



Transforming lives through education

October 2015



Satellite Resource Centres Launched

Increasing opportunities for remote communities

In September, four satellite Kusuma Resource Centres (KRCs) were launched in schools in Hardoi, Uttar Pradesh and Sambalpur, Odisha. The four new satellite centres aim to build on the success of existing KRCs, and will allow more communities from remote areas access to education resources and the chance to participate in training and courses.

Kusuma established two KRCs in Hardoi and Sambalpur in 2013 to support the work in each district, as part of the Kusuma Schools Partnership Initiative (KSPI)¹. Each centre has a library and a computer suite with full internet access, and offers training, and other events for students, teachers, parents and the wider community.

KRCs provide a space where students can participate in training to achieve academic excellence, enhance their employability skills and explore future careers. They host professional development programmes for teachers and head teachers and encourage the sharing of good practice. KRCs also hold education and career fairs, computer training and English communication courses as well as creative writing and practical Science workshops.

In the last two years demand for the KRCs and access to resources has increased. However, students and teachers living in remote areas of the districts have been unable to travel to the centres. As a result, two schools in Sambalpur and two in Hardoi will now act as satellite resource centres providing a similar level of resources, opportunities and courses for those who are unable to travel to the two main KRCs. The activities in these satellite centres will reach new communities and provide more people with the chance to participate in education activities.

Local leaders, community officials, representatives from education departments as well as students and teachers from secondary schools attended the launch of the satellite centres. One guest, Mr. Sailesh Agnihotri, the Chairman of Municipal Corporation GGIC in Sandila said:

“This is an opportunity for the students of the district and the remote blocks to build their skills and eventually excel in the job market. I would like to thank Kusuma for providing these great educational facilities in such remote locations of the district and can guarantee my support for these centres.”

Since the launch of the four satellite centres last month, membership has already reached 328, with 228 students already enrolled in English and Computer courses. One newly registered member is Deepak Badhei a Class 10 student at the Sahaspur High School who is looking forward to learning about computers. He said:

“When I used to see my teacher use a computer, I would be overawed. Computers were just machines that we saw in class but never dared to touch. This new centre has made it possible for me to learn about computers from professionals. I am really thankful to Kusuma for this opportunity.”



Mr Minaketan Pathy, the former Principal of Persuram Mishra Institute of Advance Study in Education, opens the new satellite centre in Sambalpur.
Photo: Kusuma Foundation

¹ KSPI works intensively with 50 secondary schools in Hardoi and Sambalpur to improve student attainment, teaching standards, school governance and the school environment.

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

Preparing students for the workplace

Two of the most popular courses on offer at KRCs are the English Communication and the Computer courses. Students have realised that the need for proficiency in English and Computers is now becoming essential for many job opportunities across India.

In 2014-2015, 240 students from Hardoi and 217 from Sambalpur completed English communication courses, to improve their speaking, writing and listening skills and basic Computing courses aimed at encouraging computer literacy. In 2015-2016 the demand for these courses has increased. With the launch of the new satellite centres, 800 students are likely to complete the English Communication course with over 500 students participating in the Basic Computer classes across both the districts.



Students participating in a Computer course at the KRC in Sambalpur.
Photo: Sam Strickland

Soumyaranjan is a Class 10 student from A. Katapali High School in Sambalpur. He felt that unable to learn English at school as he mainly studied in Odia. He had always been interested in learning English as he was aware that any future employers would require it, but did not know of a relevant course. Soumyaranjan completed 48 hours of English lessons at the KRC and said:

“I will never forget the last class in my English communication course. I made a full presentation in front of others completely in English. It was one of the most powerful experiences I have ever had.”

Avinash Gupta is a Class 9 student from the Ganga Devi Intercollege in Hardoi and has no access to computers at his school or home. He is interested in learning how to use computers so he can take competitive employment exams in future. After signing up for a computer course at the KRC he had this to say:

“I am so excited that I am able to come to the KRC to learn about computers. I can't wait to get started and demonstrate what I will learn to all my friends and family. They will be so proud.”

Sunita's Story

Sunita holds a Masters in Economics and is currently looking for a job in the banking sector. She is from a lower middle class family and believes that a career in banking will enable her to financially support her parents. When Sunita began to prepare for her banking exams, she felt under-prepared and disheartened as there was no access to reference books, computers or the internet.

Sunita heard about the KRC from a parent of her friend, who suggested that she visit. The very next day Sunita saw the facilities and resources available, and registered with the KRC straight away. In the lead up to her exams Sunita spent two to three hours each day at the KRC using the library for research, participating in online practice exams and keeping up to date with the latest financial news and trends from around the world.

Since joining the KRC, Sunita has sat three banking exams, passing each one, and now hopes to secure a position at the Regional Rural Bank (RRB). With the support of Kusuma, Sunita is far more confident that she will qualify for the final interview process and now aims to compete for a senior position within the bank.

“I had a particular aim in my life but without the required resources I would never be able to achieve it. My family is not in a position to afford the costly coaching, reference books and online access to practice tests. The Kusuma Resource Centre has made it possible for me to achieve what I want. It's not just me, there are many other students following their dreams thanks to Kusuma.”

Quality Circle meetings for teachers

The KRCs recently hosted the first Quality Circle meetings on 30 September in Hardoi and 7 October in Sambalpur. Quality Circles are peer-learning networks for teachers to come together, share innovative ideas and learn from one another to improve their own teaching.

The first quality circle meetings focused on innovative methods for teaching Science, English, Mathematics and managing libraries. The ideas help to encourage and enthuse teachers to select innovations and implement them in their school. Mr. Veer Bhanu Singh an English teacher from Hardoi shared how he uses word games in the classroom to encourage vocabulary building and Mr. Akhilesh Pandey a Science teacher, demonstrated how he brings ordinary objects into the classroom to link science to everyday life.

Many teachers use innovative methods in the classroom that differ from the common lecturing at a blackboard but in most situations these practices are often unrecognised. The KRC is a hub for teachers to recognise their efforts and will continue to promote innovation and reward teachers.

There will be three Quality Circle meetings each year in both districts. The aim of each meeting is to identify common issues or problems teachers face and to find solutions that improve the quality of their teaching.