



Transforming lives through education

March 2016



## Expanding student horizons

### Learning outside the classroom

Since 2013, The Kusuma Trust UK (The Trust) has funded the Kusuma Schools Partnership Initiative (KSPI) which supports 50 secondary schools in Odisha and Uttar Pradesh. The aim is to raise student attainment and aspirations, improve teaching standards and enhance the physical school environment. KSPI delivers a secondary school readiness programme for students in English, Science, Mathematics and Odia/Hindi, develops innovative teaching and learning materials, provides professional development opportunities for teachers and Head teachers and governance training for school management and development committees.

The Trust believes in the importance of a well-rounded education for young people to succeed in life and pursue their chosen career. Working in partnership with secondary schools, the programme delivers extra curricular activities for students to develop their skills and confidence outside the classroom, including team working, creative thinking and communications.

The Indian Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) states, *“The extent of a child's learning needs to be comprehensive. We need a curriculum where creativity, innovation and development of the whole individual mark the growth of a learner, including life skills, positive attitudes and values through participation in extra curricular activities.”*



Student attends an after school book club, UG High School, Sambalpur  
Photo: Sam Strickland

In Hardoi and Sambalpur, extra curricular activities for students are held in schools as well as at the Kusuma Resource Centres (KRCs) which support students in each district by providing resources such as books, audio-visual materials and computers with internet access. Students also participate in English communication courses, computing courses, book and movie clubs, competitions, educational visits and career guidance sessions. In the schools, students have the opportunity to stay after school to participate in book and movie clubs, play sports and games and receive career guidance and life coaching. The activities are aligned to the curriculum to engage students outside of the classroom with a particular focus on developing students' understanding of Science, Mathematics, Hindi/Odia and English.

Sidhant Sahu completed his Class 12 Board examinations and participated in Kusuma's career counselling before studying engineering at Gandhi Engineering College in Bhubaneswar: He says:

*“Kusuma's support has been instrumental in helping me to build my career. Constant encouragement and mentoring has ensured that my dreams of being an engineer can come true.”*

Manish Shom, Class 10 student, Parmanpur Boys' High School, Sambalpur adds:

*“After school book clubs encourage our love of books. We have regular reading groups, story telling and discussions. Our school now has more books, newspapers and opportunities for us to read and share stories with one another. I have been given responsibilities at my school including lending books to fellow students and encouraging others to join the club and develop a love of reading”*

Kusuma promotes interactive learning and enthusiasm for school, active lifestyles, creativity and the discovery of new interests. Kusuma believes that widening student horizons through learning outside the classroom is key to providing quality education.

**Our mission is to facilitate and increase access to education and other life opportunities for children and young people**

## Careers Guidance

In February, The Trust supported careers fairs in Sambalpur and Hardoi for over 1,500 students. The careers fairs provided students with information and guidance on options for post secondary study and work. Higher Education and local employer representatives attended the fairs and students had the opportunity to ask questions about a range of vocations to help inform their decision-making on career paths.

Kusuma also supports students with careers counseling in school. Pragati Nag, who is studying at Khandual High School, Sambalpur was encouraged to attend careers counseling sessions by her teacher and has now decided that she would like to become a teacher. Careers counsellors informed her of the qualifications required to become a teacher and the institutions she could apply to in the local area. Pragati says:

*“I was unaware of how to become a teacher and the qualifications required. Following the careers counseling I am clear on how to apply and the path I need to take to achieve my ambition.”*

The careers counseling sessions and the careers fairs have proved to be very popular with students. Prashant Singh, a student in Hardoi commented:

*“The careers fair and the counseling this year have been an eye-opener for me and my parents. Until now I only considered teaching, medicine and engineering as career options. I now realise there are many other opportunities for me to consider after my studies.”*

## Inter School Competitions

Kusuma has supported 50 partner schools to organise debate, essay and quiz competitions to improve knowledge and confidence levels, strengthen communication skills and promote logical thinking amongst students. Over 1,500 students from Sambalpur and Hardoi participated in the competitions. 39 Students in Hardoi and 27 students in Sambalpur won prizes in different categories.

Namita Hari, a Class 10 student from Upgraded High School, Khandual won the debate competition in Maneswar block in Sambalpur. She recalls her experience of participating in the competition:

*“Winning the debate competition has given me the confidence to express my opinions and improve my public speaking. I am very grateful for the support of my Head teacher and Kusuma, who made it possible for me to believe in myself and achieve my goals.”*

## Science and Mathematics Olympiads

Kusuma organises Mathematics and Science Olympiads to recognise top performing students and encourage them to enjoy the subjects beyond learning from textbooks. In partnership with the State Institute of Education Allahabad, Kusuma prepared quiz questions for 985 students from 112 schools in Hardoi and 25 students won prizes. Feedback from teachers highlighted that the Olympiads are an innovative way to encourage students to perform better in Science and Mathematics and they motivate students. Mr. Shiv Prakash, father of Sivam, who was one of the winners, says: *“Students are encouraged through competition. My son got high marks in the Mathematics Olympiad which was very motivating for him, his school and our family.”* Whilst parents consider the Olympiads from the perspective of prestige and encouragement, students also view the Olympiads as preparation for the Class 10 Board examinations. Shivam Kumar, Inter College Mallawan, Hardoi says:

*“Many of the questions asked in the Olympiad actually appeared in the Board exam as well. When I prepared for the Olympiad I was in effect preparing for my board exams.”*



Student at Regional Science Centre Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh  
Photo: Kusuma Foundation

## Visits to Science Centres

In Hardoi, 250 students from 25 partner schools visited the Regional Science Centre, Lucknow in February. For many of the students in rural schools, it was the first time they had visited Lucknow, the State capital of Uttar Pradesh. Students participated in hands-on experiments including rocket launches and extracting crude oil from the earth, and observed molecules under a microscope. Science experts helped students to understand various scientific models on display. Students also enjoyed 3D films on ‘The Life of Wild Animals’ and ‘Life in Alaska’. Students were able to learn science through practical demonstrations and not just books. Mr. Devandra, Science Teacher, GHSS Majhila said:

*“Students were excited to see the life of wild animals, and they saw new science experiments that are not demonstrated in schools. It was an experience of a lifetime.”*