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Night School for children in Tilonia, Rajasthan, supported by the Kusuma-funded iPartner India project. Photo: Jeremy Chu

Key Dates

1

3-13 May: Udaan and Pehchan students take public exams for Classes 5 and 8

2

17-18 May: Meetings take place for parents and guardians of Kusuma Ratna fellows

3

22 May: 140 Kusuma Young Achievers take their state level entrance examinations for professional courses

4

5 and 12 June: Workshop and residential camp for Kusuma Udayan Shalini fellows

Scholarship student overcomes setbacks to achieve excellence

Despite losing his father at a young age and suffering from a serious heart condition, Akinepally Saikrishna, a student from Kusuma Young Achievers' Award, scored 91% in his Class 12 examination. Coming from a small, economically deprived village in the Warangal District of Andhra Pradesh, he applied himself consistently since joining the programme in 2008, most notably as a lead participant in career guidance sessions. Akinepally passed his Commerce Proficiency Test for Chartered Accountancy and took the Integrated Professional Competence Examination on 3 May. After graduation, he intends to pursue a career in accountancy and has proved to be both an inspiration and a role model for other students.



On 15 April, the Trust signed four new grant agreements totaling £1.72 million for the renewal of Kusuma's scholarship programmes in Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and Uttarakhand, and a three-year project to construct a kitchen in Bhubaneswar, Orissa, to provide mid-day meals for 100,000 government school children. The partner organisations benefiting from these grants are Pragathi Seva Samithi, Sambalpur Integrated Development Institute (SIDI), Udayan Care and The Akshaya Patra Foundation (TAPF).

The Board and Founders of Kusuma Trust UK approved the first strategy for the Trust for 2011-2014. A summary of the strategy will shortly be available on the website.

our mission

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

Fellowships

On 15 April, researchers from the London School of Economics provided an interim report on the **evaluation** of the Kusuma Young Achiever and Udayan Shalini Scholarships. The report highlighted that there is a strong demand for the programmes due to limited funding opportunities for young people in Warangal and Dehradun, and that the coaching, mentoring and social activities of the programme are highly valued by the students. The evaluation will be completed in August and the final report of the findings will be available in September.

Staff from SIDI visited 64 students from the **Kusuma Ratna Fellowship Programme** in April to review their career plans and meet with their parents. Cohort One students attended coaching classes to prepare for the entrance examinations for professional courses. To source a new Cohort of 100 students for 2011, SIDI promoted the programme to 204 schools and collected the details of 9,900 students who took the Class 10 Board Examination in March.



Ratna Student, Santosini Singh, studying at home in Sambalpur, Orissa.
Photo: Sam Strickland

Nine students from Cohort Two of the **Kusuma Udayan Shalini Fellowship** have been selected for engineering examination coaching classes at the University of Petroleum & Energy in Dehradun. Seventeen students attended Spoken English classes and fifteen students participated in basic computer training.

Cohort Two students from the **Kusuma Young Achievers' Award** prepared for

entrance examinations for professional courses. Seven students took the Indian Institute of Technology - Joint Entrance Test and 30 took the All India Engineering Entrance Examination. 140 students are preparing for the Engineering, Agriculture and Medicine Common Entrance Test, and will be supported with tutorial sessions.

Bridge School Programmes: Udaan & Pehchan

Pehchan's Cohort Two students have graduated to Class 7 and special classes have been held for the 11 girls who scored less than 60% in the Class 6 final examination. Sarvodaya Ashram field staff visited the homes of 98 students to provide encouragement for them to continue their schooling after the summer vacation. The renovation of the Ashram's classrooms commenced in April.



Pehchan students during a lesson at Sarvodaya Ashram, Hardoi, Uttar Pradesh.
Photo: Balwant Singh

Project Saarathi

Kusuma Foundation's staff held meetings with Sadhana, the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), the Juvenile Justice Department of Andhra Pradesh and UNICEF in April to plan the roll-out of training to social welfare workers. TISS has committed to preparing a capacity building and evaluation plan, including designing the Training of Trainers for a cadre of 25-30 select personnel and providing technical support.

Kusuma Mid Day Meal

The Akshaya Patra Foundation has increased the feeding programme for government school children in Nayagarh, Orissa by 1,000, now resulting in the provision of 15,000 meals per day. This project will receive a disbursement of £50,201 under the current grant agreement in May.

Mobile Science Lab (MSL)

The renewal plan is being discussed with Rajiv Vidhya Mission and Project 511 with the aim of including a sustainability plan and research component as part of the new grant agreement. MV Foundation's Project 511 distributed Oxford dictionaries to 189 school students who scored high marks in recent science tests.

Special Event

On 19 April, Sir Mark Walport, Director of the Wellcome Trust, spoke at Oxford University's Bodleian Library on the role of open access in maximising the impact of biomedical research – *a viewpoint continually championed by iCommons through the Kusuma-supported BOSR programme*. Wellcome is one of the world's leading funders of scientific research and a strong proponent of open access. Walport, a member of the Prime Minister's Council for Science and Technology and the UK-India Roundtable, urged the University to reclaim its former central role in the direct dissemination of research results to the public.

Other News

Building Open Sharing Resources (BOSR)

iCommons moved operations from the US to Oxford, UK, in April, where a major research project has begun to survey the UK and EU legal barriers to the open sharing of bio-data.

Kusuma School of Biological Sciences (KSBS)

Professor Seyed E. Hasnain, a distinguished Research Professor from the Institute of Life Sciences and the previous Vice Chancellor of the University of Hyderabad, joined the KSBS on 1 April. The School's Senate approved the Minor area programme for B.Tech. students and the next round of PhD admissions will take place on 18 May.

Kusuma Young Researcher's Award

The judges have selected the winner and runner-up for the 2010 competition and the results will be announced in May.