



Improving Schools

Better facilities, cleaner classrooms, more teachers

Improving secondary education is a priority for the Government of India following legislation on the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act in 2009 and the launch of the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA). RMSA focuses on improving the quality of secondary education and ensuring more boys and girls go to school. It aims to ensure schools offer high quality education by improving facilities, such as electricity connections in classrooms, separate toilets for boys and girls, safe drinking water, libraries and science laboratories. Equally, quality education needs adequate numbers of well-trained teachers in every classroom. According to the Ministry of Human Resource Development there are 24,735 sanctioned teaching posts in government schools in the State of Odisha. However 21% of the posts are vacant. In Uttar Pradesh, there are 22,444 sanctioned teaching posts with 61% not filled.

Since 2013, the Kusuma Trust UK (The Trust) has supported 25 schools in the district of Sambalpur in Odisha and 25 schools in Hardoi, Uttar Pradesh as part of the Kusuma Schools Partnership Initiative. The programme works with the State government and District Education Offices to create model schools based on RMSA guidelines. The Trust works closely with our partner, the Kusuma Foundation in India, local communities and Head teachers to develop school plans for better teaching and improved student performance.

In the first two years of the programme, the focus was on improving facilities and basic infrastructure in schools. To-date, 36 schools have installed overhead water tanks, water connections and water purifiers for safe drinking water. 11 schools have power generators and 39 schools have an electricity connection. 16 schools have newly renovated toilet blocks for boys and girls, and all 50 schools have audio-visual equipment, libraries, and computer and Science laboratories. In 2015, the priority is to complete renovations in all schools, including providing an internet connection where feasible and supplementing each school library with 1,000 books.

In addition to providing a safe, clean and comfortable environment for students, the Trust is working in each district to support teacher professional development through training, interactive teaching and learning materials, and mentoring. Last year, the Trust worked in partnership with schools to recruit 72 contract teachers to help address the shortage of teachers in each district. The new teachers delivered over 27,000 lessons to 6,000 students, and more teachers have been recruited for the new academic year. Teachers are trained on pedagogy and on innovative lesson ideas to improve their practice and subject knowledge.

Mr Sangham Sahoo, the former District Education Officer in Sambalpur welcomed the Trust's work: *"the additional teachers in the schools has boosted the morale of the head teachers and wider community"*. The District Inspector of Schools in Hardoi, J. P Mishra, is grateful to Kusuma for the whole school approach, which supports the district's ambition to provide quality education for all students, including those from rural and disadvantaged communities.



A girl washes her hands from a water pump at UPS Saripur, Chhacheta, Hardoi
Photo: Sam Strickland

"Our new school roof means that rain will no longer prevent us from studying, I have completed the entire syllabus in our newly renovated, clean and dry classroom"

Sabita Sahu, Class 9, Jamujori High School, Sambalpur

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

Raising attendance

A school in Sambalpur is finding ways to encourage more children to attend classes by improving school facilities. Gormunda Government High School in Sambalpur had 50% classroom attendance in 2014. The School Management and Development Committee (SMDC) agreed that more should be done to improve attendance and retention. With support from the Trust and the District Education Office, the school improved its library, Science and ICT facilities. In the new academic year, student attendance has now increased to 80% and teachers have reported more enthusiastic students and interest in classes.

Basudeb Pasayat, interim Head Teacher of the school, has noticed a change in the mindset of teachers and students with the improved facilities. Now teachers are more confident they will complete the syllabus in advance of annual examinations and more students participate in Science experiments and use ICT to supplement learning from textbooks.



Girls from Gormunda Government High School using computers in the classroom
Photo: Kusuma Foundation

Community funding

Chandra Devi Shiksha Niketan is a government-aided school in Hardoi. Since 1938, when the school was established, the school has not had an electricity connection and students had to study in classrooms with no lighting and working fans during the summer months. The Trust agreed to support the school with partial funding for the electricity connection in the school improvement plan. The SMDC and the head teacher worked together to fundraise from the community to contribute to the remaining costs of the electricity connection. They secured matched funding of INR 42,000.

“Electricity will make learning more comfortable in the summer with fully functioning fans and students will now be able to study in fully lit classrooms”

Mr. Verma, SMDC member, who played a key role in ensuring the school had electricity

A cleaner school

Government Inter College Tandiyawan in Hardoi has found resourceful ways to create a cleaner school environment by instilling the ethos of a ‘clean school’ in teachers and students. The school adopted a culture of pride in the school building and surroundings, ensuring there is dedicated time in the school day for students to look after their school. The school’s major challenge had been a lack of dustbins, time for cleaning and the behaviour change required of teachers and students alike. The SMDC discussed options to improve the cleanliness of the school and decided to purchase fifty dustbins that were strategically placed in the school grounds. The Head teacher also allocated time in the school day for students to clean classrooms and surrounding areas. Students were also encouraged to recycle rubbish as much as possible and class monitors were selected to ensure tidy classrooms and clean corridors. Science teacher Mr. Kaushal Kishor explained:

“Once we had placed the dustbins around the school and introduced time in the school day for cleaning, we highlighted to students the importance of recycling and ensured students’ behaviour positively changed. Our school now has a face lift!”



New dustbins line the well-swept corridors of Inter College Tandiyawan
Photo: Kusuma Foundation

Toilets for girls

The number of schools in India with toilet facilities for girls increased from 0.4 million in 2006 to almost 1 million schools in 2014. Research by UN-Water¹ shows that good sanitation in schools can increase enrolment by 12 per cent up to Class 8. Girls Inter College in Hardoi has built a toilet block for students to encourage more girls to come to school. The lack of toilets had caused a risk to health and led to an unhygienic school environment. The SMDC had identified the need for a student toilet block for a number of years but lacked funding. Through the Trust’s support, the school now has a fully functioning toilet block and as a result more girls are attending classes, confident the school is a safe and hygienic place to learn. Vandan Badhvall, Principal of the school is equally confident that toilets will have a positive outcome on students’ learning.

¹ <http://www.unwater.org>