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Raising standards,  
expanding impact

Annual Review 2016-2017



kusuma  
trust



# Raising standards, expanding impact

## Contents

Raising standards, expanding impact	2
Where we work	4
India	5
UK	6
Making an impact	centre foldout
Gibraltar	11
Research	12

## Vision

The Kusuma Trust UK believes that every child and young person has the potential to transform and improve their life and should have opportunities to grow and develop as active and productive citizens in their communities.

## Mission

Our mission is to facilitate and increase access to quality education and other life opportunities for young people, with a focus on the disadvantaged. The Trust enables young people to realise their potential and prosper.

**W**e believe that all young people have the right to quality education and career opportunities no matter what their background. Working directly with partner organisations and with governments, we are turning this belief into a reality.

We work in the UK, India and Gibraltar to achieve our mission. The education systems in these countries are different but the issues facing young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are similar. Many young people start school behind their wealthier peers and this gap continues to grow as they progress through school.

In India, we partner with the Kusuma Foundation and started by providing intensive support to 50 schools in 2013. We now partner with the government to reach almost 2,000 schools and over 100,000 students. Our programmes have been identified by the government for scale up across districts and the States of Uttar Pradesh and Odisha to impact even more young people.

In the UK, our work in former coal mining regions with the Sutton Trust and the Coalfields Regeneration Trust reaches many students, with new cohorts joining programmes each year.

We launched a small grants programme, supporting smaller charities working to improve education and employment opportunities for young people. Our UK programmes have reached 1,367 young people who now have improved chances in further education and their careers. Our community grants have supported young people to connect with nature and two hospitals to improve medical equipment and facilities.

In Gibraltar, we continue to develop our partnership with the Kusuma Trust Gibraltar. Priorities this year included scaling up the Computer Coding Week to

reach more students and training teachers to introduce coding in classrooms. We continued to support community initiatives and charities to increase their reach and impact.

Our work is underpinned by research and evaluation. We commissioned new qualitative research into factors that influence student performance and continued our five-year evaluation of the Kusuma Excellence Fellowships in partnership with London School of Economics researchers. A study to track children's transition from primary to secondary school was also completed.

Over the last seven years our grants have raised education standards, widened reach, expanded impact on more young people, and deepened our relationship with key stakeholders. In 2017-2018, we will work with the Odisha State Government in India to scale up programmes in nine districts, expand our small grants programme in the UK to help even more young people into education and employment, and define a new strategic direction for our work in Gibraltar.

**Anurag Dikshit**, *Chairman*  
**Dr Balwant Singh**, *Chief Executive*

# Where we work

India

UK

Gibraltar

“Education is vital for social and economic transformation and promoting active citizenship. We have expanded the reach of our initiatives to enhance access to quality education for more young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in India, the UK and Gibraltar.”

# Gibraltar



We aim to make a positive contribution to the people in Gibraltar by investing in education programmes, providing opportunities for professional development, supporting local community projects and working with charities to achieve greater impact.

The UK's decision to leave the European Union means that the residents of Gibraltar face a period of economic and political uncertainty. We continue to review our grant-making priorities to address the impact Brexit may have on those working and living in Gibraltar.

## Education

Over the last year 3,476 students and 22 teachers from 18 schools

participated in our education programmes. Science, Maths and Computer Coding workshops gave primary and secondary students and teachers the chance to develop their understanding and enjoyment of these subjects through practical experiments and interactive tasks. University and career talks helped students prepare for life after school, understand the options available to them and improve the quality of their university applications.

## Professional Development

We supported eight individuals to pursue professional development

courses that directly benefit Gibraltar. Recipients were selected based on demonstrated passion and commitment to their profession, in areas where no support is available from the Government or their employer.

## Community and Charities

Thirty two charities received support to enable them to work more effectively. This included training and networking events, coaching and grant funding. Our community grants supported not-for-profit groups and charities that improve the quality of life for those in Gibraltar.

# Research



Kusuma's strategic priorities and programmes are informed by research and evaluation. In India, our research over the last year focused on: children's transition from primary to secondary school; the impact of remedial education on student attainment; the role of fellowships in influencing students' educational trajectories; and factors affecting student examination results across schools in the Kusuma Schools Partnership Initiative (KSPI) in Uttar Pradesh.

Pratham Education Foundation/ASER completed a two-year study on factors influencing children's transition from primary to secondary school, with a focus on the relationship between the availability of local secondary schools, socio-economic status

of families and student attainment at the end of primary school. Findings inform our advocacy with State and national education policy makers and providers in India.

We commissioned an independent baseline and endline assessment of student learning levels in all 50 KSPI schools before and after the delivery of Kusuma's flagship Secondary School Readiness Programme in Hardoi and Sambalpur districts. Findings will inform the planned scale-up of the programme in government secondary schools across Odisha.

The London School of Economics completed the first year of a longitudinal evaluation of the Kusuma Excellence Fellowship programme, which investigates the impact of the fellowship on

academic performance, attitudes to education, entry to further and higher education, career aspirations and employment on entry to the labour market. Students are currently in Year 11 and will be tracked annually over the next four years.

A qualitative investigation was completed of factors affecting student examination results in a sub-sample of KSPI schools in Uttar Pradesh. Interviews with key stakeholders contributed to an understanding of why student academic performance is better in some schools than others, despite all schools having received the same package of interventions. Findings will inform our strategy for working with government secondary schools in Uttar Pradesh and Odisha.

# India



In India, more than 100 million children are illiterate and 70% of young people drop out of school before the age of 15.<sup>1</sup> Inequality between the poorest and richest children is evident throughout school.<sup>2</sup> We work to change this by improving access and the quality of education.

Over the last 4 years we have supported 50 schools in Hardoi in Uttar Pradesh and Sambalpur in Odisha with whole school interventions:

- interactive sessions and resources for 8,167 students to enable them to reach age-appropriate learning levels
- teaching manuals, training and mentoring for 160 teachers to improve their skills
- training for 50 head teachers on effective school management

- training for 680 School Management and Development Committee members on how to govern schools better

We collaborated with district and State governments to expand teaching, learning and governance programmes to more schools in Uttar Pradesh and Odisha, reaching:

- 1,523 schools
- 2,298 teachers and head teachers
- 34,160 students
- 15,393 School Management and Development Committee members

In Odisha our five-year grant of £1.2 million for the construction of a mid-day meal kitchen and feeding programme delivering more than 2.5 million meals to 62,326 students in 415 schools came to an end. The programme

aims to improve school attendance and nutrition levels.

Our Fellowship programme enabled 656 young people to pursue higher education with scholarships and support in life skills, computing, English communication and career coaching. Without this, many young people from disadvantaged backgrounds would not be able to continue their education. Science tops the list of courses chosen at 77% followed by 11% in Arts, 6% in Commerce and the remaining 6% in Agriculture and vocational courses.

Our grants benefited 105,309 students, 1,988 schools and head teachers, 935 teachers and 15,933 school governors in 78 districts.

<sup>1</sup> Pratham UK

<sup>2</sup> UNESCO, Youth & Skills, 2012

# UK



Young people in former coal mining regions face many challenges: lack of jobs, low university attendance and economic deprivation. Those on free school meals are only half as likely to pass their GCSEs as their peers.<sup>3</sup> We support programmes to increase equality and offer options for these young people's future.

## Education

About 22% of young people living in disadvantaged areas apply to university and this is 30% less than those living in the most advantaged areas.<sup>4</sup> Kusuma Sutton Scholars supported 600 young people aged 11 to 13 from disadvantaged backgrounds by providing information on the opportunities at university,

campus visits, giving them tools to make decisions on GCSE choices and enrichment days to build transferable skills and confidence.

Our Pathways to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) grant supported 283 young people aged 15 to 17. The programme took an enabling approach, encouraging them to consider career choices and university degrees in STEM subjects. These young people took part in career days where they met professionals in the sector, had Science and Maths revision days to build their knowledge and spent time on campus learning about university applications and life as a student, whilst being supported by an e-mentor.

## Employment

In the UK, 631,000 young people are unemployed.<sup>5</sup> Our Young Upstarts grant enables young people to transform their ideas into businesses. It trains them to build their entrepreneurial skills with the aim of setting up their own company. Over the course of the year, 89 young people were trained and accredited, with a quarter of them going on to set up their own enterprises, which included graphic designers, photographers, hairdressers and DJs.

<sup>3</sup> Revised GCSE and Equivalent results in England, 2015 – 2016, published January 2017

<sup>4</sup> UK application rates by the January deadline, 2017 Cycle, UCAS Analysis and Research

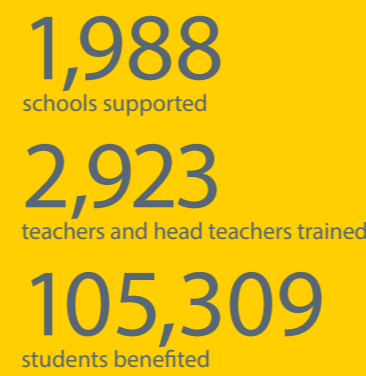
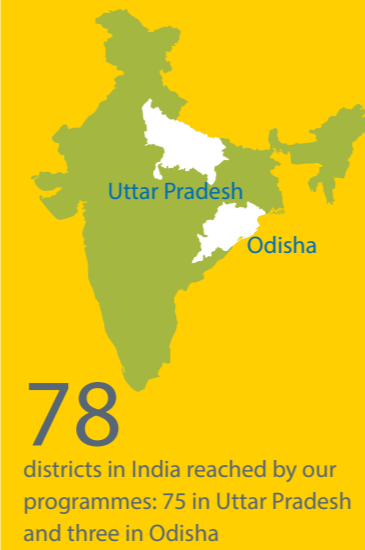
<sup>5</sup> The Careers and Enterprise Company, 2017

# Making an impact

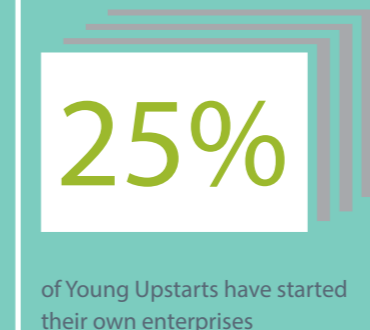
## Donations and grants



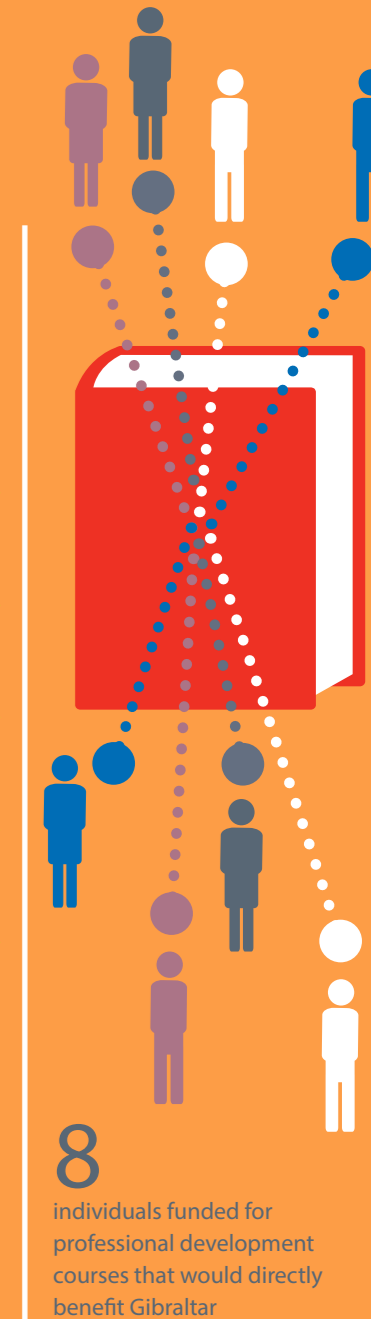
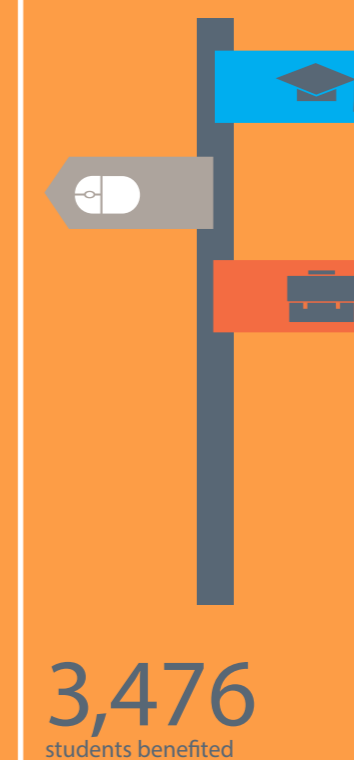
## India



## UK



## Gibraltar



# Research findings



## Access to education

The study showed that a decline in the availability of schools at secondary level has a negative impact on students. Three in 10 children who completed primary school did not progress to secondary school. Low learning levels, marriage, poverty and status as Scheduled Caste negatively influence children's enrolment in education beyond primary school.

## Remedial education

Evaluation of the Secondary School Readiness Programme found a marked improvement in average test scores between baseline and endline assessments. Increases were highest for language: average test scores increased by 13 percentage points for Hindi and

by more than 9 percentage points for Odia. Gains in average test scores were lowest for Science in Sambalpur (1.2 percentage points) and Environmental Studies in Hardoi (3 percentage points). There was positive correlation between test score gains and participation in the programme, particularly for Mathematics. Findings will inform a more rigorous evaluation using experimental research methods.

## Kusuma Fellowships

Fellows spend less time on domestic chores, more time on academic studies and are more likely to use private tuition compared with unsuccessful applicants. At the end of the first year of the evaluation, Fellows and unsuccessful applicants performed equally well in Class 11 examinations. Next year, the

research will assess the impact of the fellowship on student performance in Class 12 Board examinations and track student transition from secondary to higher or further education.

## Student attainment

This study showed that a variety of factors influence student attainment, including the distance students travel to school, teacher vacancies and absenteeism, engagement in Kusuma's teacher professional development programme by teachers, variability in how remedial education programmes are implemented, and use of private tuition. Students reported that school libraries helped them to learn, particularly when teacher vacancies or poor quality teaching affected their learning.



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