



New Education Group

Foundation for Innovation and Research in Education



Annual Report 2008-2009

Learning is fun at St. Paul's, Jhansi

Our Vision

NEG-FIRE is a Development Support Organization that aims to transform lives of marginalized children through appropriate education by strategic and dynamic partnerships.

We see every Dalit, Tribal, Girl child and all vulnerable children learning to be confident young individuals, enabling them to relate to the world around them and providing the springboard to embark on higher academic or vocational education in order to build an egalitarian society.

Our Mission

We promote Quality Education for marginalised children resulting in Social Transformation in India while upholding the values of transparency, accountability, pluralism, equity, justice, peace and respect for all.



Creating stories at Janvikas, Gujarat



We enjoy learning -
children at Jesuit Province Society - Andhra Pradesh



We know the answers - Children at Deep, Bihar

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Chairperson's Message



The validity and strength of an NGO lies in the way it tries to complement government programmes so that the efforts of a democratic government to focus on the vital areas of development as well as the marginalized sections of society are better achieved. Today there seems to be genuine concern on the part of the government to try and upgrade the education of the marginalized as a strategy to live up to its electoral manifesto to bring the benefits of development within the reach of the marginalized. The challenge for NEG-FIRE is two-fold: how to mobilize the marginalized to become aware of these opportunities and get their rightful share from the government and to act as a catalyst agent as well as an advocacy agent in researching the relevance of the methodology used by the government to access the marginalized sections and deliver its goods. The Edu-leadership programme is one such venture. NEG-FIRE is also trying to build a research component into its projects so that some innovative and unique components may be identified as key elements to success and that these can be duplicated in all new ventures. NEG-FIRE is aware of the urgency to deliver goods so that it sustains its charismatic nature and does not fall prey to the process of institutionalization. May God help NEG-FIRE in this noble venture!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Raymond Ambrose".

Fr Raymond Ambrose.

Executive Summary

The year 2008-2009 is NEG-FIRE's 4th year of existence, and we continue to be in the learning mode of testing new grounds for innovations; of being open and listening to the macro-micro realities that affect all vulnerable children and their environments, and which guide our thoughts and programmes. At the same time, we feel that we are now seeing tangible results from some of our ground-breaking ventures.

The first task before NEG-FIRE was to demonstrate through practice its belief that education goes beyond the cognitive, and that tapping the affective and kinesthetic domains are as important. We also saw this as an opportunity to celebrate the rich cultural diversity of the vulnerable communities that we work with; to give it due legitimization within the mainstream curriculum, and bring vibrancy and colour to a dull academic curriculum. We initiated the development of the sports and aesthetics curriculum, and we hope to make this a major area of focus and priority in the coming years.

The need to contribute to the knowledge base in education for marginalized children and also be informed for better practice, led to the research portfolio taking centre stage as NEG-FIRE sanctioned four new research studies. A significant milestone was the fellowship programme for grassroots workers in four districts of Maharashtra. This fellowship programme is a proven example of our belief in the capacity and capabilities of the grassroots to reflect on, search for and document 'the why' in what they do.

In an attempt to learn by doing and to demonstrate good practices, NEG-FIRE is itself implementing two programmes:

- 1) The Edu-leadership programme in Uttar Pradesh, a critical initiative of NEG-FIRE from which significant results are expected. The elimination of child labour in quarries in and around Bundi district in Rajasthan.

As part of partnership promotion during this year, NEG-FIRE continued with its approach of identifying partner NGOs according to its priority areas and themes of focus, and then mutually evolving the programme with the partners by agreeing to specific outcomes. NEG-FIRE is promoting an education programme for the notified and de-notified tribes in Maharashtra, and continues with its emphasis on the inter-state border area programme. This year NEG-FIRE reached out to one more inter-state border between Bihar and Jharkhand, and is thus now working in six inter-state border areas.

Field visits to our partners are always an energizing experience and we visited almost all of our partners in the course of the year. These visits help us to connect with the ground realities, understand the difficulties and mutually find answers to problems. The resilience of children despite their adverse situation is a great source of motivation for us.

The ECCE training being provided to nine NGOs by Muktangan in Mumbai needs mention. We are sure that through this training the developmental needs of the children in remote villages are being better met, and that they are now better equipped to begin constructing their own learning. We are confident that the transition from pre-school to primary will happen smoothly for these children, and also for those NGOs who agreed to start their pre-school classes within government schools.

This year was also satisfying because we went beyond our policy and responded in a sensitive and timely manner to the educational needs of 1,800 children in the riot affected area of Kandhamal and supported them to appear for their board examinations in Classes VII and X.

And finally the journey in 2008-09 was significant as we arrived at two key milestones. The first was that we were able to increase our donor base to include Sir Dorabjee Tata Trust (SDTT). And we finally received our Foreign Contribution Regulation Act Number in November 2008, thus ending the uncertainty of the last three years.

In the coming year, we would like to evaluate our performance over the past four years and continue to focus on developing an arts and aesthetics curriculum, continue to promote the Edu-leadership programme and put in place an advocacy programme to reduce child labour.

Our special thanks to the staff, the Board and all the committees—finance, research, process approval and our donors Misereor and SDTT—who ensured that 16,150 children receive quality education, 448 teachers are motivated, 217 schools are havens of learning and 236 villages are renewed with hope that there is a future for marginalised children!

We look at the new year with optimism and renewed hope, especially in the context of education being a fundamental right and the challenges that it will bring along with it.

Ms. Marita Ishwaran
Executive Director





We can write our names, children at KDSSS, Andhra Pradesh



Partnership
Promotion

Partnership Promotion

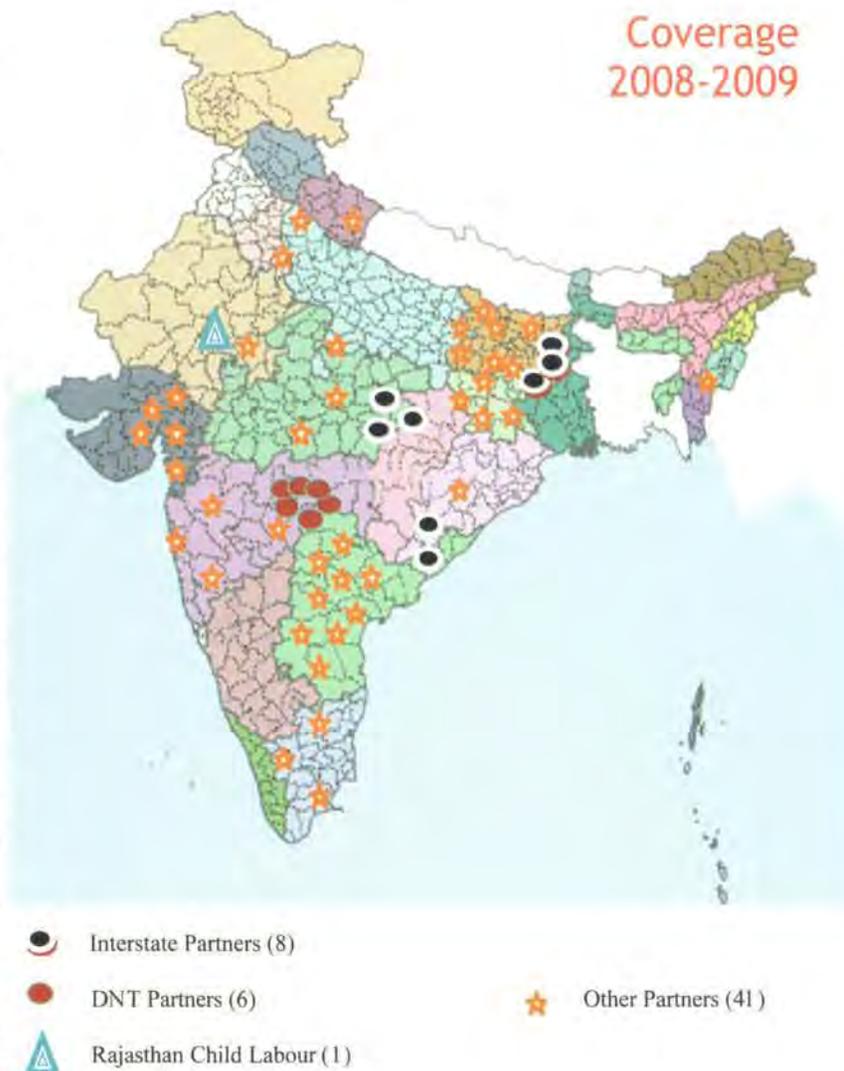
Partnership promotion is a key strategy followed by NEG-FIRE for supporting direct action in the field. Between 2006 and 2009, NEG-FIRE supported 63 partners with a total funding of Rs. 55,962,613. Out of these, 21 projects were completed by March 2009.

During the current year, NEG-FIRE entered into partnerships with 15 more NGO's reaching out to 16,150 children, 448 teachers, 217 schools and 236 villages, with a total grant of Rs. 19,995,900. Thus, the total number of Grantees that NEG-FIRE is presently supporting is 56 spread over 14 states.

1. Focus on Inter-state Border Areas

In 2007, NEG-FIRE reviewed its partnership promotion programme so as to identify those areas and communities where children are most vulnerable, and where its intervention could have the greatest impact. It was learnt that children face multiple discrimination on the borders between two states, and the language issue is a great impediment to their learning. Hence, we decided on an inter-state border area programme and selected five NGOs on the borders of: 1) Andhra Pradesh and Orissa; and 2) Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh reaching out to 11,115 children. This year we extended the programme to the border areas between Bihar and Jharkhand.

The three new NGOs Gramin Prodyogik Vikas Sangh (GPVS) along with Poornea Social Service Society and Abhiyan, working in these border areas were finalized through a rigorous process of selection and the strategy was evolved with their participation. A Participatory Rural Appraisal exercise was carried out at the onset followed by a Project Proposal Development Workshop for all the stakeholders.





Children of the Pardhi tribe being taught at MPSSM, Sholapur



Animators being oriented about the program at ISS Beed.

Through this programme we hope to create a platform for dialogue and actions by respective state government agencies to resolve issues related to language and other educational issues and empower communities so that they begin to see a good quality functional school in their village as an asset. Further, we also hope to develop local leadership to bring about awareness in the community on girls' education.

Eight villages each from Sahebganj and Pakud and four villages from Katihar were selected for the implementation of the programme. All these have large Muslim and tribal communities. The focus of the programme is on the Muslim minority and tribal communities since these are ranked low vis-à-vis development indicators in the area.

- **Gramin Prodyogik Vikas Sangh (GPVS) , Jharkhand**

GPVS is dedicated to the enhancement of the tribal and minority communities with special focus on Muslim children and women in Pakud district of Jharkhand.

NEG-FIRE's Support: The program is being implemented in the villages in Pakud district of Jharkhand. Total coverage: 6,000 children. Total cost: Rs. 1,604,768 for 3 years.

- **Abhiyan, Jharkhand**

Abhiyan works to bring communities and the government together for the development of Dalits, the Paharia and Santhal tribes. It works in 12 districts of Bihar and Jharkhand primarily in the fields of elementary education, community mobilization and women's empowerment.

NEG-FIRE's Support: The program is being implemented in the Baharwa and Sahebganj blocks of Sahebganj district on the border of West Bengal and Jharkhand. Total coverage: 990 children. Total cost: Rs. 2,088,818 for 3 years.

- **Poornea Social Service Society (PSSS), Bihar**

PSSS is working for the upliftment of tribal communities. Its main area of work is in the Katihar and Poonia districts of Bihar.

NEG-FIRE's Support: The program is being implemented in the Manihar block of Katihar district in Bihar. Total coverage: 460 children. Total cost: Rs. 964,104 for 3 years.

2. Nomadic/De-notified Tribes Programme

The NT-DNT (nomadic and de-notified tribes) community, due to its vulnerable and neglected situation, has always been one of the major groups in Maharashtra to be supported by NEG-FIRE.

A group of ten NGOs were identified who participated in a proposal development workshop in Pune held on 26-27 February 2009 where NEG-FIRE and the NGOs together developed a special programme to address the educational issues of the DNT communities. The strategy focuses on training village animators especially from the de-notified communities, to seek better educational facilities and entitlements for children, while also building their understanding on education, community mobilization and leadership. This common strategy is being implemented by six partners who have been selected, for a grant of Rs. 1,227,900 for two years. Six NGO's are working in 121 villages, reaching out to 5043 children and work with almost 33 denotified tribes.

- **Jan Vikas Samajik Sanstha (JVSK), Maharashtra**

JVSK is working for the development and improvement of the vulnerable and weak sections of society in Beed district.

NEG-FIRE's Support: The program is being implemented in Beed district of Maharashtra. Total coverage: 1,251 children. Total cost: Rs. 1,227,900 for 2 years.

- **Gramin Vikas Kendra (GVK), Maharashtra**

The focus of the organization is on promoting a unique society in which there are developmental opportunities and access to mainstream education for all without any discrimination.

NEG-FIRE's Support: The program is being implemented in the Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra. Total coverage: 387 children. Total cost: Rs. 1,227,900 for 2 years.

- **Mahatma Phule Social Education and Research Institute, Maharashtra**

The organization works towards empowering communities and families and creating opportunities for gainful employment, especially for disadvantaged sections. It works in four blocks of Ahmednagar and Beed districts in Maharashtra.

NEG-FIRE's Support: The program is being implemented in Beed district of Maharashtra. Total coverage: 454 children. Total cost: Rs. 1,227,900 for 2 years.



Children of Tirumuli tribe supported by MPSERI, Beed



Kalika Mata Festival celebration by the Pardhi tribe at Jamshed, Ahmednagar



Children of the Musahar community learning at Prabhat (Muzzafarpur Diocesan Society), Bihar



Children creating a new world at Bodhpura, Rajasthan

- **Grameen Punarrachana Kendra (GPK), Maharashtra**
GPK pursues the ideal of sustainable development for the benefit of members of the Dalit and Pardhi communities in and around Kallum taluka in Osmanabad district.
NEG-FIRE's Support: The program is being implemented in Osmanabad district of Maharashtra. Total coverage: 1,310 children. Total cost: Rs. 1,227,900 for 2 years.
 - **Mahatma Phule Samaj Sewa Mandal (MPSSM), Maharashtra**
MPSSM is working for the betterment of rural poor people, mainly women and children in 40 villages in the Nanded district of Maharashtra.
NEG-FIRE's Support: The program is being implemented in Sholapur district of Maharashtra. Total coverage: 529 children. Total cost: Rs. 1,227,900 for 2 years.
 - **Jan Jagrat Mandal Himplanari (JJMH), Maharashtra**
JJMH's focus is on striving for the development and improvement of the vulnerable and weak sections of society living in Beed district.
NEG-FIRE's Support: The program is being implemented in Nanded district of Maharashtra. Total coverage: 1,112 children. Total cost: Rs. 1,227,900 for 2 years.
- 3. Other Projects**
- As in previous years, NEG-FIRE also supported individual grassroots organizations based on specific needs.
- **Samaj Vikas Sanstha, Maharashtra**
Samaj Vikas Sanstha through its advocacy work is ensuring equitable services for poor children residing in hostels in the four districts of Osmanabad, Latur, Beed and Nanded in Maharashtra.
NEG-FIRE's Support : The advocacy initiative in Osmanabad, Latur, Beed and Nanded districts of Maharashtra for bringing about necessary changes in the existing hostel policy of the government of Maharashtra. Total coverage: 720 children. Total cost: Rs. 930,400 for 2 years.
 - **Samantar, Rajasthan**
Samantar is dedicated to cultural action and research. It runs libraries, community education centres and activity centres in Bharatpur and Gangapur towns in the state.

NEG-FIRE's Support: Campaign for multiple interventions in mainstream education covering ten government schools to promote active value based pedagogical practices in Gangapur town of Sawai Madhopur district in Rajasthan. Total coverage: 2,000 children. Total cost: Rs. 1,901,900 for 3 years.

- **Nav Bharat Jagruti Kendra (NBJK), Jharkhand**

NBJK has ties with more than 400 NGOs in Jharkhand and Bihar, and has been implementing different developmental projects including education and providing support to other voluntary organizations.

NEG-FIRE's Support: Primary school education support for the economically and socially poor families of Chowparan block in Hazaribagh district of Jharkhand. The support has been renewed for this ongoing programme for two years. Total coverage: 296 children. Total cost: Rs. 180,000 for 2 years.

- **Catholic Diocese Jhabua, Madhya Pradesh**

The focus of the organization is on educating Bhil tribal children in 22 villages who are involved in cattle grazing.

NEG-FIRE's Support: Providing quality education to children from the Bhil tribe in the 22 villages of Jhabua district in Madhya Pradesh. Total coverage: 950 children. Total cost: Rs. 3,733,000 for 2 years.

- **Prabhat (Muzzafarpur Diocesan Society), Bihar**

Prabhat has been working with the Saday community in Madhubani in Bihar for the last ten years.

NEG-FIRE's Support: This is an additional grant of Rs. 50,000 for teacher training and to take teachers for an education trip to Bodh Gaya, Rajgir and Nalanda. The ongoing project is providing primary education through five schools to the children of the Saday (Musahar) community in Madhubani district of Bihar. Total coverage: 450. Total cost: Rs. 50,000 for 1 year.

- **People's Rural Education Movement (PREM), Orissa**

PREM has reached to more than 13 lakh people of different tribal communities in five states through a network of 225 NGOs and their programmes. It has excellent networking with the government. It has been working with Dalits, tribals and the fisher community for 24 years.

NEG-FIRE's Support: Organizing coaching classes for 1,800 children of Classes VII and X who were appearing for their board examinations and who had missed a full year of study because of the communal strife in Kandhmal. Total coverage: 1,887 children. Total cost: Rs. 656,140 for 3 months.



Students of Std X discussing how to bring peace in Kandhmal



Children in Bundi Rajasthan learning through play.

4. The Child Labour Project, Rajasthan

The child labour project in Bundi district of Rajasthan is the only field project that NEG-FIRE is implementing. NEG-FIRE's direct involvement in the implementation of the programme began with a request from Misereor to survey the situation of child labour in some areas of Rajasthan. A preliminary fact finding study was conducted in December 2007 in the mining areas in and around two villages of Budhpura and Parana in Taleda block of Bundi district. The study showed that immediate interventions were required in the fields of education, healthcare and livelihood. At this point, NEG-FIRE felt that a good result oriented programme as a demonstration project would stand it in good stead for the future and decided to implement the project on its own.

Based on the experience gained in supporting various grassroots initiatives addressing the issue of child labour through mainstreaming children into schools NEG-FIRE developed a child labour strategy that is multi-pronged and incorporates aspects of prevention, capacity building and convergence. The programme is being implemented in these two villages.

Some of the achievements of this programme during the last six months include getting 54 out of 70 children from Patiyal and Bawdi hamlets formally enrolled into the Bodhpura government school in class I (43) and class II (11), and prepared other children to get enrolled in the government school in Budhpura and Parana centres. During the programme care was taken to ensure that there was no discrimination between children in the NEG-FIRE classes and those in the neighbouring classes. NEG-FIRE is also organizing training for teachers working in government schools, including training for teachers from the National Child Labour Programme (NCLP) schools. NEG-FIRE's earlier survey of out of school children was shared with Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) officials who then asked all schools to report on enrollments on the basis of the lists provided by NEG-FIRE. Initially, there was good rapport with quarry unions but with time they have started seeing us as a major impediment to their business.

The child labour project has now expanded to seven villages and includes animators at the village level for a more robust and rigorous mobilization and awareness generation in the community, with education as a key strategy. The programme will reach out to nearly 2,800 children (300 will benefit directly through preparatory centres and the rest will benefit indirectly through government schools and Anganwadi centres) at a cost of 4, 253, 690 for 3 years.



Edu-Leaders in action.

Edu-Leadership Program

The Edu-Leadership Programme

The Edu-leadership programme is NEG-FIRE's flagship programme. It is NEG-FIRE's innovative contribution to achieving Universal School Education by reaching out to children from marginalized communities. Our understanding is that the problem is not just lack of schools or teachers, but the absence of leadership. Without a committed and able leadership at various levels, but especially at the grassroots, educational interventions often end up being superficial at best, having little impact. The link between intention, delivery and accountability by and large does not exist. Current approaches, which are driven more by the need to achieve targets than at building people's capacities, lack a long term perspective.

The idea behind the Edu-leadership programme therefore is to generate a 'critical mass' of self motivated 'thinker-doers' as a resource pool in a given area, which can bring about a lasting change in the way education takes place there.

NEG-FIRE also believes that by addressing the issue of leadership, the problems of education governance, and its quality and sustainability can be dealt with more effectively. In particular, grassroots advocacy on education will be brought into focus, which will act as a trigger for making local educational-governance happen. It is this thinking that led to NEG-FIRE's Edu-leadership initiative.

The preliminary activities for this programme began with a survey in October 2007 using a Misereor grant, and culminated in a workshop in February 2008, with some 70 NGOs identified as potential partners. The Sir Dorabjee Tata Trust (SDTT) then gave a seed grant of Rs. 5 lakh for a pilot project to assess its feasibility.

The partners were prepared through a series of five intensive technical training workshops from May 2008 to February 2009, taking them through the different stages of the project of envisioning, planning and implementation. IGNUS-erg, a reputed organization headed by Subir Shukla provided the training and is a partner in this venture.

Edu-leaders Training Workshops	
Workshop	Objective
May 2008	Developing a vision for the classroom, school, society and Edu-leaders
September 2008	Unpacking beliefs and assumptions Child development, education and the change process
October 2008	Deeper understanding of key subjects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is being taught • Why it is being taught • How it should be taught
November 2008	Preparing an implementation plan to translate commitment to action
February 2009	Developing an understanding of the curriculum and course books Reinforcement of concepts/approaches of the earlier workshops

The programme was monitored from the beginning by NEG-FIRE in close collaboration with Ms. Vimala Ramachandran, head of the Educational Resource Unit (ERU), as a third party evaluator.

In October 2008, Mr. Vinod Jain of Trust Consulting evaluated the programme for SDTT and on the basis of the report SDTT sanctioned a full-fledged programme to start in April 2009 with a grant of Rs. 2.99 crore.

At present there are 39 Edu-leaders from 16 NGOs in four districts of Uttar Pradesh—Azamgarh, Badaun, Maharajganj and Muzaffarnagar—working on the programme.

The Role of the Edu-Leader

Potential Edu-leaders are first capacitated in innovative pedagogy, community mobilization strategies and leadership skills, which they integrate and transfer through practice in schools and in the communities that they work in. Each Edu-leader has one primary school, as a laboratory (either government or NGO run) wherein he transfers the newly learned knowledge either directly to the children, or to the teachers in the schools. On a visit to the area of operation, the Edu-leader can be seen either supporting the teachers, taking classes in a school, playing with children telling them stories or preparing teaching learning material for the schools. Some Edu-leaders can also be seen teaching children in the villages or engaging in conversations with individuals or groups in the community; they can also be seen talking to officials sharing their success stories and also the difficulties that they face. At times they also organize community meetings.

Programme Effects

The results so far have been very encouraging with regard to the effectiveness of the technical training workshops and initial impact at the grassroots level, i.e., in the school and the community. There has been a marked improvement in the thought processes, actions, writing and presentation skills of Edu-leaders; positive developments can also be seen in the schools and within the community. Community members have welcomed the interventions made by the Edu-leaders and children look forward to coming to schools in which they are active. Partnering NGOs also talked about a visible change at the community level with regard to education. Apparently, more children were enrolled in primary schools and they were found to be more regular in attending classes in those schools in which the Edu-leaders had intervened. After some initial resistance, the teachers have accepted Edu-leaders in classrooms and have started taking an interest in activity-based teaching.

The programme has generated some valuable experiences and insights. What follows are experiences of some of the Edu-leaders and how the programme has benefited them along with suggestions of ways in which their experiences can be enriched further.



The Dalit Community and the Edu-leadership Programme

Most Dalit children in Maharajganj in Uttar Pradesh are working either at home or outside. However, after a few months of the Edu-leadership programme some changes can be seen. Not only is the number of Dalit children in schools increasing, but their attendance too has significantly improved. The Dalit community is more aware of the need and significance of quality education and is now taking an interest in children's schooling.

Dharmendra Kumar, Secretary
Samaj Sewa Sansthan, Maharajganj



Way of Life

I never thought that one day the Edu-leadership programme would become an important part of my life. Initially I thought that when the educated and qualified people and the government machinery engaged in the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan could not change the system, then what change would I be able to bring?

A number of capacity building workshops were organized which were successful in building our capacities with reference to different aspects and innovations in education. We also learned the process of translating the traditional method of teaching into a more interactive, child centric and joyful learning one. Today every Edu-leader thinks about new methods to make the teaching-learning process more interactive and learner friendly.

When I started teaching as an Edu-leader in a primary school the first thing I felt was the need to establish a close bonding between the teachers and the pupils. I did face resistance from the teachers but things improved over time and now the same teachers have started taking part in activity based teaching.

My message to fellow Edu-leaders covers two things: Education and the ability to become a leader make you an Edu-leader. Being an Edu-leader means building the capacities of others and motivating them to take forward the changes that you have made.

Tabbasum
Edu-leader, Muzaffarnagar



Toward Education: Towards Development

I worked for the community as a village Sarpanch, before getting associated with the Edu-leadership programme. My pattern of thinking and working has considerably changed after my experience with the Edu-leadership programme. I have now started basing my work on democratic principles and ensuring that the children and the community are with me on a particular decision. I have understood the close relationship between the school and the community, and the significance of quality education for a developing community. I now call my friends for community meetings and share my learning and experiences with them. The impact is being felt in many primary schools and village committees have become more active and regular. Also, a process of dialogue has started between the school and the community, due to my efforts and the sharing of my work and experiences.

Sher Singh, Village Sarpanch
Edu-leader, Muzaffarnagar



Children outside a camp in Kandhamal

Research & Development

Research and Documentation

NEG-FIRE's research and documentation (R&D) programme is a strategic programme/unit towards the creation of a knowledge base built on the experiences and innovations by grassroots practitioners, workers and educationists in the area of elementary education (including Early Childhood Care and Development), with special focus on marginalized children (especially Dalits, tribals and religious minorities, with girl children cutting across groups). Through an array of programmes ranging from fellowships for grassroots practitioners, research by educationists as well as institutions, NEG-FIRE's R&D programme envisions its role as a torch bearer in its mission for 'social transformation through education' by identifying pressing issues, areas and challenges related to the education of marginalized children. It aims at presenting to the larger community, the loopholes in our education systems, the challenges faced by children and practitioners of the marginalized communities, as well as the innovations brought about by people at the grassroots for public discourse and debate. The larger agenda of the programme is to build a knowledge base and public opinion to advocate a pro-marginalized-communities education policy. As part of the objectives of R&D, NEG-FIRE's programmes endeavour to enhance the research, documentation and advocacy capacities of communities and practitioners in the field.

1. The Fellowship Programme

In sync with the larger goal of R&D, the fellowship programme is an annual programme where grassroots workers from CBOs and NGOs, Anganwadi and Balwadi workers, teachers, activists and individual practitioners in the field, spread over a particular geographical location and belonging to the marginalized communities and groups, are awarded a fellowships to pursue guided action research on an issue or area that they identify as pivotal for spreading education in their communities or villages.

The first round of fellowships was awarded in the state of Maharashtra for the year 2008-09 to 17 fellows for a period of nine months from June 2008 to February 2009. Table 1 gives the names of the fellows, their locations and organizational addresses and their research topics, based on the thematic areas of research.

Table 1: Details of the fellowship programme**Thematic Group One : Early Childhood Education**

Mentor: Ms. Mini Srinivasan

S.N.	Name and Organization	Research Topic
1	Smt. Sucheta Shete Social Development & Research Institution, Sholapur	Cognitive-Skills Based Curriculum And Pedagogy in Pre-school.
2	Ms. Archana Ranpise Sadhana Institute for Sustainable Development, Pune	Cognitive-Skills Based Curriculum And Pedagogy in Pre-school.
3	Ms. Jamuna Satish Gaikwad Grameen Punarrachana Kendra, Osmanabad	Introduction of Cognitive-Skills Based Curriculum And Pedagogy in Pre-school with a Special Emphasis on Children's Home Language.

**Thematic Group Two: Community Women's Involvement
in Education.** Mentor: Ms. Shruti Tambe

4	Ms. Mangal Narsingh Shrimangal, Parivartan Sanstha, Latur	Enrolment of children outside formal schooling system in schools.
5	Ms. Shaikh Sofiya Jawed Janvikas Samajik Sanstha ,Beed	Analytical study of Bhil women's livelihoods and Bhil children's education.
6	Ms. Uma Arun Jadhav	Educational Problems Facing Kolhati Girls and their Health.

Thematic Group Three: Participatory Research

Mentors: Ms.Manjusha Khedkar and Mr.Rajeev Khedkar

7	Mr. Santaji Madhukar Rode Osmanabad/ Research in Marathwada	Status of education amongst girls from Wadar community in Tuljapur block of Marathwada.
8	Mr. Shivabusavanna Gulappa Chalwadi	Status of school dropouts amongst children from Lamani community in Devni block of Latur district.

**Thematic Group Four: Study of Government Ashramshalas of
differently able (deaf & mute, blind, and other groups) students
in four districts of Marathwada**

Mentors: Mr. Mathew and Mr. Rajesh Ingle

9	Mr. Sheshrao Shivram Gaekwad Shram Shakti Sewabhavi Sanstha Kuntur, Nanded	Study of the facilities available in the government ashramshalas and hostels for blind/handicapped/ deaf & mute students in the district of Nanded.
10	Mr. Shaikh Babu Shaikh Mohammad Wadmavli Lok Vikas Manch, Beed	Study of the facilities available in the government ashramshalas and hostels for blind/handicapped/ deaf & mute students in the district of Beed.



The first batch of fellows with mentors and NEG-FIRE members

Fellows Speak :**In her own words: Two incidents shared by Jamuna**

- *Babita Pintu Kale, a 4-year-old girl from the Village, was very short tempered. She remained aloof and disliked anybody who even looked at her. In my five years of running the Balwadi I remember no incident of getting close to her, except during the distribution of food. She would either stand alone or go home. But since this December I see a change in her. She attends classes regularly, sits through every class and even requests me to sing a particular song that she likes. This song is in the Pardhi dialect. I think the fact that I was able to communicate in Pardhi brought her closer to me. She waits for me daily under the neem tree. She interacts with me in Pardhi and I respond in the same*



Jamuna with Pardhi Children

11	Mr. Sanjay Bhagwan Haral Wadmavli Lok Vikas Manch, Beed	Study of the facilities available in the government ashramshalas and hostels for blind/handicapped/deaf & mute students in the district of Beed.
12	Mr. Santosh Ratan Gaikwad Navchetna Sanstha Pohregaon, Latur	Study of the facilities available in the government ashramshalas and hostels for blind/handicapped/deaf & mute students in the district of Latur.
13	Mr. Maruti Dnyoba Sirsat Grameen Punarrachana Kendra, Osmanabad	Study of the facilities available in the government ashramshalas and hostels for blind/handicapped/deaf & mute students in the district of Osmanabad.
A		
14	Mr. Vishwas Chakranarayan Pune	Studying the Mindsets: The Deprived and Education in the backwaters of Koyna.
15	Shri. Shravan Etkar Mahatma Phule Gramin Lok Seva Sanstha, Osmanabad	The Wadar: A Study of the oral tradition.
16	Mr. Avinash Anna Saheb Gaikwad, Pune	The Phanse Pardhis in Present Context and the issue of Education- A Study.
17	Mr. Laxman J. Chavhan, Vir Sindoor Laxman Shikshan Kendra, Sangli	Orality and Education: The study and documentation of the Berad Ramoshi Oral tradition.

language and thus we get engaged in a good conversation. She speaks her mind to me through her own language and I also build my knowledge of the language through her. I ask her the names of animals, objects, trees, body parts etc. Knowing Babita's language has made me understand her feelings. This underscores the significance of language; the teacher should be familiar with the language of the community in order to teach the children.

- *Some officials from the Adivasi department visited the basti in January 09. Since the Balwadi class was going on at that time, they visited me and showed interest in knowing the work I was doing. I told them what we were doing and also that eight children from the basti had gone out of the village to continue their studies. The officers appreciated the changes that had taken place in the community and congratulated me in public. They appealed to the parents to send their children to schools and help me in every possible way. The parents realized their mistake and stopped complaining about what I was doing. Witnessing a well running Balwadi convinced the officer that the people were trustworthy and he immediately approved their loan proposal for buffalos. This in turn convinced the parents about the importance of educational activity. Earlier they were reluctant to send their children to school. Instead of books and slates, girls would get engaged in goat rearing. However, gradually a change has become visible. Now girls of various age groups come and attend Balwadi classes.*

(Excerpts from Jamuna's Gaikwad's translated report).

The aims and results of the fellowship programme are well expressed by one of the programme mentors:

Mentors Speak :

In nine months, what has been achieved? What can be achieved in nine months? The problems are huge, intimidating. Can a few young men and women move mammoth systems, wake officials up from decades of indifference? But then, that was never the intention of this fellowship.

What has been achieved is that these men and women have managed to bring something new into their own work, and in the process have changed themselves. They have managed to shake something loose in the government machinery, and have gained immensely in confidence to move that machinery. They have understood something new about the children they work with, and have opened new windows into their own minds. They have learned what is possible. And they have something to share—possibilities.

- First of all, that it is possible to help young children to learn not to copy and repeat, but to think with a few games and learning materials, a lot of imagination and enthusiasm.
- Second, that it is possible for very young children to learn from their environment. The environment can become the teacher's best helper.
- Third, it is possible to get Anganwadi workers to enjoy their work and connect with their communities, and to get communities to believe that the Anganwadi can give their children the beginnings of a good education.
- Fourth, it is possible to teach young children in such a way that the language they learn in their mothers' laps is not despised and killed off when they come into school.
- And fifth, that research is what you do when you think about your work, read and write about it, and share it with others.

And what has the mentor learnt? Humility in the face of dedication and sheer hard work in the most difficult of circumstances; the real possibility of bringing education to the poorest without compromising on quality; the eagerness and ability to learn among young women without much in terms of qualifications; and the joy of being able to provide the spark that kindles that growth Mini Shrinivasan

Let me say at the end that it has been an honour to have worked with activists of the calibre of Avinash, Taty, Laxman and Vishwas. The 'mentor' learned a lot and that it is a continuing process. I am grateful to them and to the NEG-FIRE for this humbling experience Dr. Ajay Dandekar



Mentors NEG Fire staff

2. Research Studies

NEG-FIRE also supports scholars and subject specialists in doing broad-based research that will directly benefit organizations working in the field. Four research studies were sanctioned:

1. **Study on the Impact of the SSA in Tribal Areas of Gujarat.** Dr Ajay Dandekar through the study attempts to measure the quality of education provided by government schools in tribal areas of Gujarat by assessing the competency of students, internal factors (within the school) and external factors (socio-economic-demographic).
2. **Plight of children in riot-affected Kandhmal region.** Sanctioned to Young India, an NGO from Orissa. This research seeks to systematically study the impact of riots on children and the psycho-social development issues posed by this.
3. **Experiences of conflict and children's Education.** Proposal submitted by Mr. Gyan Deo Tripathi, a consultant from Bihar. The researcher studies the impact of migration on socialization and education of children with a special focus on the girl child, and also on the relationship between migration and child labour.
4. **An Enquiry into the Socialization of Tribal Children in the Context of Constructivism.** This study by Ms. Ritu Bala of the Department of Education, Delhi University seeks to understand the socialization of values, the sense of well-being, gender roles, social structure and governance and notions of labour with an inter-disciplinary approach. The suggested locations are in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.

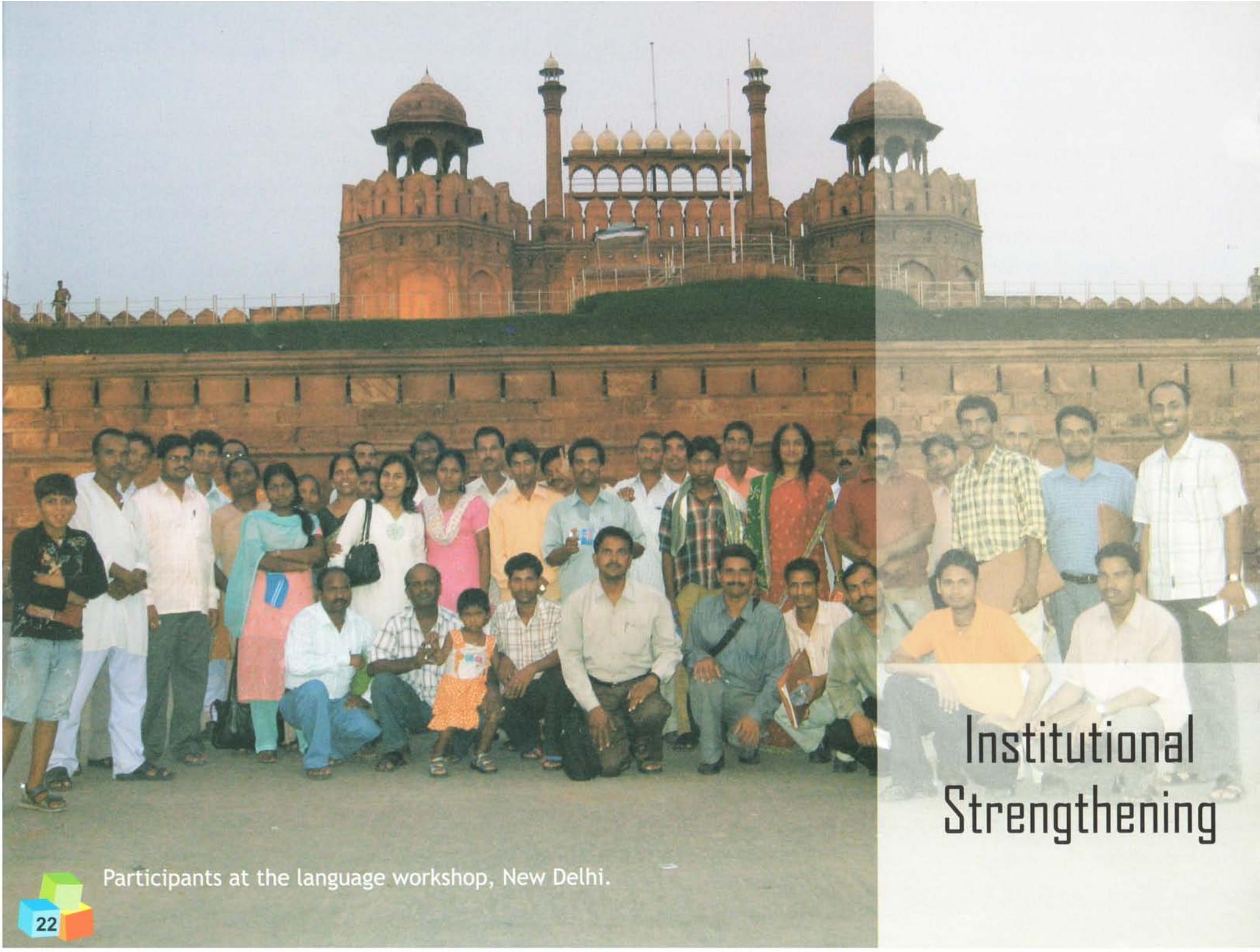
3. Documentation on Child Participation

We studied four different models to document the scope and degree of child participation. We sought to find out how far participation in each model is informed, willing, relevant and appropriate. We also examined whether the implementation of the right to participation in a particular context could give rise to conflicts with other rights like the right to a safe and supportive environment and the right to education. Along the same lines, the project considered where one draws the line between child participation and the adults abdicating their responsibility. And finally, we wanted to look at whether child participation had an impact on society at large.

The models studied were:

- Bal Sansads in government schools in Ranchi district (Jharkhand),
- Child participation in Sadhana (one of our partners in Andhra Pradesh),
- Child networks in CACL (Pune), and
- Child Rights Trust in Bangalore (Karnataka).

These studies can be found on our website.



Institutional Strengthening

Participants at the language workshop, New Delhi.

Institutional Strengthening

NEG-FIRE is committed to building the capacities of its partner NGOs. To assist them, NEG-FIRE identifies best practices in different fields, including within its partners and organizes workshops where these can be shared. This year NEG-FIRE organized two Training of Trainers (TOT) workshops and one exposure visit for its NGO partners.

a. ECCD Programme of Mukhtangan, Mumbai.

Mukhtangan has developed an alternative quality, cost effective model for English medium education for underprivileged children. This tried and tested model of ECCD is presently being implemented up to Class IV in municipal schools in Mumbai. Teacher training is an integral part of the teaching learning process.

Mukhtangan conducted a 10-month long training of trainers programme in Mumbai on ECCD, beginning in December 2008 for NEG-FIRE partners in Uttar Pradesh, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand and Gujarat. This training programme follows a participatory approach and eight persons completed the course.

Recently, at our partners meeting in March 2009, the trainees shared how much they had benefited from this training. What also gives us satisfaction is that through such trainings, the developmental needs of the children in remote villages are being met and they are beginning to construct their own learning, they are exploring their world and enjoying their experiences. We are confident that the transition from pre-school to primary will happen smoothly for these children. We also think that the NGOs who agreed to start their Balwadi classes in government schools will find the transition of children into primary school easy. We would like to take this further and look at classes I and II. The trainees now have a two fold mission. To ensure that the pedagogy is being implemented at their NGOs and to share replicate the practice in two more NGO's/ICDS centres.



Children learning at Mukhtangan, Mumbai.



Participant being trained on the WRIP methodology.

b. Writing and Reading Improvement Programme (WRIP)

During our monitoring visit to our partner organization SOVA (South Orissa Voluntary Association), Orissa, we identified WRIP (the Writing Reading Improvement Programme) as one of their best classroom practices. WRIP is a combination of three important aspects—seeing, listening and reading aloud with correct pronunciation—and is designed to develop the reading and writing skills of children in 28 weeks. SOVA has been implementing the programme successfully and has been able to create interest among children to continue in school.

A 4-day workshop focusing on writing and reading through the WRIP methodology was organized on 25-28 November 2008 in Bhopal. In all 29 participants from 14 different partner organizations were invited and were trained in WRIP. As a follow-up, those trained conducted workshops for teachers of partner organizations in six states. Teachers from the nearby government schools, non-formal education (NFE) programmes and NCLP schools also attended these training programmes.

c. Exposure Visit to Dalit Shakti Kendra

The Dalit Shakti Kendra (DSK) has created a model for Dalit empowerment, resistance and alternative creation amidst exclusionary and discriminatory policies and practices in Gujarat. One of their innovative programmes is a science museum linked to a library. In August 2008, a group of NEG-FIRE staff members, children and staff from our partners in Gujarat visited DSK. The children enjoyed the exposure visit immensely, and the staff got new insights and understanding on Dalit issues and the innovative educational program at DSK.

d. Gujarat strategy meeting

A strategy planning workshop was organized at IRMA, Anand from 3-6 February 2009 to develop a strategy for future interventions in Gujarat. In the course of the four day workshop the participants analyzed educational interventions during the past 25 years at various levels, and their impacts; the current scenario of education in Gujarat with focus on groups and issues and the strengths and weaknesses of the different types of developmental approaches. Besides this, specific approaches as developed by organizations such as CACL and the Centre for Social Justice were presented by the organizations and studied during the



Ram Singh from Bundi, Rajasthan learning the WRIP Methodology.



A spirit of enquiry promoted at DSK Gujarat



Partners Meeting

workshop. Around 20 participants including NEG-FIRE's current and former partners participated in the workshop.

The workshop provided valuable information and insights to the participants and will also be invaluable to NEG-FIRE in its planning for the future in Gujarat. NEG-FIRE was made aware of specific vulnerable groups, their locations, causes of exclusion and their issues - discrimination, migration, and those related to the community, teachers and curriculum. Attention was drawn towards the Meena Samaj, Sidhi, migrant Muslims, manual scavengers. Locations identified were border areas of Kutch, districts Dahod, Baroda, Chota Udaipura, Dang, Panchmahal and Santrampur.

e. Partners Meet-2009 for Advocacy and Networking

NEG-FIRE organized a partners' meet on 17-18 March 2009 with a focus on identifying issues and areas for research and advocacy. Thirty-seven NEG-FIRE partners from 11 states engaged in educational practices from early childhood to elementary education, and also those working on issues of child labour participated in the meet.

The issues identified for research and advocacy were ECCD, migration, multilingualism and child labour. In the field of school education, the key issues identified were community participation, entitlements for children and classroom processes. The specific sections that the participants felt needed special attention were children in conflict and crisis (IDP, agrarian crisis, communal situations) and special groups like the girl child and children from Muslim communities.

f. Retreat of Staff

Staff members of NEG-FIRE attended a 4-day Earth-centered Healing Workshop from 3-6 March in Baga Retreat House, Goa. This workshop was conducted by Father Paul Vaz, Rector & Executive Chairman of St. Xavier's College, Mumbai. Using the methodology/process of meditation, painting, dancing, celebrating and quieting, the focus of the workshop was on two aspects: Self-discovery and self-possession, earth consciousness and rooted-ness. This experience helped staff members to step out of their busy lives and become aware of the inner rhythm of self being.



Goa Retreat

The Governing Board members, April 2008-March 2009

- 1 **Fr. Raymond Ambroise**
Chairperson, Founding Individual Member

Fr. Ambroise has been actively involved in Mass Media activities through Amruthavani and animation of the poor in about 2000 villages in Andhra Pradesh.



- 2 **Dr. Jaya Peter,**
Vice Chairperson,
Founding Individual Member

An eminent Scientist, with 34 Research Papers in International & National Journals.



- 3 **Bishop Thomas D'Souza**
Founding Institutional Member - CBCI

Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Bagdogra, West Bengal and is also a member of the Commission for Education and Culture of the Catholic Bishop' Conference of India (CBCI).



- 4 **Rudolf C. Heredia, S.J.**
Founding Institutional Member -CRI
(Till June 2008)

The founder Director of the Social Science Centre, Mumbai and at present, a research fellow at the Indian Social institute, New Delhi.



9. **Fr. John Ariapilly**
Institutional Member-CRI
(Since July'2008)

Provincial of the Delhi Jesuit Province, Society of Jesus.



- 5 **Sr. Mariella CJ**
Founding Institutional Member - CRI

Provincial of the Delhi province of the Congregation of Jesus (CJ).



- 6 **Mr. Gagan Sethi**
Founding Individual Member
(Till June 2008)

The Executive Secretary of Janvikas, Gujarat since 1987 and it's Managing Trustee from 1997 to 2007.



- 7 **Dr. Azra Razzack**
Individual Member

Faculty member at the Dr. K. R. Narayanan Centre for Dalit and Minorities Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi.



- 8 **Mr. Martin Macwan**
Institutional Member- Dalit Foundation
(Since July 2008)

Human rights activist in Gujarat and also the founder of Navsarjan Trust, Gujarat.



10. **Mr. Martin Pinto**

A Fellow Member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India. Co-opted on the board as a financial expert since July 2008.



The General Body members:

1. **Rev. Bishop Stephen Rotluanga**
Bishop of Aizawl.
2. **Fr. Thomas V. Kunnunkal, SJ**
Research Director at the Indian Social Institute, New Delhi.
3. **Fr. Robert Slattery**
The Director of Hazaribag Diocese Education Research Centre, Jharkhand.
4. **Dr. G. Pankajam**
Ex-Vice Chancellor of Gandhi Gram University.
5. **Mr. Shankar Venkateswaran**
Former Executive Director of America India Foundation.
6. **Mr. K.P. Fabian**
Institutional Member-IGSSS
The President of IGSSS.
7. **Dr. Ranjana Srivastava**
Academician and specialist in the field of Education and Development.
8. **Dr. Prakash Louis**
A leading professional studying Social Movements in the country and an active advocate for social inclusion of Dalits, Tribals, religious minorities and women in the society and especially in all aspects of governances.
9. **Dr. I. Devasahayam**
Professor of Tamil with a teaching experience of 31 years in Arulanandar College and founder member of People's Watch-a Human Right Organization.

Finance committee

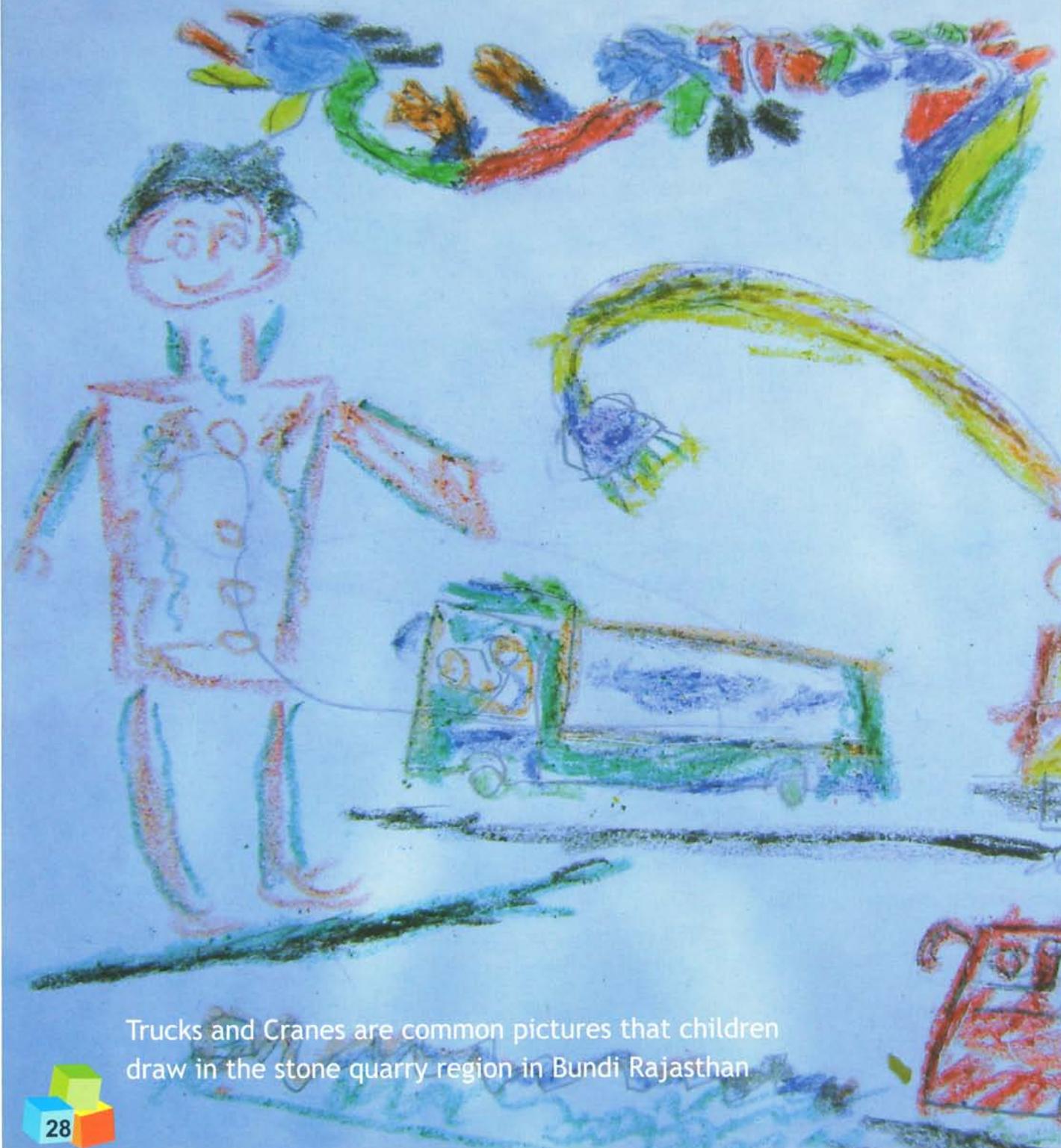
1. Fr. Raymond Ambroise - Chairperson, NEG-FIRE
2. Fr. Thomas Kunnunkal - Treasurer, NEG-FIRE
3. Mr. Martin Pinto - NEG-FIRE
4. Mr. Bhupinder Gupta

Research committee:

1. Dr. Pankajam - General Body, NEG-FIRE
2. Ms. Dipta Bhog
3. Ms. Suma Sachdeva
4. Ms. Farah Farooqui
5. Ms. Priti Joshi

Process Approval Committee.

1. Fr. Raymond Ambroise - Chairperson NEG-FIRE
2. Bishop Thomas D'souza - NEG-FIRE.
3. Fr. John Airapilly - NEG-FIRE
4. Mr. Dayaram



Finance

Trucks and Cranes are common pictures that children draw in the stone quarry region in Bundi Rajasthan

New Education Group - Foundation for Innovation and Research in Education

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2009

(CONS A/C)

Particulars	Schedule No.	As At 31-03-2009 (Rs.)	As At 31-03-2008 (Rs.)
SOURCES OF FUNDS			
Reserve & Funds	1	1,565,608.23	1,007,787.15
Programme Balances	2	858,323.43	7,588,862.53
Total		2,423,931.66	8,596,649.68
APPLICATION OF FUNDS			
Fixed Assets			
Gross Block	3	2,564,544.00	1,842,148.00
Less: Depreciation		1,002,728.00	636,913.00
Net Block		1,561,816.00	1,005,235.00
Capital Work in Progress		-	-
		1,561,816.00	1,005,235.00
Current Assets & Advances			
Cash & Bank Balances	4	840,932.09	7,354,368.88
Advances	5	21,183.00	315,500.00
		862,115.09	7,669,868.88
Less : Current Liabilities & Provisions	6	-	78,454.00
Net Current Assets		862,115.09	7,591,414.88
Total		2,423,931.09	8,596,649.68
Significant Accounting Policies & Notes to the Accounts	12		

Note: Previous year's figures have been re-classified wherever necessary.

For & on Behalf of Management

As per our report of even date

Marita Ishwaran
Executive DirectorFr. Thomas V. Kunnunkal
TreasurerJ. A. Martins & Co
Chartered AccountantsPlace : New Delhi
Date :

New Education Group - Foundation for Innovation and Research in Education

Income and Expenditure Account for the Year Ended 31st March 2009

(CONS A/C)

Particulars	Schedule No	For The Year Ended 31-03-2009 (Rs.)	For The Year Ended 31-03-2008 (Rs.)
INCOME			
Programme Fund Allocated		30,705,586.79	15,137,600.88
Bank Interest		3,140.08	69.63
Donation Received		-	20,757.00
Total		30,708,726.87	15,158,427.51
EXPENDITURE			
Continuation Of the National Education Programme (2005) In India	7	5,440,383.00	9,088,724.26
Continuation Of the National Education Programme (2007) In India	8	10,346,025.00	5,721,306.82
Continuation Of the National Education Programme (2008) In India	9	14,053,383.79	-
Feasibility Study for Developing Educational Leaders Programme	10	497,826.00	-
Administration Expenses	11	4,274.00	48,472.00
Depreciation		365,815.00	327,570.00
Total		30,707,486.79	15,186,072.88
Excess of Income Over Expenditure		1,240.08	(27,645.37)
Total		30,708,726.87	15,158,427.51
Significant Accounting Policies & Notes to the Accounts	12		

Note: Previous year's figures have been re-classified wherever necessary.

For & on behalf of management

As per our report of even date

Marita Ishwaran
Executive DirectorFr. Thomas V. Kunnunkal
TreasurerJ. A. Martins & Co
Chartered AccountantsPlace : New Delhi
Date :

For New Education Group – Foundation for Innovation and Research in Education

Schedule 12

(A) SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES:

(i) **Basis of Accounting:**

The financial statements have been drawn up under the historical cost conventions, on cash basis except for amounts payable as statutory dues, which are accounted for on accrual basis. Grants are accounted for at the time of actual receipt of funds.

(ii) **Fixed Assets**

Fixed assets are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation. Cost is inclusive of freight, duties and any directly attributable cost of bringing the assets to their working condition for intended use.

(iii) **Depreciation**

Depreciation on fixed assets is charged on written down value (WDV) method at the rates specified under the Income tax Act 1961. Depreciation on fixed assets purchased out of grants / donations / designated funds is reflected in the Income and Expenditure Account with a corresponding transfer from the Capital Reserve Account.

(iv) **Grants / Donations / Designated Funds:**

Grants / Donations / Designated Funds received for a particular programme(s) are recognized in the Income and Expenditure Account over the period necessary to match them with the related costs, which they are intended to compensate. The unutilized Grants / Donations / Designated Funds Contributions are reflected as part of Programme Balances. Other Grants, Donations, Contributions received without any specific direction are accounted for as revenue when received.

(v) **Interest:**

Interest earned on Programme Funds are credited directly to such funds. Interest earned on other funds is accounted for as revenue in the Income and Expenditure Account.

(vi) **Capital Reserve:**

Capital Reserve represents the written down value of fixed assets purchased out of grants / donations / designated funds.

(B) NOTES TO ACCOUNTS:

- (i) The Society is registered under Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860 vide Registration No. S-52241 of 2005 dated 28-03-2005.
- (ii) The Society is registered under section 12AA of the Income-Tax Act 1961 vide registration No. DIT(E)/12A/2005-06/N-873/1315 w.e.f. 28-03-2005.
- (iii) Interest earned on Programme Funds aggregating Rs. 378,789.18 has been reflected as Interest under Programme Balances – Schedule 2.
- (iv) Audit Fees are Rs. 45,000.00 plus Service Tax of Rs. 5,562.00 thereon.
- (v) No provision for taxation has been made in view of the expected exemption under Section 11 and 12 of the Income-Tax Act 1961.
- (vi) Previous year figures have been regrouped / reclassified wherever found necessary for comparative purposes.

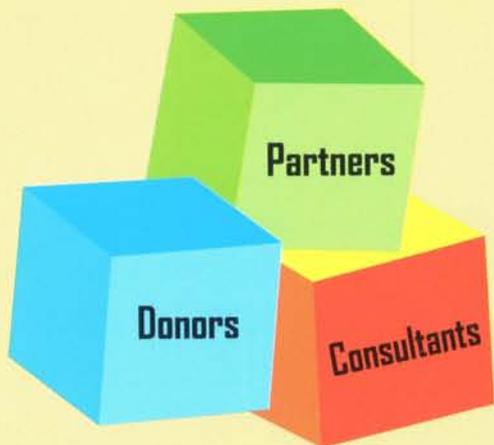
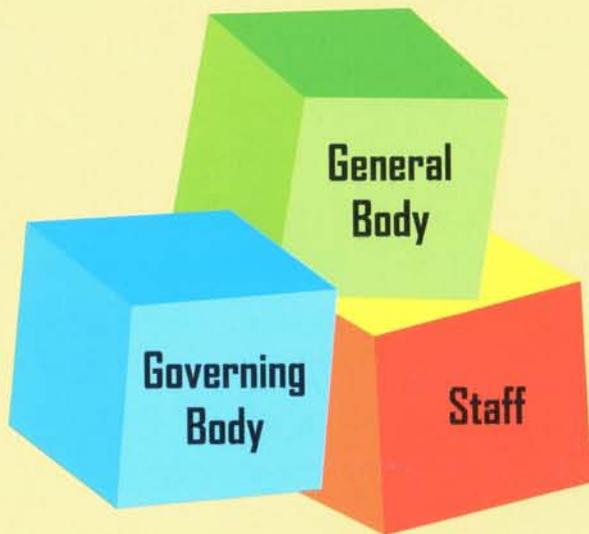
For New Education Group – Foundation for Innovation
and Research in Education

M. Ishwaran
Marita Ishwaran
Executive Director



Fr. Thomas V. Kunnunkal
Treasurer

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TEAM



We invite you to join hands

*.... to make Education an
effective approach to
empowering the powerless
and bringing development
to people and communities
who have no access to it....
... be a partner, a volunteer,
a donor ...
Donate to*

NEG-Fire

(All donation are eligible for tax relief under
section 80 G of the Income Tax Act)



NEG-Fire

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Telefax : 26531887
E-mail : info@negfire.org
Website : www.negfire.org

Let us Reflect

- ☞ Learning begins at birth.
- ☞ No two children learn in similar ways. Do we take this into account when we provide their education?
- ☞ Are children assured of the right to quality and culturally oriented education?
- ☞ Who should the teacher be accountable to? The child, the community or the system?
- ☞ Do teachers treat at all children with same respect regardless of their class, caste, gender or religion?
- ☞ In early childhood only about providing meals to poor children or about psycho-social development and learning?
- ☞ 'Can leadership emerge from the margins'?
- ☞ Should schools be community owned or privately owned?
- ☞ Should Panchyats play a crucial role in the education system?