quality of education, empowering teachers, and preparing youth for the future of work. Speaking at the launch of the Initiative, he said, *“This is an important platform where Sarkar, Samaaj aur Sanstha have come together to make EdTech truly Sabka EdTech. The next step is to turn this into a Jan Andolan that ensures technology benefits every learner. India will present a model to the Global South that makes quality EdTech affordable and accessible for all.”*

The initiative will operate across **three interconnected programmes**:

- **EdTech ScaleX**, an initiative to scale proven EdTech and AI solutions that have demonstrated measurable learning gains through integration with state education systems and community-driven programs.
- **EdTech Accelerator**, a programme to support the development and growth of high-quality EdTech and AI solutions aligned with India’s diverse classroom needs.

- **EdTech & AI Innovation Hub**, a collaborative space to discover, test, and validate emerging EdTech and AI innovations, with a focus on India-centric solutions across languages, grades, and learning contexts.

All programmes are underpinned by a strong commitment to rigorous evidence generation, ensuring that insights on what works, for whom, and under what conditions guide the basis for how technology is integrated with education systems.

Partners expressed their deep commitment and optimism in scaling up proven solutions:

“Students catch up and move ahead when learning adapts to their needs. Personalised, technology-enabled tools can make that possible at scale. Entering the AI era, India is building on a decade of education reforms, stronger early learning, and tools that already deliver results in classrooms. ShikshaNext takes the next step by backing proven solutions and helping public school systems use them widely, so more children succeed in school and beyond.” – **Prachi Jain Windlass, Head of India, Michael & Susan Dell Foundation, India.**

“Reliance Foundation’s vision is simple yet profound – that every child in India should have the opportunity to fulfil their potential and realise their dreams. The rapid expansion of digital connectivity and 5G over the past decade has unlocked unprecedented possibilities to deliver quality education to every corner of our country.

We have seen that when philanthropy, government, educators, and innovators come together with shared purpose, technology in education moves beyond promising pilots to achieving measurable learning outcomes at scale. ShikshaNext represents the next step in this journey – a collaborative platform to generate rigorous evidence, strengthen partnerships, and harness the power of AI responsibly and inclusively.

Our commitment is to ensure that the next generation of AI-enabled solutions is not only innovative, but equitable – designed to serve every child, everywhere, and to truly transform India’s educational future.” – **B Srinivasan, Executive Lead, Reliance Foundation.**

“When EdTech is rooted in strong pedagogy and evidence, we now know it can drive real learning gains at scale; as generative AI adds fresh momentum, initiatives like ShikshaNext can channel catalytic funding and partnerships to ensure these technologies are designed for low-resource classrooms and guided by sound teaching principles, not just technological possibility.” – **Benjamin Piper, Director, Global Education at the Gates Foundation.**

“As we look to the future of learning in Bharat, Central Square Foundation’s focus is on making technology work for the children who need it most; with ShikshaNext, CSF is bringing together committed partners, rigorous evidence, and learning-focused capital so that EdTech and AI translate into real, measurable gains in classrooms, not just promises on paper.” – **Ishmeet Singh, Chief Executive Officer, Central Square Foundation.**

The launch brought together senior officials from the Ministry of Education, representatives from leading philanthropic organisations, EdTech innovators, educators, and partners from across the country, marking a collective commitment to harnessing AI and technology to strengthen learning outcomes for every child in India.

About Reliance Foundation

Reliance Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Reliance Industries Limited, aims to play a catalytic role in addressing India's development challenges through innovative and sustainable solutions. Led by Mrs Nita M Ambani, Founder and Chairperson, Reliance Foundation is relentlessly working for the overall well-being and enhanced quality of life for all, focusing on rural transformation, education, health, sports for development, disaster management, women empowerment, urban renewal and arts, culture and heritage, and has touched the lives of over 88 million people across India, in over 91,500 villages and urban locations. More on www.reliancefoundation.org.

About Gates Foundation

The Gates Foundation is a global philanthropy working to reduce poverty, tackle preventable disease, and expand opportunity so more people can lead healthy, productive lives. Education is a core pillar of its work, with a Global Education Program focused on improving foundational reading and math for children in India and sub-Saharan Africa. The foundation backs evidence-based solutions, including effective use of EdTech and AI, and supports governments to scale what works through public systems. In India, it partners with government and mission-driven organizations to strengthen human capital and learning outcomes as a driver of long-term, inclusive economic growth. <https://www.gatesfoundation.org/>

About Michael & Susan Dell Foundation

The Michael & Susan Dell Foundation (www.dell.org) builds pathways that change lives for people and communities around the world. Dedicated to creating measurable and sustainable impact, the foundation has invested \$3 billion to accelerate human opportunity globally.

About Central Square Foundation

Founded in 2012, Central Square Foundation (CSF) is a non-profit committed to improving learning outcomes for school-going children across 14 Indian states through system-led reform. We work in close partnership with 11 state governments to design and deliver statewide missions on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN), while strengthening Early Childhood Education.

CSF also focuses on building a vibrant EdTech and AI ecosystem to enable equitable, high-quality learning at scale. Our work extends to strengthening school governance across government and affordable private schools, and supporting High Potential Students (HPS) from underserved communities to become future innovators, researchers, and leaders. More on <https://www.centralsquarefoundation.org>.