



Transforming lives through education

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kusuma
trust

Investing in Teachers

Bridging learning gaps to raise student attainment

Across India, schools are facing a severe shortage of teachers. In the State of Odisha¹, there are 24,735 sanctioned teaching posts with 21% of these being unfilled and in Uttar Pradesh² 61% of the 22,444 sanctioned teaching positions remain vacant.

In Kusuma's two focus districts of Hardoi in Uttar Pradesh and Sambalpur in Odisha there are 1,080 teacher vacancies. The teacher-student ratio is high with 1 teacher to every 72 students in Hardoi and 1 to 48 in Sambalpur. This has an adverse effect on student attainment as confirmed by the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER)³ 2014 which shows 25.5% of Class 8 students unable to read text suitable for Class 2 and 56% of Class 8 students unable to perform basic arithmetic.

As part of the Kusuma Schools Partnership Initiative (KSPI), the Trust works with 25 secondary schools in Hardoi and 25 in Sambalpur to improve the quality of teaching and raise student attainment. To ensure that teacher shortages do not impact on student performance, Kusuma recruited a pool of 72 teachers to cover sanctioned vacant positions and long-term absences. All teachers in the pool receive training on subject content, good teaching practices and innovative ways to improve student participation. They also help deliver Kusuma's Secondary School Readiness Programme (SSRP) which bridges the learning gaps amongst students through group activities, enquiry-based learning techniques and study camps.

In 2014-2015, the 72 teachers (42 in Hardoi and 30 in Sambalpur) delivered 27,198 class sessions in both districts. With the help of these teachers schools were able to deliver the full syllabus, some for the very first time. The teachers also delivered 7,672 SSRP sessions enabling 6,100 students to improve their understanding of key subjects. Their support meant that the workload of regular teachers became more manageable and they were able to devote more time and attention to students.

Sudarsan Siksha Sadan, Majhiya, a KSPI school in Hardoi has 1,500 students and only 4 teachers in post. Teachers were struggling to teach the required classes and keep students interested. After discussions with the Head Teacher, School Management and Development Committee members and District Education Officer, Kusuma deployed three teachers from the pool to the school. Using innovative approaches, such as activity-based learning, linking real life experience with textbooks and peer learning, students became more engaged in lessons and attendance rose by 25%.

“We love coming to school, because the new teachers from Kusuma organise a lot of games and activities in the class and make learning much more fun”.

Pratiksha Singh, Student, Class 10 Student,
Sudarshan Siksha Sadan, Majhiya, Hardoi



A teacher from the Kusuma teaching pool delivering a lesson in Sambalpur
Photo: Kusuma Foundation

Kusuma continues to support schools in Hardoi and Sambalpur to improve teaching by reducing the teacher-student ratio through the teaching pool, promoting the use of innovative teaching and learning materials, delivering training on interactive teaching methods, providing on-site support and coaching for teachers, and promoting the sharing of good practice.

1. http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/minutes/Odisha.pdf
2. http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/minutes/UP.pdf
3. www.asercentre.org

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

Effective teaching in the classroom

Mr. Rinku Pradhan is a teacher from the Kusuma teaching pool and delivers language classes in Saleibhata High School. The school is located in a remote hilly area of Sambalpur and has been unable to fill a language teaching vacancy for the past 5 years. Having participated in training sessions based on Kusuma's Good Teaching Guide and Teacher Support Units, Mr Pradhan further developed his own teaching methods. As a keen artist, Mr Pradhan started using illustrations in his story telling lessons. His hand painted pictures of popular fables depicted each story he intended to teach.

Mr Pradhan's innovative approach has seen students enjoy lessons and become more engaged in class. Students now understand the language easier and enjoy writing, illustrating and sharing their own versions of stories.



A painting by Mr Pradhan explaining one of the stories he teaches
Photo: Kusuma Foundation

“The training from Kusuma helped me to develop the teaching-learning aids that I use to make lessons more relevant and interesting for students.”

Mr Rinku Pradhan, teacher from
the Kusuma Teaching Pool

The world is my classroom

The Kusuma Excellence Awards identify and reward teachers who are top performers. Teachers receive a cash prize and support for their professional development. Twenty award winning teachers in Hardoi recently participated in a course entitled 'The World is my Classroom' delivered in partnership with Pravah Learning Voyages Private Limited.⁴

'The World is my Classroom' gives teachers an understanding of life skills and the importance of relating classroom learning with students' home environments. Teachers use real life examples to illustrate concepts and encourage student engagement. They also explore the role teachers play in strengthening life skills and help students to apply these skills to real life situations.

Teachers are encouraged to share their experiences with others in 'Teacher Network' meetings facilitated by Kusuma to increase awareness on how including life skills in school curricula can benefit students and their communities. Kusuma continues to support these teachers to introduce life skills lessons in their schools.

“This course has really helped me think how I can design life skills activities and weave them into my classroom teaching. I have now come to believe that as teachers, we have a responsibility to make learning more interesting and relevant. By engaging more with students and using real life examples we can give them the life skills and ability to make a real difference”.

Kalpna Verma, teacher at
Rampal Singh Kanaujiya Girl's
Higher Secondary School

Education tour inspires teachers

37 Science and Mathematics teachers from Sambalpur recently visited one of the most pioneering Science institutes in India, the Regional Science Centre in Digha, West Bengal. Teachers had the chance to participate in practical science experiments explaining the concepts of sound and light, chemical reactions and environmental pollution, and received guidance on how to use these in schools. Mr. Chakraborty, the Senior Faculty member from the Centre explained the importance of practical lessons complimenting theory and shared some innovative teaching materials.

The Kusuma supported educational tour promotes teacher learning and good teaching practices. Tours are an integral part of the support given to teachers as part of Kusuma's Teacher Professional Development activities. In 2014-15, 55 teachers have had the opportunity to visit Centres of Excellence to explore new approaches, observe innovative practices and diversify their teaching repertoire.

“This was my first ever learning visit and I was very excited to be part of it. It definitely helped develop my ideas and skills to make classroom learning more fun and I will be planning many more practical science lessons”.

Jagannath Pradhan, teacher at Parmanpur Girls' High School,

4. <http://www.pravah.org>