

Sixty-Five Secondary Schools to receive support

The Trust has committed £191,385 for interventions to improve the quality of secondary education in Uttar Pradesh and Orissa

In early May, The Trust signed grant agreements with two NGOs, Vigyan Foundation (VF) and Centre for Youth and Social Development (CYSD), for projects aimed at strengthening the capacity and effectiveness of School Management and Development Committees (SMDC)*, an essential component of Rastriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA)*, in Hardoi, Uttar Pradesh and Sambalpur, Orissa. These grants will support 40 schools in Hardoi and 25 schools in Sambalpur.

The projects will strengthen school governance and management by training SMDC members to understand and fulfill their responsibilities. Each SMDC will develop and implement a school development plan to improve their school's learning environment and boost the enrolment, retention and academic performance of students.

All 65 schools will be encouraged to lobby the government to ensure that necessary infrastructure, such a separate toilets for boys and girls, enclosed playgrounds, science laboratories and libraries, are established and functioning in the schools.

**SMDCs are comprised of up to 18 members (including teachers, parents and community members) and are responsible for school governance and management.*

***RMSA is India's national scheme for improving the quality of secondary education.*

May Snapshot

- Six grant agreements signed
- £352,000 in new grants committed
- Research programme approved



A teacher and students during an English class at the Sarvodaya Ashram in Hardoi, Uttar Pradesh. Photo: Sam Strickland



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Udayan Shalini Fellows in Dehradun, Uttarakhand.
Photo: Suzanne Davies

Scholarships renewed

On 25 April, The Trust committed £49,553 to Udayan Care for the continuation of the **Kusuma Udayan Shalini Fellowship** until March 2013. The grant will enable 249 meritorious female students from economically challenged backgrounds in Dehradun, Uttarakhand, to complete their higher education.

On 4 May, The Trust awarded £17,647 to Sambalpur Integrated Development Institute to add a fourth cohort of 100 students to its **Kusuma Ratna Fellowship Programme**, which has thus far enabled 300 students in Sambalpur, Orissa, to complete their senior secondary schooling and enrol in tertiary courses.

“Fellows appear to exert more effort in schools and receiving the fellowship appears to make them value education more and have a better sense of the wages they expect to earn in the labour market upon graduation. Parents of fellows tend to believe that if one daughter is successful in school, others should follow in her footsteps.”

From an evaluation of the impact of the Kusuma Udayan Shalini Fellowship Programme by the London School of Economics

A new grant for Pragathi Seva Samithi will also be approved in May for the **Kusuma Young Achievers’ Award** to assist over 500 students to complete their higher education in Warangal, Andhra Pradesh. Scholarship students from all three programmes receive a stipend, mentoring support and career counseling.

Open University starts new project

From 18 to 27 April, the Open University (OU) team managing the **Professional Development of Secondary Science and English Teachers** project visited India for meetings with key stakeholders at District and State levels. A presentation to the Uttar Pradesh State Education Department is planned for mid-May, after which a Memorandum of Understanding will be signed with the Department. Also in May, the OU will prepare the field-testing of the curriculum framework for teacher educators, teachers and students of Science in Classes 9-10, and create a research and evaluation framework.

Frontline workers trained

On 12 and 13 April, 185 frontline workers received training at the Kasturba Gandhi Memorial Trust in Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, on children’s vulnerabilities and rights and the importance of utilising the Juvenile Justice Act to support children at-risk. On 7 and 21 April, personnel from the Judiciary, Police, Child Welfare Committee, Juvenile Justice Board and Juvenile Welfare Department, from Hyderabad and Ranga Reddy Districts, received training on the Juvenile and Child Protection mechanisms designed to assist vulnerable children in need of care or those in conflict with the law.

New research

On 4 May, The Trust signed a grant agreement for £86,832 with Kusuma Foundation, its affiliate, to fund a programme of research across several projects. The programme will include a new Kusuma Research Fellowship, baseline studies and evaluations to track the impact and effectiveness of Trust-funded interventions.

A grant of £6,890 will enable the NGO, Pratham, to conduct a pilot study from May to July to assess the status of secondary education in Hardoi, Uttar Pradesh, to develop tools and methodologies for a future, larger-scale study.

Research has also been undertaken to assess the impact of the Mid-Day Meal Programme, managed by The Akshaya Patra Foundation, on the enrolment, attendance and retention of students in secondary schools in Nayagarh, Orissa, and Medak, Andhra Pradesh. A summary of the findings will be available in May/June.

“Food variety, quality and nutritional content have improved considerably and the programme encourages enrolment, increases attendance and prevents students from dropping out of schools. It also creates a positive communal hub where children can sit, eat and socialise together without the worry of going without food.”

From a research study into the Mid-Day Meal Programme in Nayagarh, Orissa and Medak, Andhra Pradesh

Other News

In a letter to the UK Chancellor, George Osborne, the CEO of The Trust, Dr Balwant Singh, expressed concerns about the impact the UK government’s planned cap on income tax relief will have on charitable giving. Dr Singh believes this proposed change will inhibit philanthropy, be detrimental to community and international development and jeopardise the financial sustainability of charities and foundations.

<http://www.kusumatrust.org/news/latest-news/charity-tax-relief-cap-debate/>