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Students watch a Mobile Science Lab projection at a Government High School in Hyderabad.  
Photo: Sam Strickland

## Key Dates

1

4-5 March: 169 students and 17 staff from Sarvodaya Ashram visited Lucknow

2

16 March: CEO attended Seminar on Open Access for Scientific Information in Delhi

3

16 -17 March: Two community seminars held for Udaan/Pehchan students and their parents

4

30 March – 1 April: CL and SPO met with four partners of Project SAARATHI in Hyderabad and Mumbai

5

4-6 April: iCommons attended the 11<sup>th</sup> Genomic Standards Consortium conference in Cambridge, UK

## Kusuma Foundation Country Leader visits projects in India

From 14 to 23 March, KF's new Country Leader (CL), Pankaj Sharma, visited five projects in Hardoi, Hyderabad, Warangal and Delhi respectively. Accompanied by the Senior Programme Officer (SPO), he met with staff from Sarvodaya Ashram, Project 511, Pragathi Seva Samithi and The Asksaya Patra Foundation (TAPF)'s Mid Day Meal programme. He also had discussions with TAPF on the kitchen construction proposal for Orissa. The CEO, Balwant Singh, and the CL also met with the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi (IITD).

The Kusuma Trust's new strategy will be finalised in April. The emerging area of focus is secondary education with a geographical focus on Sambalpur in Orissa, Hardoi in Uttar Pradesh and Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh. The Board will discuss the strategy in April.

Baroness Susan Greenfield CBE, Chancellor of Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh and Professor of Synaptic Pharmacology at Oxford University, agreed to join the Advisory Board of the Kusuma School of Biological Sciences, after meeting with Faculty Staff at the IITD.

our mission

To facilitate and increase access to education and other life opportunities for children and young people



A Mobile Science Lab biology lesson at a Government High School for girls in Hyderabad. Photo: Sam Strickland

### Fellowships

Staff from the Sambalpur Integrated Development Institute (SIDI) visited 52 homes of students from the **Kusuma Ratna Fellowship Programme** in March to review their examination preparation and career plans. The mentoring programme was initiated with 12 mentors being assigned to 10 - 15 mentees each. Cohort Two students received their second stipend and an average of 42 students per week are visiting and making use of the Resource Centre in Sambalpur. SIDI has received its third and final disbursement under the current grant agreement.

Workshops were held on 13 and 18 March for the students of the **Kusuma Udayan Shalini Fellowship** to help improve their examination performance in the subjects of Maths, Chemistry, Physics, Accounting and Economics. 12 students have been selected by an accounting software agency to undergo three months' free training in a Tally software package. The SPO visited Dehradun in March and Udayan Care received its second and last disbursement for the current grant agreement.

### Shalini Case Study

Neelam Arya, one of the students from the 2008 Cohort, received academic prizes in co-curricular activities at school before achieving 63% in the Grade 12 Uttarakhand Board Examination in 2010. The former Chief Minister of the State, Mr. B.C. Khanduri, organised a major event at which she received an award, acknowledging her success. Currently, Neelam is undertaking a B.A. with the Dayanand Brijendra Swaroop Post Graduate College in Dehradun and, after graduation, she hopes to become an Indian Administrative Services Officer.

The Partner of the **Kusuma Young Achievers' Award**, Pragathi Seva Samithi (PSS), has successfully matched 30 students from Cohort Two with coaching centres, which provide preparation for professional courses' entrance examinations. PSS has negotiated a discount enabling the students to only pay a third of the fees, which is covered by their stipend. 80% of Cohort One students are now pursuing professional and higher education courses at private colleges.



An English lesson at Sarvodaya Ashram, Hardoi, Uttar Pradesh. Photo: Sam Strickland

### Bridge School Programmes: Udaan & Pehchan

12 Udaan students from Cohort One took their Grade 10 standard annual examination. 164 parents and 176 students from both programmes took part in the community seminars on 16-17 March. Academic performance and follow up support for girls studying in mainstream schools were discussed. Udaan's Cohort Three students have graduated successfully to Grade 5.

### Mobile Science Lab (MSL)

On 11 March, a meeting of the Technical Oversight Committee and the Government took place to discuss the strengthening of joint project monitoring with the Rajiv Vidya Mission. The CL, SPO and FM from KT visited the Government High School, Ameerpet, in Hyderabad to observe the MSL sessions in progress. Discussions were held with the partner, Project 511, on developing the next phase of MSL.

### Project Saarathi

The project plan has been revised to include a cadre of 25-30 trainers for training child development agencies' workers and a block of training for functionaries of the Juvenile Justice Department. The Tata Institute of Social Sciences has recommended a consultant to design a research model, to assess the long term impact of the state wide roll-out of the project.

### Accessibility and Access to Knowledge

The Centre for Internet and Society has conducted research on the mobile phone market, to gauge how many handsets in India are accessible for persons with disabilities <http://cis-india.org/advocacy/accessibility/blog/accessible-mobile-handsets>. CIS is also coordinating an EGovernance Study Tour of Bangalore and Delhi for Mr Abdul Kareem Al-Samarai, Minister for Science and Technology, Iraq.

### Building Open Sharing Resources (BOSR)

Funding was received from the University of Maryland for the Genomic Standards Consortium conference and capacity building work continues with the University of Maine's Technology Centre.

### Other News

#### iPartner India

A corporate donor held an awareness-raising event on iPartner's work on 24 March in Copenhagen. A new event, focused on child trafficking in India and involving the support of Lady Noon's Foundation, will take place in late May.

#### Kusuma Seva

Following a visit by the SPO in March, Board members of Vikash Vidyalaya Foundation have proposed that Kusuma's exit plan should include staff training on child rights and home management, as well as life skills and computer lessons for the children.



A schoolboy is served at the Mid Day Meal Scheme in Andhra Pradesh. Photo: Sam Strickland