

Teachers in Focus

Promoting good practice and professional development

The Kusuma Trust UK (the Trust) believes that teachers are pivotal in improving the quality of education and outcomes for students. The Trust supports the professional development of teachers, recruits volunteer teachers to address teacher vacancies and shortages, and encourages the sharing of good practice among teachers.

The Trust works with the Kusuma Foundation in India to deliver training to Head teachers and teachers. **Udbhav**¹, the Trust's professional development programme for teachers, aims to improve classroom practices through training, mentoring, school-based support and the provision of low cost interactive teaching and learning resources. *Udbhav* was piloted in Hardoi in Uttar Pradesh in 2012 and now supports teachers in 92 government and government-aided secondary schools in the district. In August 2014, the programme was expanded to include 153 schools in Sambalpur, Odisha. In addition to interactive teaching methods, the programme focuses on three subjects – English, Science and Mathematics. *Udbhav* supports the implementation of Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA)², India's national strategy for improving the quality of secondary education, produces bespoke teaching and learning modules and offers face-to-face training and mentoring for teachers.



Teachers learning innovative teaching methods at the Kusuma Resource Centre
Photo: Sam Strickland

There is a shortage of teachers in both districts, with sanctioned teaching posts remaining vacant. To address this problem, 72 **volunteer teachers** have been recruited in Sambalpur and Hardoi in the 50 schools that are part of the Kusuma Schools Partnership Initiative. Volunteer teachers cover sanctioned but vacant teacher positions and long-term teacher absences. Volunteer teachers also take responsibility for supporting students to bridge their learning gaps. All the volunteers received a full orientation on their roles and responsibilities and participate in *Udbhav*.

"We believe teachers should be supported and given appropriate resources to deliver quality education."

Dr Balwant Singh, CEO of Kusuma Trust UK

A second round of Kusuma Teachers' **Innovation Conferences** were held in August at the Kusuma Resource Centres (KRCs) in Hardoi and Sambalpur in partnership with STIR³ Education to promote the sharing of good practice. The conferences built on the theme of the first round of conferences in January where teachers were introduced to the concept of **'teachers as change makers'** to encourage innovative thinking. Teachers shared micro-innovations they had developed since January and highlighted the impact these have had in the classroom. Micro-innovations from across the country will be assessed by STIR and teachers with the top 100 micro-innovations will be invited to participate in a STIR conference in Delhi in September and will be awarded a certificate from Roehampton University, London.

"It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge."

Albert Einstein

¹ *'Udbhav'* means to rise from

² http://mhrd.gov.in/rashtriya_madhyamik_shiksha_abhiyan

³ <http://www.stireducation.org>

Transforming Science teaching in schools

Ms Sukanti Nayak, a Science teacher at Parmanpur Girl's High School in Sambalpur, used to rely only on textbooks for her teaching as she did not have access to suitable interactive resources to enhance teaching and learning in the school.

Ms Nayak recently attended a teacher innovation workshop at the Kusuma Resource Centre in Sambalpur where teachers had the opportunity to learn new and innovative methods of teaching Science by using locally available resources. Since the training, she has created her own teaching and learning materials using paper cups, thread and balloons. She now regularly uses these to enhance the learning experience for her students. As a result, students at the school have become more engaged in her lessons and have started to create their own resources with her help.

"We are very lucky to get an opportunity from Kusuma to learn new simple ways to teach Science and I am now more confident in experimenting with resources to teach the underlying principles of Science through fun methods. We now convert waste material into useful learning aids for experiments and are already sharing these techniques with our students."

Ms Sukanti Nayak,
Parmanpur Girl's High School, Sambalpur

London teacher visits Sambalpur

Nick Clabburn, a teacher from London, visited Sambalpur in August to work with teachers and students in some schools. *"It was a privilege to be able to join the Kusuma team in Sambalpur and meet teachers and students in their schools. Teachers in the UK could learn a great deal from the schools in Sambalpur, where despite a lack of resources, materials and infrastructure the teachers have a huge amount of commitment and a real sense of solidarity within their schools. The students also have incredible enthusiasm, humour and a real eagerness to learn, often against all odds."*



Students studying at the Sason High School in Sambalpur
Photo: Sam Strickland

Attendance and examination results soar

Mr. Sanjay Kumar Pandey is a teacher at Shri Dev Darbar Ashram Inter College in Hardoi, and has been regularly attending teacher training sessions as part of the *Udbhav* programme. As a result of the training, he has transferred many new skills to transform teaching in his classroom.



Mr Pandey teaching a Science lesson in Hardoi
Photo: Kusuma Foundation

Mr Pandey has seen attendance in his Science classes increase by 15% and has also seen a huge impact on the annual Class 10 Board examination results. The pass rates have risen from 33% in 2013 to 60% 2014. He has also become more confident to share his new knowledge and skills with other teachers in the district and has facilitated training sessions for volunteer teachers.

"The Udbhav programme has greatly helped me in engaging students. I personally feel that even more than the facilities at the school, teacher capacity development is vital to improve classroom teaching and learning."

Mr Sanjay Kumar Pandey,
Shri Dev Darbar Ashram Inter College, Hardoi

Kusuma Team

Edith Parker joined the Trust in August as Finance Manager and Cristal De Saldanha Stainbank will join the team in October as Head of Programmes. We thank Andrew Vivian, the Programme and Grants Manager, for his significant contributions over the last two years. He left the Trust at the end of August.

Kusuma Twitter



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