

Research on Employment

New approaches to education and training can increase job opportunities

The Kusuma Trust (The Trust) recently commissioned research on employability¹ in the Hardoi District of Uttar Pradesh. The study was carried out by Gfk Mode² to evaluate employability in the district by assessing the characteristics, knowledge, skills and attitudes of individuals seeking employment. The aim of the research is to generate evidence to inform the creation of appropriate job opportunities and increase employment.

Interviews were carried out with 800 people aged 18-35 years in twenty villages. Respondents were categorised as employed, unemployed or under-employed. Quantitative surveys with vocational training institutes and industry leaders alongside focus groups were also conducted as part of the study. 36% of respondents were self-employed in agricultural activities and 13% in small business or trade. 18% were in work but under-employed in skilled labour, such as chefs, electricians and mechanics, whilst 33% were classified as unemployed. Unemployment was mainly linked to low rates of literacy, a shortage of vocational institutions and a dearth of jobs locally. The findings suggest that the high level of unemployment in Hardoi may have contributed to 30% of the population moving to neighbouring larger towns and cities in search of work.

Recommendations on increasing employment in the district include a new approach to education through integrating vocational training into mainstream education, striving for universal literacy and further training opportunities by State Government and employers. The study also proposes that more structured and accessible support for people to set up small-scale cottage industries such as tailoring and embroidery, improved transport links between towns and rural villages, and special provisions for the employment of women would be helpful. The report of the research will be available on The Trust's website³ in April 2013.

The Trust is working with the Better Education Through Innovation Foundation (BETI) in Hardoi to deliver vocational training to 3,000 young people who have dropped out of school, with the first cohort of 459 trainees due to complete their accredited training in April 2013. The vocational training includes welding, automobile mechanics and embroidery.

Hardoi District

Agriculture and Horticulture are the District's major industries, particularly grain mill and sugar production.

There are 38 working factories in the District and 347 small scale industries.

The single largest producer of yeast in India is based in Hardoi.

¹ Employability refers to an individual's capability of gaining employment and maintaining it (Hillage and Pollard, 1998)

² www.gfk-mode.com

³ www.kusumatrust.org/about-us/publications



Young women learning embroidery skills at a vocational training course in Hardoi. Photo: BETI

National Award for Kusuma Fellow

Udayan Care

Amreen, a Kusuma Udayan Shalini Fellow, who was selected for the Kusuma funded scholarship programme implemented by Udayan Care in Dehradun, Uttarakhand, recently won a Higher Education Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research (INSPIRE) award. The award of INR 120,000 was given to Amreen as part of the Indian Government's flagship scheme to engage young people in Science and Technology and to encourage careers in scientific research. As a result of receiving the award, Amreen would like to become a science teacher.

Science in Schools

The Science Museum

The Science Museum's learning project funded by the Trust aims to provide practical learning experiences to students, their families and teachers. This month the project commenced work with 20 primary schools and 1,200 students from London and the South-East of England by inviting teachers and students to participate in facilitated visits to the Museum. The Science Museum is also developing virtual and physical classroom resources for teachers to take back to the classroom and use with their students either during formal science lessons or through STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) clubs. Physical resources created for schools include 'Mystery Boxes' and 'News and Views' to support the 'How Science works' curriculum, and 'Launchbox' designed to support exploration of science themes such as light and sound.



Primary school students participating in 'Science Museum Live'. Photo: Science Museum

New teaching materials in Science

The Open University

Udbhaav⁴, the Teacher Professional Development in Secondary Science and English project, held a three-day cluster meeting for teachers in Hardoi, Uttar Pradesh, in February. The purpose of the meeting was to gather teachers' feedback on recently developed teaching materials that have been piloted in classrooms. The materials were developed in consultation with a Project District Resource Group in response to identified needs of teachers in the district. The group includes teachers and district education officers.

Feedback from the teachers at the meeting identified the usefulness of the materials in guiding and supporting them on *how* to teach rather than simply focusing on *what* to teach. The materials enable teachers to use a student-centred approach and encourage students to engage in peer discussion rather than simply learning from textbooks. The feedback from the cluster meeting will inform further improvements in the teaching materials for the next academic year.

Other Fellowships

On 23 February, the Country Leader of the Kusuma Foundation attended the closing event of Ford Foundation's International Fellowship Programme⁵ in New Delhi. The programme had been running for 12 years and offered advanced study opportunities to leaders who work for social change to enhance their knowledge, skills and capacity to serve as transformational leaders in their home countries. The fellowship programme emphasised equity and access to higher education which has parallels with Kusuma's Fellowship programmes.

Indo-UK higher education partnerships

UK universities have announced a series of research partnerships and scholarships to coincide with the UK prime minister's recent visit to India to bolster trade and education links. Prime Minister Cameron announced a new 'one-day' visa service for Indian students that he hopes will facilitate improved access to educational opportunities for those wishing to study in the UK.

⁴ Udbhaav meaning to 'rise from' is the teacher professional development programme funded by The Trust

⁵ www.fordifp.net