



Transforming lives through education

April 2014



Investing in education

Fellowship students set their sights higher

An evaluation of Kusuma's Fellowship programme in Odisha shows that the scholarship programme raises Fellows' expectations about their future careers, salaries and the jobs market. Fellows are more likely to view education as a high-return investment compared to other students.

The evaluation, conducted by the **London School of Economics**, showed that the fellowship programme, which supports disadvantaged students to complete secondary education and pursue higher education, had a range of direct and indirect impacts on Fellows, their families and social networks. Although Fellows and comparable students who did not get the scholarship had similar performance on standardised tests at Class 12, Fellows were more optimistic about their future. They were also more likely to encourage others, particularly friends, to apply for a fellowship award. This resulted in a higher number of applications for fellowships from Fellows' social contacts compared with the peers of non-recipients. Such findings demonstrate the important role of peer group networks in extending information about, and the potential benefits of, the fellowship programme.

The evaluation also showed that fellowships had an impact on family life and on parents' aspirations for their children's future. Although parents of Fellows spent more time on domestic chores as a result of their child's involvement in the programme, they were more likely than other parents to view education as an investment in the future well-being of the family as a whole. For example, parents of Fellows were more likely to agree with the statements that 'if the oldest child is successful, the younger children should follow' and that 'children should postpone marriage until they have completed their education'. These findings suggest that the positive benefits of the fellowship programme are likely to trickle down to younger family members and, as a result, produce benefits for young people and families over the longer term.

The evaluation highlighted that the Fellowship has an unequivocal positive impact on the Fellows and their networks. This is reflected in greater confidence, higher aspirations and improved understanding of the importance of education to succeed in life for the Fellows, their families and friends.

The Board of Kusuma Trust has approved funding for a sixth cohort of 100 new Fellows in Sambalpur in 2014 and the commencement of a new Kusuma Excellence Fellowship for 100 Fellows in Hardoi from 2014.

Dr Balwant Singh, CEO of the Trust, said:

"We are encouraged by the findings and would like to see more young people complete their education, set their sights higher and pursue their ambitions."



Kusuma Ratna Fellows studying Mathematics in Sambalpur, Odisha.
Photo: Sam Strickland

*The Kusuma Trust UK
supports bright young people
from disadvantaged backgrounds
to complete their secondary schooling
and pursue higher education.*

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

Science results improve

The Science in Schools project, implemented by Agraneer Jana Kalyan Anusthan in Sambalpur, aimed to improve understanding of Science by providing schools with Science laboratories and equipment. Schools involved in the project had a 9% increase in Science examination results with an average pass percentage of 75% in 2013 compared with 64% in 2012. Control schools where the project was not implemented had an increase of only 1% from 65% to 66% over the same period.

Dhananjaya Behera, a student at Gokulanand High School who participated in the project, passed his secondary school Science examinations with a score of 93% in 2013 and is currently studying Science at Newton College, Sambalpur. He said:

“I participated in scientific experiments in Physics, Chemistry and Biology using the Science kits and it became easier for me to understand the concepts in the textbook. I could easily relate to the practical experiments and the teachers reinforced the scientific theories. As a result of the project, I am studying Science as a subject at college and pursuing my ambition of becoming a doctor.”

Kiranmayee Chhuria, from Maneswar High School, passed her Science examinations with 90% and said:

“Before the Science in Schools project, Science teaching did not include practical sessions. I was asked to memorise scientific theories by rote. By using the Science kits, I began to learn by doing, conducting scientific experiments and discovering science for myself. I have now decided to become a Biotech Engineer and make a positive contribution to society.”



Students taking part in a practical Science lesson.
Photo: Sam Strickland

Students participating in practical science classes are more interested in Science and achieve better results in examinations.

Science Teachers get hands-on experience

A ‘Teacher Zone’ at the Science Museum took place on 26 March 2014 in London, which is part of a project funded by The Trust. More than 200 teachers attended.



Science teachers at the Teacher Zone, Science Museum.
Photo: Science Museum

The aim of the Teacher Zone is to enable primary and secondary teachers to participate in ‘bite-sized’ training sessions, increase their skills and confidence and find out more about the Science Museum’s exhibitions. Hands-on activities included the opportunity to construct an anti-friction hovercraft and discover new resources for use in the classroom.

Global Education & Skills Forum 2014

Dr Balwant Singh, CEO of the Trust participated in the Global Education & Skills Forum 2014 in Dubai from 15 to 17 March. The Forum invited heads of government, business leaders, leading academics, educators, donors and others to meet with a view to strengthen ties, collaborate in the field of education and work more effectively towards a better-educated and more equitable society on a worldwide scale. Key conclusions include:

- Education must be owned not by teachers but by students. Students can also make the best teachers.
- Introducing new technologies can support teachers to support more students.
- There is a strong rationale for massive investment in teacher professional development, reduced contact time and more ICT infrastructure. A bold move is needed towards more blended learning, increasing and utilising student autonomy.
- There is a need to restructure the teaching profession in order to ensure that time is available for development and for assessment.
- The status of teaching should be elevated to make a lasting change to the system.

Former US President Bill Clinton, a key speaker at the Forum, said:

“Attracting the best people to teaching, developing and supporting their skills, and holding our teachers in high regard — all are critically important to achieve excellence, both in teaching and learning.”