



## Improving Governance in 1,584 Schools

### Translating policy into practice

In March 2018, India's national programmes for improving the quality of primary and secondary education were merged. The aim of the new programme is to ensure that inclusive and equitable quality education is available from nursery through to school graduation.<sup>1</sup> A strong School Management and Development Committee (SMDC)<sup>2</sup> is essential to achieve this. SMDCs raise the quality of education and achieve school improvement through good governance and school planning.

Kusuma has worked intensively with 50 schools in Uttar Pradesh and Odisha to establish, train and support effective SMDCs. Based on the learning from this, Kusuma now supports the Government of Uttar Pradesh to implement a five-year State-wide school governance improvement programme called *Sugam* in 1,584 schools. Launched in 2015, the programme promotes the formation of active SMDCs, provides training and supports effective school planning.



A Head teacher meeting with SMDC members at a secondary school in Hardoi  
Photo: Sam Strickland

Training alone is not adequate to bridge the knowledge and skills gaps of SMDC members. Ongoing support from Kusuma and district officials enables SMDC members to operate more effectively. The project also uses a dedicated WhatsApp group to promote a community of good practice.

Entrenched hierarchy, gender stereotyping and wage loss limit participation in SMDCs. The funds allocated to SMDCs are small compared to the overall school budget. Teacher vacancies remain a major issue. *Sugam* supports Head

teachers to play an important role in addressing these problems.

One problem that has successfully been overcome is the participation of a significant number of community members including parents who are illiterate. Previously this would have deterred many from participating in SMDCs. Kusuma has developed simple visual tools to enable anybody, regardless of education background and literacy level to participate in their local school's governance.

Since 2015, *Sugam* has supported 15,393 school governing committee members in 1,285 schools across 75 districts and trained 225 master trainers. A review of SMDC members found that their knowledge of school standards had increased from 36% to 72%, and knowledge of the use of school funds improved from 67% to 85%. In 2017-2018, 80% of SMDCs involved in *Sugam* developed and implemented school annual plans.

Kusuma continues to support the Government of Uttar Pradesh to overcome barriers faced by SMDCs. The partnership aims to support more than 23,000 SMDC members from 1,584 secondary schools.

***“I congratulate Kusuma and Uttar Pradesh Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan for successfully completing three years of the Sugam programme. Strengthening community groups like School Management and Development Committees is a long-term goal, but the fact that secondary schools in Uttar Pradesh have developed annual school plans in the last two years is a great success.”***

Awadh Naresh Sharma,  
Director of Secondary Education, Uttar Pradesh

Several success stories are highlighted overleaf.

1. <http://www.pib.nic.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1526916>
2. SMDCs consist of teachers and community members who are responsible for the governance and management of schools.

### Making school accessible for all

Student attendance at Government Higher Secondary School (G.H.S.S.), Noorpur in Ghaziabad was low. The school is based in a remote location with limited public transport, making it hard for students to commute. Despite their best efforts, the SMDC's attempts at improving attendance failed. At a *Sugam* training event, they learnt about book banks from Kusuma. Inspired by this, they decided to set up a bicycle bank for their students. They successfully raised funds from the local community, purchased bicycles and now loan these to students who live further away. This new scheme has created an innovative option for students to get to school.



A student from GHSS Noorpur receives a new bicycle as part of the loan scheme.  
Photo: Kusuma Foundation

### Introducing Computer lessons

The SMDC of Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Kaushaliya in Ghaziabad, identified the need for a functioning computer laboratory as a key priority in the school plan. They raised funds from members of the local community to purchase four new computers and employ a computer teacher to work with students and train other teachers. Teachers at the school are now using the computers in their lessons to illustrate key concepts and show educational films. Neha Kahn, a Class 9 student at the school says:

*“It was beyond my imagination that I would ever be given a chance to develop computer skills. I had never seen a computer before but the new computer laboratory at school has made all this possible. Now I can connect to the world with just one click. I am so happy!”*

### New grants awarded to India and Gibraltar

In April 2018, Kusuma Trust UK committed £1m for programmes in India and Gibraltar. Our work in India supports the Kusuma Foundation to improve education in secondary schools. Funding will support State governments to scale up Kusuma's programmes. In Gibraltar, the grant will fund Excellence Prizes for high achieving students, Professional Development Awards, education initiatives and support local charities whose work benefits the local community.

### Working with local authorities

The G.H.S.S. Vaaripur in Bhadohi has no boundary wall or electricity. The SMDC was concerned about the school not being secure at night as there had been repeated thefts of teaching and learning material, stationery and sports equipment. SMDC members appealed for support from the Gram Pradhan<sup>3</sup> who agreed to fund and install solar powered lights and employ a night guard for the school. Since then the school and its resources have been safe and available to teachers and students.

### Providing exciting learning opportunities

During discussions with students, SMDC members of G.H.S.S Bahoranpurkalan in Moradabad found that students were keen to experience learning outside the classroom. The SMDC worked with the teachers to secure funds and organise a trip to the Aryabhata Planetarium. Twenty-five students visited and used telescopes to see stars, constellations and the solar system which they had previously only read about. Farheen, a class 10 student who participated in the trip shared her excitement:

*“After visiting the planetarium, I learnt that stars have their own planets too. For the first time in my life, I went outside my village with friends and teachers. It was amazing and I wish we could go on a trip like this every year”.*



Students and SMDC members from G.H.S.S Bahoranpurkalan at the Planetarium.  
Photo: Kusuma Foundation

3. A Gram Pradhan is the head of the village local council