

Disadvantaged UK pupils are half as likely as their better off peers to reach national standards at primary level and one third as likely at secondary level

Source: Department for Education 2011



Education in the UK

Research launched to identify causes of educational failure

The Kusuma Trust (The Trust) awarded a grant to the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) in November to undertake research to review the causes of educational failure in the UK. This will be part of CSJ's **Breakthrough Britain II*** initiative, which was officially launched on 29 November 2012.

In 2007, CSJ published a report entitled *Breakthrough Britain*, which focused on the causes of poverty, educational failure and social breakdown. Working groups examined why huge investment in education had failed to reverse the persistent underachievement of disadvantaged children. The report recommended a number of policies including the introduction of free schools, financial support for disadvantaged pupils and greater opportunities for young people to take up vocational training and apprenticeships.

Five years on, Britain is in a dramatically different political and economic position, with individuals and society facing challenges due to the recession. Building upon the recommendations from the 2007 report, CSJ has launched *Breakthrough Britain II* as a major new review into the causes of social breakdown and poverty in today's society. The review will consist of six volumes: family breakdown, educational failure, addiction, debt, worklessness and the voluntary sector. The Trust has awarded a grant of £95,000 to CSJ, funding the Educational Failure volume of the research.

Dr Balwant Singh, Chief Executive of The Trust, who attended the launch said "On behalf of Kusuma Trust UK, I am delighted to support Breakthrough Britain II which I hope will lead to practical recommendations for education reforms to address the causes of educational failure in Britain." Mr Christian Guy, Managing Director of CSJ added "The CSJ believes that education in the UK should provide young people with the skills and opportunities they need to reach their potential. The Kusuma Trust's support will enable us to explore the failings of the education system and provide practical policy recommendations to improve the lives of those in the most difficult circumstances."

**Breakthrough Britain II is a major piece of research to examine the root causes of poverty and social breakdown in the UK*



Centre for Social Justice and Kusuma Trust UK staff at the Launch of Breakthrough Britain II. Photo: CSJ

New global education research reinforces Kusuma's priorities

A recent report by Pearson Education entitled [The Learning Curve](http://thelearningcurve.pearson.com) (<http://thelearningcurve.pearson.com>) aims to help policy makers, school leaders and academics identify the key factors to improve education outcomes. The report also identifies the importance of working with parents to ensure that they are engaged in their child's schooling to increase enrolment and retention rates. These findings are backed up with evidence from a number of projects funded by The Trust.

The Pearson report outlines the importance of quality teaching and states that 'there is no substitute for good teachers'. An initiative that emphasises the importance of good teachers is the Open University's **Teacher Professional Development in Science and English** project. The project provides teachers with new skills to improve their teaching through training workshops. A recent evaluation of the workshops in Hardoi, Uttar Pradesh identified that teachers are requesting more opportunities for professional development, want to learn new teaching techniques and are keen to begin using new technology to improve the quality of their teaching.

The report also identified that education requires long term, coherent and focused system-wide attention to achieve improvement. The **RMSA¹ Roll Out for Quality Secondary Education** project takes this approach to raising educational standards. The project, implemented by the Centre for Youth and Social Development (CYSD) works closely with School Management and Development Committees (SMDCs) in Sambalpur, Odisha to address governance and management in 25 schools. A recent review of the SMDCs established in Sambalpur revealed that they are working significantly better in intervention schools than other schools in the district. 70% of intervention schools now have a school development plan compared to only 42% of non-intervention schools. The school development plan enables schools to achieve improvements at a systemic level in the long term.



A meeting of SMDC Members in Tabala High School. Photo: Kusuma Foundation

Community play proves to be a huge success

As part of CYSD's community outreach strategy, a community play 'Khola Daraja'² was performed in 17 Panchayats³ in Sambalpur district in November. The play addressed the issues of student enrolment and retention in secondary schools for students aged 14-16. Khola Daraja tells the story of the importance of education for a young person's future and the role that the community and parents can play. Anandabasi Barla, one of the parents in the audience and a new SMDC member in Tabala Village said: "After seeing the play today, I will send my daughter to school regularly and also actively motivate other parents in the village to do the same" Due to the success of the play, CYSD are planning a further 34 in Sambalpur in the coming months.



A performance of Khola Daraja in Sambalpur. Photo: Kusuma Foundation

A glimpse into the IT sector inspires fellows

A recent educational visit for 50 **Kusuma Udayan Shalini Fellows** to WIPRO Global IT Business has inspired fellows to consider careers in the IT sector. The visit, which took place in November, introduced fellows to several departments of the organisation. Fellows were given the opportunity to understand services provided by WIPRO and the technological products offered. Fellows met with WIPRO employees and held a Q&A session on the business and the global IT market. Students were informed of career possibilities and processes for applying for training schemes at WIPRO.

Inauguration of new school

The Kusuma School of Biological Sciences (KSBS) will be inaugurated on 10 December 2012 at the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi. The inauguration will take place alongside the BioWorld Delhi Conference hosted by KSBS. Dr Balwant Singh, Chief Executive of the The Trust will speak at the inauguration and conference, at which Professor Jorg Hacker, President of the German Academy of Sciences, Leopoldina, will give the keynote lecture.

¹Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) is India's national scheme for improving the quality of education

²'Khola Daraja' means an open door.

³Panchayats are local assemblies at village, block and district level.