



Transforming Lives

Development begins with education

In 2016, the universal Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)¹ agreed by the United Nations (UN) came into effect. There are 17 proposed goals that provide a framework for countries to better target and monitor progress in social, economic and environmental sustainable development. For the goals to be achieved, governments, the private sector, charities and civil society all need to play their part.

According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, countries must recruit 69 million teachers in the next 14 years to provide every child with primary and secondary education². Teachers play a critical role in improving the quality of education and learning outcomes, which is why SDGs call for a huge increase in qualified teachers and support for teacher training.

The Kusuma Trust UK (the Trust) believes that education is a basic right and the basis for sustainable progress. The Trust's work contributes to SDGs by improving the quality of secondary education and providing opportunities for young people in India, the UK and Gibraltar. This update focuses on goals relevant to the work of the Trust.

End poverty in all its forms

Education is key in reducing poverty. On average, one year of education is associated with a 10% increase in earnings³. The Kusuma Excellence Fellowship programme provides scholarships for young people in our focus districts of Hardoi and Sambalpur in India to continue their education and progress into employment. Fellows who have graduated report higher earnings and a higher standard of living for themselves and their families. The Trust also supports students in the UK and Gibraltar to access top universities and gain employment through scholarships, enterprise and pathways programmes.

Achieve gender equality

Education can empower women to overcome gender discrimination and make informed choices about their lives. In India, young women with secondary education are more likely to have a say over their choice of spouse than women with no education and they go on to have more control over when to have their first child⁴. The Trust supports and encourages more girls to attend secondary school in the two focus districts by funding the construction of separate toilets for girls and boys, working with community members

to encourage more girls to attend and remain in school, and provide more trained teachers and additional learning materials to improve the foundation skills of students.

Inclusive and equitable quality education

Education contributes to inclusive societies and participatory and representative decision-making. In India, the higher the level of household education, the more likely people are to attend local forums and play an active role in their community⁵. The Trust supports community participation in school life to strengthen school governance and funds the training of School Management and Development Committee (SMDC) members on their roles and responsibilities. The Trust supports the State Government of Uttar Pradesh to strengthen school governance in more than 1,500 secondary schools in all 75 districts for more than 23,000 SMDC members.

“Education is a fundamental right and the basis for progress in every country. Prosperous countries depend on skilled and educated workers. The challenges of conquering poverty, combating climate change and achieving truly sustainable development in the coming decades compel us to work together. With partnership, leadership and wise investments in education, we can transform individual lives, national economies and our world.”

Ban Ki-Moon, United Nations Secretary-General

UNESCO highlights the pressing need for more teachers to be recruited who are well trained, well supported and commensurately paid. The Trust uses evidence on teacher vacancies and the impact of this on students to advocate with the State governments of Odisha and Uttar Pradesh in India to fill teacher vacancies and recruit more teachers. Kusuma delivers training to more than 1,200 teachers, has developed interactive teaching and learning resources in English, Mathematics, Science, Hindi and Odia, and supports teachers through mentoring and peer learning. Our Excellence awards recognise teachers for outstanding performance and encourage high standards in the schools we support, making a positive impact on the lives of more than 60,000 students each year.

1. <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html>
2. <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/FS39-teachers-2016-en.pdf>
3. <http://www.globalpartnership.org/education/the-benefits-of-education>
4. <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Library/Documents/gmr-2013-14-teaching-and-learning-education-for-all-2014-en.pdf>
5. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/0023305/230508e.pdf>

Helping my family out of poverty

Shrabani Parida lives in a small one-room rented home with her mother and father who run a small shop in Sambalpur. She passed her Class 12 board examinations and wanted to pursue higher education but her family's low income meant she was unable to afford the fees. One of Shrabani's teachers referred her to the Kusuma Excellence Fellowship (KEF) programme. KEF offers 200 scholarships each year to students from disadvantaged backgrounds to complete secondary school and pursue higher education. The Fellowship includes a stipend, mentoring, English and computer training, life skills development and career guidance.

Shrabani successfully applied for the Fellowship in 2012 and has since completed a Bachelor in Education course at Sambalpur University, and is now employed as a Government teacher in Dangsargi Ashram School. Shrabani is helping her family by supporting her younger brother who is studying at the Industrial Training Institute (ITI) in Hirkud so that he may have the same opportunities that she had.

"The Kusuma Excellence Fellowship supported my academic and professional growth. It has given me the knowledge and skills to become a teacher and contribute to the family income ensuring a comfortable and better quality of life for me and my family."

Enabling girls to stay in school

Many schools in rural Hardoi in Uttar Pradesh struggle to ensure that girls regularly attend school. A lack of separate toilets for girls and boys, a shortage of teachers and the distance girls have to travel to reach school contribute to girls dropping out of school at an early age.

Tanya Pathak is in Class 10 at the Government High School Udharanpur in Hardoi. In 2014 the school only had one teacher and a shortage of facilities meaning that Tanya was not comfortable going to school despite wanting to study. Tanya considered attending a private school but this was not an option as her father was concerned for her safety travelling to a school further away and he could not afford the fees.

Kusuma recognises these barriers to education for girls such as Tanya and supports schools to recruit more teachers, improve facilities and create a safer environment for girls. Today, more teachers in Tanya's school ensure classes are held regularly with better quality teaching, there are separate toilets for boys and girls and Tanya does not have to pay to study or travel long distances to a private school. She is delighted to attend school safely and continue her education in her home village.



Tanya Pathak working with her classmates at her school.
Photo: Kusuma Foundation

School sets example for community participation

Kisinda High School is a government high school with 300 children from 35 surrounding villages. Ms. Darshani Sandha, Head teacher of the school decided that more should be done to involve parents and unite communities to improve their school. With support from Kusuma, Ms Sandha invited parents and the local community to attend meetings at the school to participate in the School Management and Development Committee (SMDC) and sought suggestions on how the school can better serve the community.

An active SMDC was established, which is currently working with Kusuma to implement a Secondary School Readiness Programme (SSRP) to address the learning gaps of Class 9 and 10 students in Mathematics, English, Science, Hindi, Odia and Social Sciences. The programme includes a study camp at the start and at the end of the academic year, a period of self-learning and additional classes during the school term. The SMDC meets regularly to review progress, parents are updated on their child's progress and they are encouraged to support their children with homework and self-study. These efforts are now showing positive results with the pass rate in Class 10 examinations improving from 70% in 2013 to 98% in 2015. Ms. Darshani Sandha believes her school is setting an example for other schools to follow.

"Inclusive and quality education for all is very important especially in our school that has students from many local villages. In our diverse community we are striving to achieve this and ensure that all of our children are able to complete secondary school."