

CERCs: Empowering Communities and Ensuring Sustainable Learning

Community-Led Learning Hubs for a Digital Future

The Community Education Resource Centre (CERC) is a vital initiative of ASPIRE, bridging the digital divide in rural Odisha. CERCs serve as digital gateways for remote communities, providing access to technology, learning resources, and essential services at an affordable cost. They enable individuals, even in the most isolated villages, to connect with the outside world without leaving their locality.



What CERCs Offer

Alongside digital access, CERCs support:

- **Self-learning and academic support** for children

- **Social awareness and outreach** through school campaigns and village programs
- **Skill-based training and e-services** for community members

ASPIRE has established **173 CERCs** – 141 in Odisha across 273 Gram Panchayats, including 26 in extremely remote areas where digital connectivity was previously non-existent, and 32 in Jharkhand. With strong community support, these centers are transforming rural education and digital empowerment. The long-term vision is for the community to take complete ownership of the centers, ensuring sustainability even after ASPIRE exits.

Four Core Functions of CERCs

- **Skilling & Training** – Partnered with E-Max to provide affordable computer and vocational courses (DCA, PGDCA, basic IT) with government-recognized certifications.
- **Academic Support** – Children use CERCs for self-study and attend online classes for Classes 6–10 in Math, Science, and English, with STEM kits enhancing practical learning.
- **Community Services** – Affordable services such as printing, certificates, ticket booking, and digital form submissions, reaching 31,087 beneficiaries in the first quarter.
- **Mass Education & Social Awareness** – Outreach through educational films, community campaigns, and mobile libraries, while connecting villagers to government schemes and entitlements.

Each function also serves as a revenue stream, helping centers reach the **₹10,000–12,000 monthly income goal** to cover electricity, facilitator salaries, and maintenance costs.



Sustainability in Action

One inspiring example is **Odapada block**, where a structured sustainability plan was implemented after a review meeting in April. By May, facilitators had developed a strategy that included:

- Maintaining 100 enrolled beneficiaries per center
- Adjusting monthly dues and admission fees
- Mapping and opening sub-centers in underserved areas
- Promoting CERCs via community campaigns and advertising

- Offering facilitator incentives from center-generated income
- Sharing budget plans with Panchayats for support
- Seeking sponsorships and exploring MP/MLA LAD fund options
- Reactivating and empowering CERC Management Committees



Early Success Stories

- **Sibapur CERC** reached 100 regular beneficiaries and generated a surplus, enabling incentives for facilitator Sidhant Naik.
- **Balarampur CERC** ran a successful pamphlet and poster campaign, bringing in 20+ new admissions.
- **Gundichapada CERC** opened a sub-center with 30–40 expected beneficiaries and restructured operations with 3 student batches and regular fee collection.
- **Gunadei CERC** introduced demo classes in two middle schools, integrating basic computer education.

- **Siminai CERC** surpassed ₹50,000 in balance, showing healthy income and community commitment.
- **Dhalapur CERC**, a new center, started with 20+ beneficiaries and ₹3,000+ income within weeks.

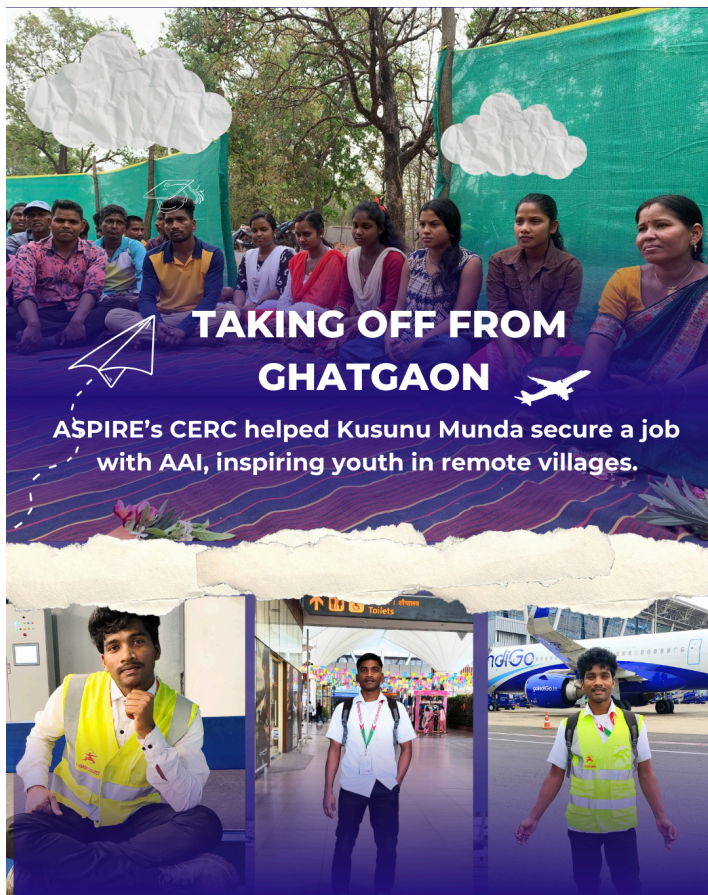


Looking ahead, focus will be on engaging PRI members and stakeholders to further strengthen sustainability. Meanwhile, in **Jhumpura block**, five active CERCs are now preparing to integrate Common Service Centers (CSCs) to provide government services like caste, income, and residence certificates, pension applications, land records, and ticket booking—at lower costs for villagers.

Success Story: From a Remote Village to the International Airport

Kusunu's Journey

Kusunu Munda hails from Bali Pokhari in Ghatgaon block, Odisha. Coming from a poor family—his father a daily wage labourer and his mother a homemaker—life's



opportunities were always limited. After completing his matriculation at the village school, Kusunu pursued ITI.

But once ITI was over, he found himself at a standstill. He knew little about the outside world, job opportunities, or higher education. Staying at home, he spent his days helping his parents, unsure of what to do next.

In 2023, ASPIRE opened a CERC in his area—a hub designed to connect remote communities to the world of digital education and

opportunities. For Kusunu, this was a turning point.

Curious and hardworking, he joined the CERC and began learning about technology, digital tools, and how to apply for jobs online. Guided by the CERC teacher, he discovered a world he never knew existed.

One of those online applications changed his life forever. Kusunu received an interview call from the Airports Authority of India (AAI)—and he was selected for the post of Immigration Check, earning a salary of ₹35,000 per month.

For the first time in his life, Kusunu saw an airport—not as a passenger, but as a member of the team making it run. It was a dream come true for his family and a proud moment for his entire village.



He began his career at Biju Patnaik International Airport in July 2024 and has now been transferred to Chennai International Airport. Today, he is not just supporting his family but also inspiring other young people in remote areas to dream bigger and step into the world of possibilities.

Through Kusunu's journey, we see the true impact of ASPIRE's mission—transforming lives by connecting the most remote corners of our country to education, skills, and opportunity.

Thankyou