



Strengthening School Management

Governance training manual launched in Uttar Pradesh

On 13 January 2015, the Minister for Secondary Education in Uttar Pradesh, Mr. Mehboob Ali, chaired the State-wide launch of the Kusuma supported School Management and Development Committee (SMDC)¹ training manual in Lucknow.

The SMDC training manual was developed as part of the Kusuma funded Parwaaz² project, implemented by the Vigyan Foundation in 40 Schools in Hardoi, Uttar Pradesh. The objective of Parwaaz was to roll out the Rashtriya Madhyamik Siksha Abhiyan (RMSA)³ scheme to strengthen the capacity of SMDC members who play a critical role in the management and governance of schools.

The Minister praised the work of Kusuma in improving the quality of education in the 40 schools in Hardoi. Recognising the potential of the manual, he pledged to work closely with Kusuma and Vigyan Foundation to roll out the manual to SMDCs across the entire State of Uttar Pradesh. This will be achieved by training District Education Officers and master trainers in each of the 71 districts in Uttar Pradesh. Kusuma has supported and funded the printing of the SMDC Manual and dissemination to all government and government-aided secondary schools in the State.

The launch was attended by Mr. Jitendra Prasad (I.A.S) the Principal Secretary for Secondary Education, the Joint Secretary of RMSA, members of the Legislative Council,



The Minister for Secondary Education and guests launching the SMDC Manual
Photo: Kusuma Foundation

Education Department officials, Head Teachers from the 40 Hardoi schools already using the manual and representatives from Vigyan Foundation and Kusuma Foundation.

The Government of India's RMSA scheme aims to promote community ownership of secondary education by setting up and strengthening the role and responsibilities of SMDCs.

Together with Head Teachers, SMDCs take steps to ensure the growth and development of their school, promoting a conducive environment for academic excellence. SMDCs assist Head Teachers to prepare school annual plans to address both academic and infrastructure matters. SMDC roles and responsibilities include active involvement in school planning, implementation of interventions in schools and monitoring of progress.

Kusuma continues to deepen its work and engagement with schools in Hardoi (Uttar Pradesh) and Sambalpur (Odisha), including strengthening and providing SMDCs with the knowledge and skills they need to create a brighter future for young people.

"We continue with our strategic commitment to improve education quality and outcomes in secondary schools in Hardoi and Sambalpur. One strand of this is to build the capacity of SMDCs in close partnership with Education departments. We are encouraged by emerging results and the recognition by senior State officials, and we will continue to share our models and resources for the benefit of more schools."

Dr Balwant Singh,
CEO, Kusuma Trust UK

1. A SMDC consists of teachers and community members including local authorities, academics, representatives of disadvantaged groups and parents.
2. Parwaaz means 'to fly'.
3. Rashtriya Madhyamik Siksha Abhiyan (RMSA) is India's national scheme for improving the quality of secondary education.

SMDC arranges Science trip for students

Ms Rajaswari Mahore is the Head Teacher at the Government Higher Secondary School in Baheriya, Hardoi. She has always wanted her students to go on educational trips but as the only full time teacher in the school this has not been possible.

Ms Mahore approached the SMDC who agreed to organise a trip on her behalf. The SMDC members planned a Science trip for Class 10 students to visit the Regional Science City (RSCL) in Lucknow in December. As well as planning the details of the trip, members of the SMDC accompanied students to the RSCL and arranged transport to individually drop students home safely. SMDC members who participated in the trip came back very enthusiastic about their roles after witnessing the reactions of the students. They vowed to continue to offer their full support to enrich students' learning and to assist Ms Mahore.

“For the first time in my life I left my village with all my school friends to see stars and different science models. It was such a joyful learning trip.”

Mashi Devi, Class 10 Student
Government Higher Secondary School, Baheriya.

SMDC secures funds for school improvement

The U.G. Government High School, Garmunda, did not have enough classrooms for lessons and were using school buildings that were in a state of disrepair. The SMDC agreed that this was a top priority and lobbied education and government departments, without success.

With the support of Kusuma, SMDC members and the Head Teacher approached the Executive Engineer of the Rural Development Department in Sambalpur for financial support to repair classrooms and construct new Science and Computer laboratories. The SMDC was successful in obtaining INR 5.2 Lakhs for the construction work. Junior Engineers from the department partnered the SMDC to identify needs in existing buildings and space for construction. New Science laboratories are due for completion by December 2015. New flooring and roof replacements have already been completed in existing school buildings.

“Previously we had to use the Primary School building to conduct Science classes if they had a spare room. Most of the time this space was unavailable so practical lessons had to be dropped. I am now very happy to be getting dedicated rooms for a science laboratory. My students will have a much better learning experience.”

Sri. Byasadeb Pasayat,
Head Teacher, U.G. High School, Garmunda

Local community leader supports school

Parmanpur Girls High School is a Government school in Maneswar (Sambalpur District of Odisha) with 180 students. As the school had no water connection, toilets were unusable and safe drinking water unavailable. This was not conducive to learning and placed students at considerable risk.

After reviewing school annual plans with the help of Kusuma, the Head Teacher discussed the issue with the SMDC. They agreed to approach the local Sarpanch⁴ to inform him and other members of the local council about the situation. The SMDC's request to connect the school to the main water pipeline serving the local village was approved by the Sarpanch. With the support of Kusuma, work is underway to complete the connection in January 2015.

“It is the first time in my block that a school will have access to safe drinking water and running water for toilets. This is so critical for a girls' school. It will allow students to attend school with their dignity and safety no longer at risk as they will not need to leave school to access these services. I am so happy that we can make a contribution to the work of the school.”

Mr. Padmanava Nath,
Sarpanch of the Parmanpur Gram Panchayat



Kusuma staff and the Head Teacher of Parmanpur Girls High School discussing school annual plans. Photo: Kusuma Foundation

Annual BioWorld Conference in Delhi

On 12 -14 December 2014, the Kusuma School of Biological Sciences (KSBS) at the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi hosted the fourth annual BioWorld conference with a focus on Protein Structure and Function. The conference provided researchers and senior academics the opportunity to present latest research and developments to peers and internationally established scientists. Dr Balwant Singh, Chief Executive of The Trust, attended the conference and also participated in the Advisory Board meeting on 11 December 2014.

⁴ A Sarpanch is the elected head of a self governed institution at village or small town level in India known as a Gram Panchayat.