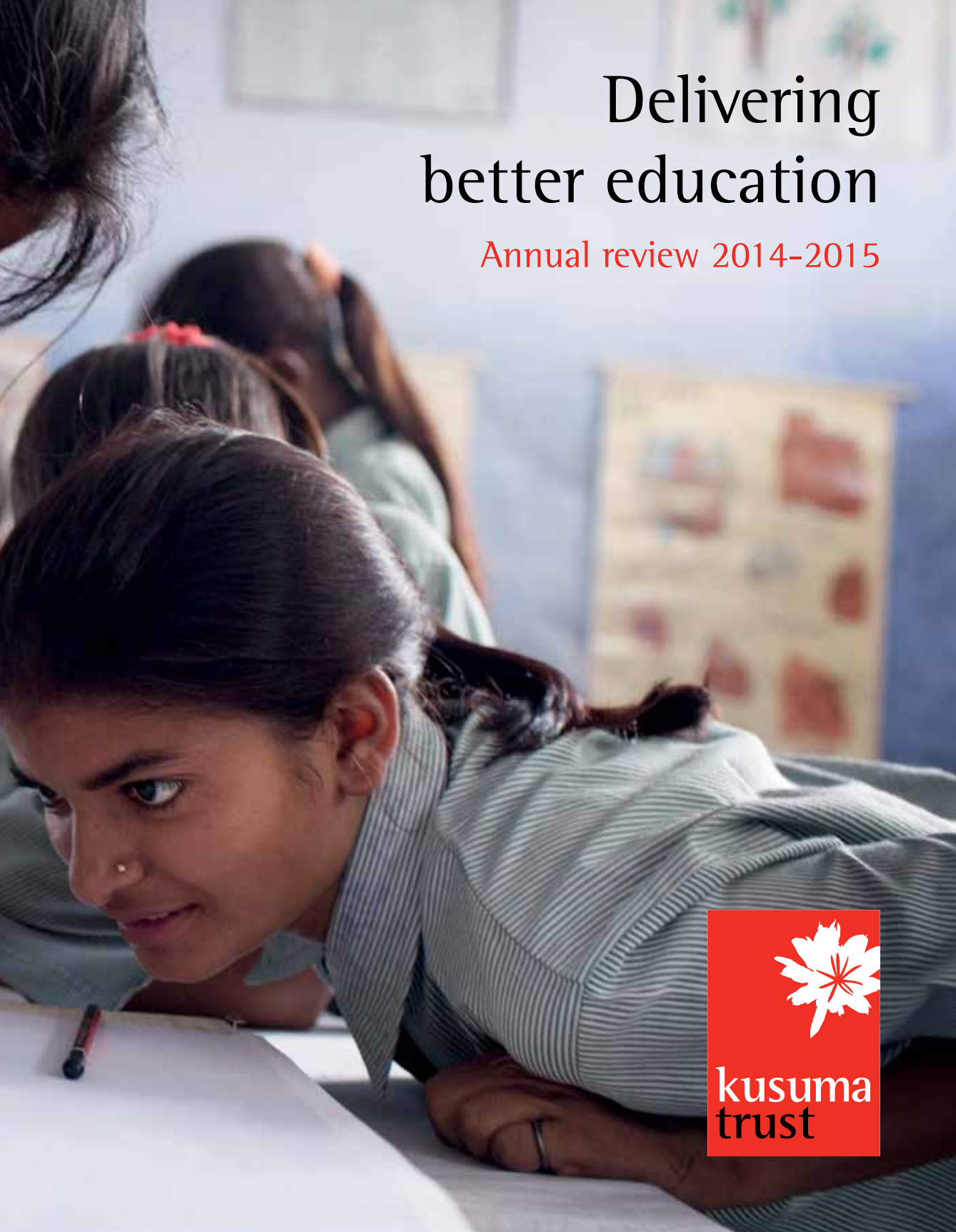


# Delivering better education

Annual review 2014-2015



kusuma  
trust

# 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 education and other life opportunities for children and young people, with a focus on the most economically disadvantaged. The Trust enables children and young people to realise their potential and break the inter-generational cycle of poverty.

# Contents

Delivering better education	3
Our approach	4
Education	6
Success stories	10
Research	14

The Kusuma Trust UK works in the districts of Sambalpur in Odisha and Hardoi in Uttar Pradesh in India. The districts have a combined population of 5.1 million and are among the lowest performing in their State.

Since 2010, the Trust has supported young people by raising their aspirations, creating partnerships with schools and engaging parents and local communities. We are seeking to transform education systems by fostering creativity and analytical thinking in secondary schools. We work with District and State governments to strengthen school management and governance and develop better teaching models that can be scaled up to more schools to achieve greater impact.

In 2014-2015, the Trust funded grants worth £1.34m. We continued to improve facilities in schools, including access to clean water, electricity, toilets for boys and girls, libraries and computer laboratories. We delivered accelerated learning activities for 5,466 students to bring them to the standard required for secondary school. We provided scholarships to 693 young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to complete secondary school and pursue higher education.

We worked with 610 secondary school teachers to build their capacity and improve classroom practice in English, Mathematics and Science, and provided mentoring and interactive teaching and learning materials. We recruited teachers to fill vacancies and worked in consultation with head teachers to develop annual school plans and identify priorities.

Research and evaluation remains central to our work. In the UK, we funded important research with practical recommendations on how to break the cycle of educational failure. In India, the Trust funded innovative research on children's access to education and their transition through the education system. The Trust also funded the first in a series of annual assessments of student learning levels in schools to assess the impact of our work on student learning outcomes.

In 2015-2016, we will expand our work in school governance and

management to reach almost 1,000 schools and 14,000 School Management and Development Committee members. We will continue to be a learning organisation and will ensure that we draw on strategic, policy and research evidence to inform our programmes.

In the UK, we will target young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in areas of significant economic deprivation such as coalfield communities. Our programmes will engage students, teachers, parents, communities and universities.

We thank our Trustees, partners and staff for their continued support and dedication and look forward to another successful and productive year ahead, working to deliver better education for students, teachers and their communities.

**John G Rhodes**, *Chairman*  
**Dr Balwant Singh**, *Chief Executive*



# Our approach



## Raising aspirations

**We motivate and inspire young people to pursue education and realise their full potential.**

The Trust supports young people to achieve their potential by providing quality learning resources, improved teaching in schools, access to educational materials and financial support to continue their studies. We raise young people's aspirations to ensure they are prepared for higher education and employment.

## Engaging communities

**We mobilise parents and local communities to play a vital role in schools and their children's education.**

We empower communities to make positive and long-lasting changes to young people's education. Local community members are involved in school decision-making through participation in School Management and Development Committees. The Trust works with parents to help them engage with schools and contribute to better education outcomes for their children. Parents are encouraged to have a voice in school governance and management. Their participation helps to ensure children stay in school.

## Creating partnerships

**We partner with teachers, school committees and government departments to improve the quality of education.**

Partnerships are essential to our work. Establishing partnerships and gaining the support of District and State governments has enabled us to work closely with schools, teachers, students and communities. We support teachers and head teachers through professional development, mentoring, teaching resources and peer networks. Teachers, and the quality of their teaching, are central to education outcomes for young people.

## Transforming education

**We transform education systems at District level based on evidence of what works and promote models for expansion.**

We believe in the transformative power of education. We value our work with policy makers and government partners to help scale up and embed sustainable improvements into the education system. We have developed models for school improvement that are to be expanded and adopted widely across districts and by State Governments.



# Education

“Secondary education requires systematic processes and a focus on community participation.”

In 2014-2015, the Trust supported over 40,000 students, 693 Fellows, 610 teachers and 50 secondary schools which are part of the Kusuma Schools Partnership Initiative (KSPI) across our focus districts of Hardoi in Uttar Pradesh and Sambalpur in Odisha. We did this by improving the quality of teaching, strengthening school governance and enhancing the school environment. During this year the Trust prioritised teacher professional development and made improvements to school facilities including refurbishing classrooms, providing clean drinking water and separate toilets for boys and girls.

## Kusuma Fellowships

The *Kusuma Fellowship* programmes **raise the aspirations** of meritorious students from poor families in Uttar Pradesh and Odisha to complete secondary school and continue to higher and professional education. Students from disadvantaged and marginalised backgrounds are provided with a stipend, academic support and mentoring. Seminars

are organised for Fellows on topics such as career guidance, public speaking, communications, time management and healthy living.

## Secondary School Readiness

The *Secondary School Readiness Programme* delivered accelerated learning to over 5,466 young people to take them to the standard required for secondary school. The first phase took place during the school holidays from May to September and included foundation sessions, followed by self-learning at home. A second phase concentrated on remedial classes before and after school hours.

## Community engagement

The Trust works closely with local communities to ensure there is active **community engagement** in education. The Trust developed a manual on good governance for School Management and Development Committee (SMDC) members, which was launched by

the Minister of Secondary Education in Uttar Pradesh. The manual was developed in partnership with schools and aims to strengthen the capacity of SMDC members, who play a critical role in the management and governance of schools.

## Partnerships

The Trust **creates partnerships** with secondary schools to build the capacity of teachers and to improve classroom practices in English, Mathematics and Science. The Trust collaborates with district education offices and State Governments of Uttar Pradesh and Odisha to address teacher shortages in secondary schools and find solutions to improve the teacher-student ratio. The Trust recruited 72 teachers from local communities to fill teacher vacancies and they taught over 27,000 sessions in schools across the districts. Head teachers in schools where additional teachers are placed report that pupil attendance increased. Teachers meet with parents locally to encourage them to send their children to school. This has a multiplier effect as parents talk to, and encourage others, to do the same.

## Educational materials

The Trust provides training for teachers, school visits by experienced teacher-mentors and interactive teaching and learning materials. Our work supported the professional development of 610 Secondary Science, Mathematics and English teachers in 50 government and aided schools in Hardoi and Sambalpur. We helped schools to set up libraries and provided grants to buy books. Book bank schemes have been established, where graduating students give their textbooks to new students so that those from poorer backgrounds can study.

## Kusuma Excellence Awards

*Kusuma Excellence Awards* are given annually to recognise and reward high performing schools, teachers and students. Fourteen schools, 55 teachers and 85 students received awards for achieving the highest scores and the highest percentage of distinctions in Science, Mathematics and English in Class 10 and Class 12 examinations.

## Transforming education systems

The Trust conducts research and uses evidence to **transform education systems**. The introduction of the manual for SMDC members to strengthen school governance in 25 schools in Hardoi will be rolled out to nearly 1,000 schools and 14,000 SMDC members will be trained across all 75 districts in the State of Uttar Pradesh in 2015-2016. We are supporting head teachers and SMDCs to deliver school improvement plans. Training for Head teachers included planning and management of school resources and facilities, developing school budgets, encouraging new teaching and learning strategies and enhancing community participation.

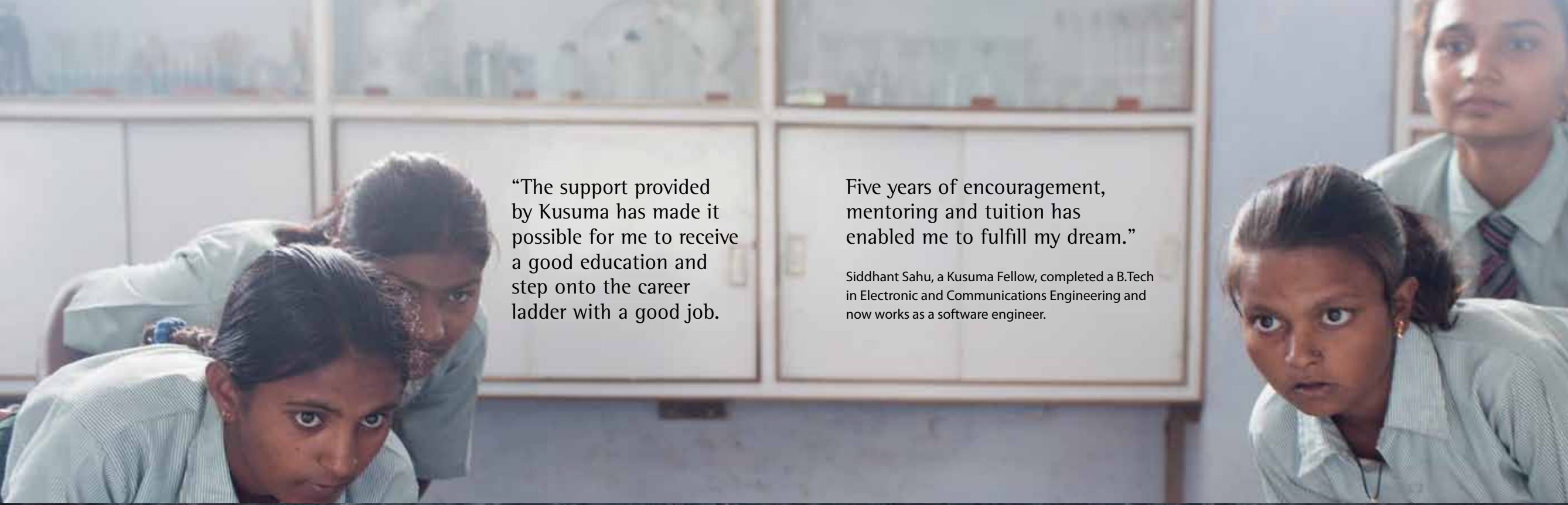
## Kusuma Resource Centres

A *Kusuma Resource Centre* supports our work in each district. Teachers, students and parents access educational resources and computers and many attend workshops and events. For students, the Centre

provides a space for study and career guidance. For teachers and head teachers, the Centres provide training and peer learning opportunities. The Centres host education and career fairs, computer training and English communication courses as well as creative writing and practical Science workshops for students. From 2015, two schools in Sambalpur and two schools in Hardoi will be satellite Resource Centres and host workshops, events and courses in remote areas to reach more students, teachers and communities in each district.

The Government of India's Mid-Day Meal Scheme is a national programme supplying free lunches to children in schools to improve their health and encourage them to attend school. Funding from the Trust supplements the Government scheme to ensure children receive a hygienically prepared, nutritious and hot meal in school every day. *The Mid-Day Meal Kitchen*, which is run by The Akshaya Patra Foundation, prepares and distributes meals for up to 65,000 children each day in 348 government schools in Odisha.





“The support provided by Kusuma has made it possible for me to receive a good education and step onto the career ladder with a good job.


Five years of encouragement, mentoring and tuition has enabled me to fulfill my dream.”

Siddhant Sahu, a Kusuma Fellow, completed a B.Tech in Electronic and Communications Engineering and now works as a software engineer.





# Success stories



“I am thankful to Kusuma for introducing the classes for our children, for motivating them and for trying to make them ready for secondary school. This has not only helped my children but it will also help other children who would have probably dropped out of school without Kusuma’s support.”

## Completing Secondary School

Sabitri got married at an early age and didn’t finish her schooling. She has two teenage daughters studying in Sumati Behera High School in Sambalpur. Sushmita is in Class 9 and Tanuja in Class 10.

Her husband wasn’t interested in educating their daughters because there wasn’t the money to support them through school. As a result, Sushmita and Tanuja decided to stop studying and didn’t take the exams.

Sabitri believed that her daughters should complete Class 10. At a parents’ meeting she heard that Kusuma organises additional classes for Class 9 and 10 students to help them pass their exams and she persuaded her husband to allow their daughters to attend school. Consequently, both girls completed their studies and

achieved good results and they are going to continue their studies to Class 12.

Sabitri was inspired by the support offered by Kusuma, so she participated in a door-to-door campaign in the surrounding villages to encourage parents to send their children to additional classes and ensure their children complete secondary school too.

*She says: “I am thankful to Kusuma for introducing the classes for our children, for motivating them and for trying to make them ready for secondary school. This has not only helped my children but it will also help other children who would have probably dropped out of school without Kusuma’s support.”*

## Teacher empowerment

Kusuma promotes professional development in Science, English and Mathematics for teachers in Hardoi and Sambalpur. Pre-service training does not adequately prepare teachers for the challenges they face in the classroom. Continuous professional development is necessary to ensure teachers are able to adapt and develop their classroom practices.

Dilip Podha teaches English in Classes 9 and 10 in Sahaspur High School in Sambalpur. As a History and Odia graduate, Mr Podha is not trained as an English Teacher, but has great interest in the subject. Most of his students are first generation learners of English and he struggled to find teaching methods that engaged his students.

Mr Podha attended training organised by Kusuma and learned the skills of questioning and facilitating answers from students, as well as lesson planning and classroom management. He was introduced to interactive teaching methods and learning resources that enable him to engage better with his students. Following the training, Mr Podha is eager to adopt the new teaching techniques and is confident of the benefits for him and his students:

*“There are many ways to ensure student participation in the classroom. Small changes by the teacher, such as asking questions in different ways or giving clues that lead to correct responses, aid learning. The training focuses on developing practical teaching approaches that can be used in the classroom. Thanks to Kusuma for this.”*





“The Kusuma Resource Centre provides me with a great environment for learning. The computers with internet access help me improve my typing skills and gain confidence with MS Office. I have read all kinds of reference books at the Centre and over the past four months, my studying has become easier and more informed.”

### Kusuma Resource Centres make a difference

Ranjana is a Class 5 student who lives near the Kusuma Resource Centre in Hardoi. She visits the Centre everyday with her sister. She had never seen a space with so many books and computers. The books teach her new things and she enjoys reading the children’s magazine, Champak. She has learned how to use a computer and is an avid Microsoft Paint artist. She has also become proficient using Word and Excel. Ranjana feels that she is encouraged to learn new things by the Kusuma team and that the opportunities the Centre provides means she is equipped to progress to secondary education.

Bhagabati is a student from Sambalpur who regularly uses the Kusuma Resource Centre to complete his

studies for an M.A. in Political Sciences. He describes the Centre as an ideal space for young people in the district to raise their aspirations:

*“The Centre provides me with a great environment for learning. The computers with internet access help me improve my typing skills and gain confidence with MS Office. I have read all kinds of reference books at the Centre and over the past four months, my studying has become easier and more informed.”*

Bhagabati will complete his final exams this year and is certain that the Kusuma Resource Centre has played a huge part in helping him to obtain the good marks he achieved in recent tests.

### Community decision-making

Upgraded High School Mahulpali in Sambalpur did not have an active School Management and Development Committee (SMDC). This year, newly appointed head teacher, Mr Arakhita Mallik, decided to engage members of the community. With support from Kusuma and the SMDC manual, which provides guidance on school management and governance, the head of the local community was asked to participate in school planning meetings and encourage others to do the same. During the meetings, parents, teachers and community members discussed issues concerning teacher shortages, better facilities and improving student performance. A plan was made including suggestions to track teacher attendance by SMDC members during school visits.

Mr Vishnu Kant Pandey, Joint Director Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA)\* Uttar Pradesh acknowledges Kusuma’s support:

*“Secondary education requires systematic processes and a focus on community participation. Kusuma’s work with schools on building the capacity of SMDCs and the development of a training manual for SMDC members is a welcome step. We are happy to collaborate with Kusuma to build the capacity of SMDC members in government schools throughout the State of Uttar Pradesh, and bring a much needed focus on community involvement.”*

\* RMSA: India’s national scheme for improving the quality of secondary education.



# Research

The Centre for Social Justice published 'Closing the Divide', a report on tackling educational inequality in the UK. The Trust awarded a grant to identify what works in **breaking the cycle of poverty and educational failure**. The report was launched in September 2014 and made recommendations on early years education, teacher professional development, improving learning between schools, and reaching areas of particular disadvantage, such as coastal and former manufacturing towns. The proposals attracted considerable attention from government,

the media, policy advisors and academic experts.

Understanding children's progress through the education system in India remains a key priority. A study by Pratham tracks students at points of **transition from upper primary to secondary education**. The Trust also funded Pratham to complete a baseline survey of all educational institutions and the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) in Hardoi and Sambalpur.

The Trust recognises the need to evaluate the impact of its work

on **student learning outcomes** in India. EduLever, an education consultancy, was funded by the Trust to assess student learning levels in selected government secondary schools in Hardoi in Uttar Pradesh, and Sambalpur in Odisha. One hundred schools took part in the survey of which 50 are part of the KSPI. The latter schools receive multiple forms of support, including improved facilities, teacher training and mentoring, and remedial education programmes. Learning levels of students in KSPI schools will be compared with students in comparison schools that receive a low level of support or no support.



## Trustees

John G Rhodes *Chairman*  
Dr Soma Pujari *Co-Founder*  
Anurag Dikshit *Co-Founder*  
Andrew J Hutton  
Prashant Jain

## Chief Executive

Dr Balwant Singh

## Advisers

David Carrington  
Hazel Slavin  
Sandra Sequeira

## Partners

Agranee Jana Kalyan Anusthan  
Centre for Internet and Society  
Centre for Social Justice  
Kusuma Foundation  
Pratham Education Foundation  
Science Museum  
The Akshaya Patra Foundation

Photography: Sam Strickland  
Design: Lydia Thornley Design



**Kusuma Trust UK**  
Mezzanine Level  
48-49 St James's Street  
London SW1A 1JT  
Tel: 020 7569 1920  
info@kusumatrust.org  
www.kusumatrust.org

A company limited by guarantee  
registered in England and Wales  
(number 6753811) and a registered  
charity (number 1126983)