



Transforming lives through education

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## Improving the quality of education Progress in Kusuma supported schools

Kusuma's focus in India is on improving the quality and outcomes of education in Odisha and Uttar Pradesh. In 2013, Kusuma launched the Kusuma Schools Partnership Initiative (KSPI) supporting 50 secondary schools in both States to improve student attainment, teaching standards, school governance and the school environment.

Since then 138 teachers from the 50 schools have received intensive training and on site support from members of District Resource Groups<sup>1</sup>. With support from Kusuma's teaching pool, all 50 schools delivered and completed the syllabus for Mathematics, Science, Social Science, English, Hindi and Odia. New teaching methods were introduced and ideas for promoting libraries implemented by 127 teachers who participated in Kusuma led peer-to-peer learning sessions. An independent evaluation commissioned by Kusuma provided promising evidence that: *'teacher quality, measured on three key domains of lesson preparation, student participation and facilitation skills was better in KSPI schools compared to control schools.'* Edulever Evaluation 2015.

670 School Management and Development Committee members from the 50 schools received support and training on their roles to help them govern and manage their schools effectively. All 50 Head teachers participated in training on academic leadership, stakeholder engagement and effective school planning.



Students from UPS Behlolpur using Kusuma developed Science materials  
Photo: Kusuma Foundation

More than 5,000 students participated in a Secondary School Readiness Programme<sup>2</sup> to address low learning levels among students. 80% of students from the schools participated in the programme to improve their learning level, receiving intensive support from trained teachers and the opportunity to self-study using materials developed by Kusuma. Ms. Sharma, Head teacher of the Government Higher Secondary School, Raura in Hardoi, said:

*"Kusuma has completely refocused my school on student learning. We persuaded 95% of our students to enrol for the Secondary School Readiness Programme. We are now tailoring our teaching to the appropriate levels of students and have found Kusuma's approach and interactive teaching materials very useful."*

There have been significant changes in the schools. All 50 schools have water connections and purifiers providing safe drinking water, working electricity connections, power generators and safe electrical wiring. 49 schools have renovated classrooms and 39 schools now have separate toilets for boys and girls. In collaboration with the District Administration, the remaining 11 schools will have new toilets by July 2016.

As the programme enters its third year, reviews of data and the lessons learnt from the programme thus far are informing the next stages of work. Based on emerging evidence and impact of the programme, the Education Departments in both States have requested scale up of the work in partnership with Kusuma.

*"With support from Kusuma and the Education Department, these schools have developed a real vision for change. Models for improvement developed at these 50 schools are promising and we are very excited about the potential these hold for transforming education in the two States."*

Pankaj Vinayak Sharma,  
Country Leader, Kusuma Foundation India

1. District Resource Groups are made up of experienced teacher educators.
2. The Secondary School Readiness Programme addresses the learning gaps between the actual and required level for secondary school.

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

## Widening learning horizons

Kusuma Resource Centres<sup>3</sup> support schools by delivering workshops, training events, and offer books and online resources for students of all ages.

Bandana Tarasia is 16 years old: *“As well as borrowing books, I also attend the English Communication course at the Centre in Sambalpur as I have always struggled with English. Since starting the programme I have acquired better communication skills, learnt the importance of eye contact and body language, and improved my vocabulary. Thanks to these lessons, I am not afraid of the subject anymore and English has even become my favourite subject.”*

Ranjana Singh is 11 years old: *“I go to the Kusuma Resource Centre nearly everyday. I have never seen so many books, magazines and computers all in one place. I love reading Champak, a Hindi magazine for children, and I have learnt how to use the computer at the Centre. I had not seen a real computer before I came here but now I have mastered painting software and I love painting with it.”*



Ranjana Singh at the Kusuma Resource Centre in Hardoi  
Photo: Kusuma Foundation

## Better understanding of subjects

Salman is a Class 10 student at Government Inter-College Tadiyawan in Hardoi, Uttar Pradesh. His learning and understanding of ideas has improved through the use of Kusuma’s learning materials.

*“I had real difficulties learning from the prescribed text books, but the new student learning units provided by Kusuma really helped my understanding. In particular, the Mathematics materials describe topics in a way that use real life examples. This interests me much more and as a result my understanding of trigonometry is much better. My teachers are also using Kusuma materials to prepare us for our Board examinations. The new materials we now use are great and were not available in my school before Kusuma’s support.”*

## Fellowships provide career guidance

The Kusuma Excellence Fellowship supports students from disadvantaged backgrounds to complete secondary school and pursue higher education.

Shivendra Pratap Singh was awarded a Fellowship in 2014: *“I am so lucky and grateful to receive this prestigious award. Whilst I really appreciate the financial support to continue my studies, the additional opportunities such as access to resources, computers and training courses has been amazing. I am especially impressed with the career counselling I receive. Choosing a career is such an important decision and I have had expert guidance at just the right time. Kusuma’s career support for Fellows like me allows us to develop a better understanding of ourselves, find our areas of interest, discover our strengths, and link these with ambitious career choices. I now have a clear career goal, I hope to become an engineer.”*

## Students’ voices matter to schools

Students at the Pabitra Mohan High School, Nakitoideola are actively involved in improving their school as a result of Kusuma encouraging them to participate in school planning.

Manoj Kumar Sahoo explains: *“Students previously had no voice or role in suggesting how to make our school better before the partnership with Kusuma. Now, I have been able to highlight the computer training that my classmates and I need, and the limited number of books in our library. I was pleasantly surprised and proud when both my ideas were included in the school’s annual improvement plan this year.”*

Bharati Behra says: *“I am the Chief Minister in our school cabinet. After being given the opportunity to participate, question and influence our school plan, I feel as important as the Honourable Chief Minister of Odisha! I am now involved in ensuring that our school plan is executed for the benefit of my fellow students.”*



Bharati Behra and Manoj Kumar Sahoo  
Photo: Kusuma Foundation

3. Kusuma Resource Centres deliver workshops and training events, offer meeting space for the community and a library of books and online resources.