



## Mentoring and Coaching

### Individual support for teachers and students

Research published by the National Foundation for Educational Research and the Training and Development Agency for Schools ('Mentoring and coaching for professionals: a study of the research evidence' 2008), identified that mentoring and coaching was proven to have an impact on both individuals and organisations<sup>1</sup>. For individuals, mentoring can lead to increased reflectivity and clarity of thinking, better problem-solving skills (including decision-making), gains in practitioner knowledge and skills, self-management and self-learning skills and more positive attitudes towards professional and career development. Mentoring can contribute to the development of a learning culture in schools, a collaborative and pastoral approach and encourage school leaders and teachers to have high aspirations of themselves and their students.

Since 2013, The Kusuma Trust UK (The Trust) has supported head teachers, teachers and students in schools in India with mentoring and coaching. The Trust focuses its work in the districts of Sambalpur in Odisha and Hardoi in Uttar Pradesh.

For Head teachers, The Trust supports training in school planning and management in partnership with School Management and Development Committees, parents and the community. Experienced Head teacher coaches work with head teachers on a one-to-one basis to find ways to improve academic results, student attendance, teacher performance and financial management and planning.

For teachers, the Trust funds mentoring and training to improve teaching practices and subject knowledge in English, Mathematics, Science, Hindi and Odia. There are opportunities for teacher peer learning through 'Quality Circles' to share good practice and expert teachers, who are part of a District Resource Group (DRG), provide support to teachers through mentoring and coaching visits. DRG members monitor the teachers in the classroom and provide guidance and encouragement to use innovative and effective teaching methods. Independent evaluation of the teacher training and mentoring concluded there was evidence of positive changes in teacher behaviour in both the districts of Hardoi and Sambalpur.<sup>2</sup>

Teacher quality, measured on the three key domains of lesson preparation, student participation and facilitation skills was higher in schools supported by the Trust compared with comparison schools in both districts.

The Trust supports Fellowship programmes for students to progress to further and higher education. A group of highly motivated mentors provide guidance to the Fellows, to help build confidence, offer career advice and improve academic performance. Each Fellow is supported to develop a plan of action that includes academic, personal development and life skills goals.

The Trust also supports students in the UK with mentoring. The Pathways to STEM and Kusuma Sutton Scholars programmes provide opportunities for academically able low and middle-income state school students to access higher education. Each student is assigned a mentor and provided with tailored education and careers advice and a series of school visits, project days, campus visits and academic mentoring by university community learning hubs.



A District Resource Group member offers teaching guidance and support  
Photo: Sam Strickland

In 2017-2018, The Trust will continue to invest in mentoring as a powerful means to transform young people's lives. Some examples of how mentoring and coaching for teachers and students have had a positive effect are described overleaf.

1. <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/MCM011>

2. <http://www.kusumatrust.org/lwp-content/uploads/2016/11/Udbhav-follow-up-assesment-Nov-2016.pdf>

## Gaining confidence to teach using interactive methods

Ms. Pratyusha Singh, an English teacher at Girls Government Inter-College in Hardoi has been teaching large classes, leading from the front of the class and using the blackboard. Ms Singh had always wanted to try new ways of teaching and when the Trust supported the school with professional development activities she became inspired. She started working with Mr Arvind Bajpai, a DRG mentor-teacher who had experience of developing lessons and activities that promote interactive teaching. Mr Bajpai visited the school regularly to offer guidance and constructive feedback on new ways of teaching English. Ms. Singh applied her learning in the classroom, using group work and student-led activities regularly. Students have become more engaged and interested in learning English.

*"Thanks to the mentoring I have received, I feel more confident as a teacher. I see my students working together in groups and interacting with one another in English. I have a 'magic box' that I use regularly in the classroom. I divide my students into groups, they each pick a card with a subject written on it and they have to ask questions to one another and describe their subject – a great way to encourage working together and speaking in English!"*

## Head teacher coaching promotes positive change

As Head teacher of Upgraded High School Mahulpali in Sambalpur, Mr Mallik recognised the importance of ensuring that students had the appropriate learning levels to prepare for the Class 9 examinations in Science, Mathematics, English and Odia. With support from the Trust, he introduced a Secondary School Readiness Programme (SSRP) into the school which aims to bridge learning gaps of students transitioning from primary to secondary school.



Students participate in group work activity in an SSRP lesson  
Photo: Sam Strickland

Mr Malik realised that in order for the programme to succeed, he would need to manage the delivery of the SSRP and ensure that his teachers were trained and able to deliver the syllabus. He started to work closely with his coach to introduce training for the teachers and provide them with support in lesson planning. Mr Malik encouraged teachers to draw on the experience and knowledge of DRG members to help plan and deliver the SSRP lessons. Gradually Mr Malik began to see positive changes in his own behaviour as well as in the quality of teaching:

*"I have benefitted from mentoring as Head teacher of this school, and so have my teachers. I believe in setting an example as the leader of the school and the guidance from the DRG has given me the confidence to perform better."*

## Mentoring supports ambitious students

'Pathways to STEM' is a two-year programme designed to support talented secondary students in the UK achieve their aim of studying Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics (STEM) at university. The initiative is implemented with the Universities of York and Nottingham and the Sutton Trust. The programme offers a range of opportunities to engage with STEM and helps students successfully prepare for a university degree while learning about career opportunities in STEM.

The Universities work with targeted schools and colleges in former coalfield communities to recruit talented students for the programme. Students receive mentoring from 'University ambassadors' and are advised on different aspects of university life. Students develop a 'skills and knowledge ladder', writing down what they have learnt and create the ladder, which states their ambitions at the top. Students identify their strengths and knowledge, and see how improving these areas could help them reach their full potential and achieve their ambitions.

*"Pathways to STEM really helped me to better understand what life at uni is like. Asking the Ambassadors questions about their experiences was very useful."*

Pathways to STEM Nottingham University participant.



Students at York University attend a Pathways to STEM workshop  
Photo: York University