



New Education Group

Foundation for Innovation and Research in Education

Annual Report April 2009 - March 2010



Our Vision

NEG-FIRE is a development support organization that aims to transform lives of marginalized children, through appropriate strategies and dynamic partnerships with local NGOs, networks and community-based groups.

We see every Dalit, tribal and girl child and all those belonging to vulnerable groups, 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 enable partners to promote quality education for marginalized children resulting in social transformation in India, while upholding the values of transparency, accountability, pluralism, equity, justice and respect for all.



Happily learning- children in a Govt. school in AP



Learning through group work- children in Azamgarh dist., UP



Clap your hands!- children in a govt. school in AP

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From the Chairperson

Dear friends,

Home and school are two crucial and complementary institutions that a child needs in life to blossom as a full-fledged human being. The home caters to the physical and emotional needs of a child while the school addresses his/her intellectual and social needs. Such being the stupendous responsibility of society both need to be addressed with equal importance.

India has opened up the floodgates and is poised for mammoth expansion in the field of universal school education with the enactment of the Right to Education (RTE) Act effective from April 2010. Although our founding fathers had envisaged universalization of education, so far this dream had been elusive; it may become a reality through this legendary initiative. RTE is inclusive in character and maps well on the philosophy and vision of education.

The aim of NEG-FIRE is to bring education to the marginalized and RTE is a great ray of hope in this direction. RTE may have some teething troubles in its implementation but these should not deter any social activist from seizing this golden opportunity to make it serve the cause of education for the marginalized effectively. Such being the importance of RTE, NEG-FIRE will make all efforts to join hands with every patriotic Indian to see that this historic venture is implemented by playing the double role of a promoter and a watchdog. In fact, all the projects and processes promoted by NEG-FIRE will be colored by RTE in one way or the other. May RTE be a major milestone in realizing the long cherished dream of our founding fathers of building an egalitarian India in the coming decades!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Raymond Ambroise'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Fr. Raymond Ambroise
Chairperson, NEG-FIRE



From the Executive Director

Dear Friends,
Salaam from NEG-FIRE!

This report covers the period 2009-2010, but I would like to sail you through NEG-FIRE's five-year journey as a legal entity since 28 March 2005.

NEG-FIRE is actually an avatar of NEG (National Education Group) that was started in 1989. The new name spelt out the difference from the parent organization with the following ingredient: new, innovative and research oriented to critically review past practices. NEG-FIRE's mandate was to innovate a new trail to meet the challenges of bringing child-friendly education to the marginalized in an effective way.

NEG-FIRE organized a think tank to chalk out its future interventions.

Hence, the following decisions:

- Instead of huge investments in constructing school buildings we decided to find innovative ways to bring education to the marginalized.
- Rather than soliciting projects, we decided to map out the location of the most marginalized in India and bring education to them.
- Instead of limiting the project period to around three years, we decided to focus on a target area for a longer period, say 7-10 years, to integrate education into the culture of the marginalized.
- Teachers are key actors in educating children. They must become edu-leaders—a word we coined to show the leadership role that teachers have to play in communities.
- Grassroots workers must be encouraged and enabled to do simple research on factors that affect the education of the masses.

As in all fledgling growth we too had our share of challenges and defining moments. The incubation period was one of growth and development, of exploring, learning and taking risks. However, what remained constant was our indomitable spirit, sustained by our meaningful purpose of *transforming the lives of marginalized children and their communities through education* and the overall goal of co-creating a just and equitable society.

During 2005-2010, we moved from an annual budget of Rs. 5,443,216 to Rs. 43,709,119, from an average grant of Rs. 582,417 to our NGO partners to Rs. 2,083,500, and from one major long-term donor to two. We devised strategies for promoting partnerships, research and fellowships and self-implemented three flagship programs: the 'Edu-leadership' program in Uttar Pradesh, the program for the 'elimination of child labor' in Rajasthan and the 'fellowship' program in Maharashtra. Through all this, we moved from strength to strength, ever more focused on our vision and stronger in our mandate.

Our vision goes beyond merely providing education; it aims at transformation through education. Thus, we proactively identified regions with significant numbers of marginalized and vulnerable children, employed multipronged strategies to meet varied needs and realities, were open and flexible to allow space for mistakes, re-drew strategies, coped with the changing socio-economic and political upheavals and provided space to incorporate changes due to the Right to Education (RTE) Act 2009. We engaged with quality technical groups in order to provide the best learning experiences and opportunities to children by building capacities of our partner NGOs.

Over these five years as an enabling organization, our most prized investment was connecting to 14 tribal communities, the de-notified tribes, the musahars and other very vulnerable dalit and Muslim children and their families through our 75 grantees. These have been in the most remote areas, some along the interstate borders and in about 20 poorest districts in 14 states in the country. Through the grantees, we promoted quality education for over a lakh children, about 3000 teachers and 1000 schools.

Under our key focus areas of 'Partnership Promotion and Research', we experimented with innovative concepts like developing leadership for education at the grassroots or the Edu-leadership program that now runs in four states, the inter-state program along the borders of six states to specifically address language issues as also other educational gaps, provided fellowships to grassroots workers in three states in order to build not only their research capacities but also to help them improve their practice. We have, commissioned 11 research studies done by small grassroots organizations and individuals. We are developing a handbook on cultural expressions for teachers working in tribal schools and contextual teaching-learning material for Musahar children and have provided opportunities for play, sports, and arts, both at the community and school levels.

We also opened new horizons in implementing projects ourselves. These were done as a demonstration of good practice as well as for our sustainability. Two of these are the Edu-leadership program in Uttar Pradesh supported by the Sir Dorabjee Tata Trust (SDTT) and the child labor elimination program in Rajasthan supported by Misereor, Germany.

Five years is too short a period to assess outcomes as some of the partners have just completed two to three years while some others had only a three year project time-frame. The process was also affected when some of the already afflicted communities were further subjugated to uncertainties and fear due to crisis or conflict be it communal, police repression, floods or change in governments. This, in addition to the 'normal' hazards and obstacles of poor quality schooling - high absenteeism and inadequate teachers, poor teaching, schools used by police personnel, discrimination by teachers and the system, language learning issues and non-receipt of entitlements. Schools were just not safe, sensitive or caring to these children.

Despite these situations we have evidence of hundreds of children being brought out of labor and into schools; thousands are today accessing formal education and doing well academically. An 'emotional resilience curriculum' pilot project tested with children in Gujarat has shown positive trends. Young children who were gripped with fear due to a tense communal situation are now enjoying an inclusive curriculum that takes care of their socio-emotional and cognitive needs. Children are performing better due to focus on accelerated learning strategies and intense support.

Some parents have started talking about their children's education; some have walked out of their homes to peep into classrooms for the first time, though still with fear while some braver ones have used the provisions of the Right to Information (RTI) Act to seek answers. Women, youth and even Panchayat members are being developed as leaders for education. Children's education has now become a part of the agenda of women

and youth groups as also of Panchayats. On a more practical level, parents in many homes have provided children with study corners; they are also fixing study times for their children. In one case, members of 100 Panchayats vowed and ensured that their Panchayats would be child labor free.

Sensitizing officials on the language issue in inter-state border areas has happened to some extent, and there is openness in addressing the issue. Grantees have received support from SSA clusters and block level officials. Several communities are enthused and motivated enough to dream of better schooling for their children and are aware of the importance of education, specifically RTE and their involvement in their children's education.

During this five-year period, we opted for support interventions where the focus was on children accessing formal education, rather than on building schools and/or parallel education initiatives. This timely decision has stood us in good stead as today we are better aligned to function with the constitutional mandate of RTE, without any regrets of financial losses or of abandoning any partner on this account. We also chose to reduce the number of grantees and their geographical spread for greater impact. We would like to accompany children in their journey of growth and development for about 10 years beginning with promoting a young child's need for care and education up to the elementary stage, so as to take a whole generation of children out of the poverty cycle.

Yes we have grown as an institution too, with these early years focused on putting in place human resource and financial systems. This policy is now culminating into a policy of good governance and effective structures like process approval and finance and research committees being in place for guidance and advise.

This journey was made meaningful due to a host of groups and people we met and engaged with along the way; we learnt many a lesson from the good practices on the ground from our grantees with regard to both programs as well as finance. The gleam in the children's eyes, their enthusiasm to learn and some dedicated school principals, teachers and government officials have reinforced our belief that change is possible through collective action. We are also thankful to all our consultants, technical groups, friends and well-wishers, and of course our donors, Misereor and SDTT, who have been the wind beneath our wings.

Internally, the visionary General Body, the Governing Board and the various committees that guided our quality processes, together with a passionate and enlightened professional staff, including our ex-staff members also contributed to our path-breaking effort in the last five years to bring education to the marginalized. Every single person helped to build, brick by brick, the edifice called NEG-FIRE.

As an organization we are always open to learning and through experience have realized that we desire a new way to move ahead and reach closer to what we aspire to achieve. For the next phase we would like to look closely at the unfolding of partnerships, how to make the participation of the community more meaningful and how to encourage and support alignments between the vision of the community and that of the NGO. We need to focus on differentiated capacity building as a sustainable strategy, instead of only financial sustainability. We need to find out how to really engage directly with very small groups, who are from communities we wish to engage with, with a priority focus on building leadership among the most marginalized for education. We would like to explore better and more effective program management strategies - innovative monitoring and evaluation practices, encourage regular conversations and look forward to every partner being a potential research partner, with more evidence-based process documentation.

The focus will also be on ensuring that the RTE Act 2009 is operational, not only through support of programs but by also being a strong third eye. By networking with a range of stakeholders and a multiplicity of advocacy strategies we can contribute to making governments accountable. We also aspire to be a benchmark of quality education for marginalized children, and would provide space as well as co-create this along with interested groups with a mutual vision.

Finally, the poorest children, their families and the community guided NEG-FIRE's discourse and our intervention strategies so that we are grounded on the life situation of the poor. The future journey beckons us to work with rigor and focus in order to tilt the scales of justice positively, and to be able to get communities to take over the education agenda of their children.

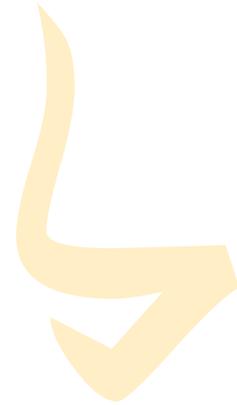
We are happy to share with you three CDs, one gives glimpses of our work, and one each on the PLAY initiative and the ART expression of children. We hope that you will enjoy these and send us your feedback. To those who can support us with challenging ideas, finance or in any other way to realize this mission, this will be a great opportunity. Please do join hands with us to realize this great mission.

In solidarity with marginalized children,

M. Ishwaran.

Marita Ishwaran
Executive Director.

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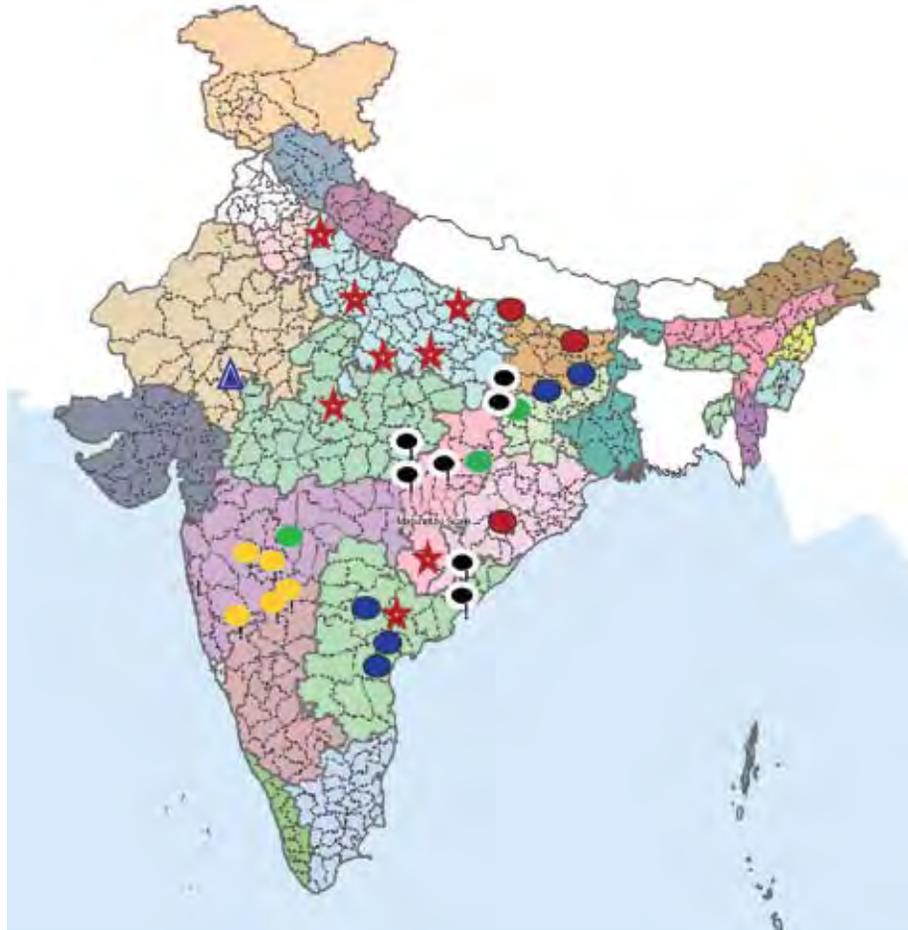




Partnership Promotion

Artwork by children in a summer camp in Bundi district, Rajasthan, RCL Program

NEG-FIRE's Coverage 2009-10



COVERAGE 2009-10
 35,312 Children
 1,463 Teachers
 499 Schools
 and 746 Villages

2009-10
 32 partners
 33 districts
 09 states

- NT-DNT Partners
- Inter-state Partners
- Advocacy Program
- ★ Edu-leadership Program
- Fellowship Program
- ▲ Rajasthan Child Labor Program
- Other Programs

Partnership Promotion

Partnership promotion is a key strategy followed by NEG-FIRE for supporting ground-level work. Between 2005 and 2010, the organization supported 75 partners with a total funding of Rs. 80,964,613. Out of these, 43 projects had been completed by March 2010. During 2009-2010, NEG-FIRE sanctioned 12 new partners reaching out to 35,312 children, 1,463 teachers, 499 schools and 746 villages with a total grant of Rs. 25,002,000. The present number of grantees being supported by NEG-FIRE is 32 spread over nine states across India.

During 2009-2010, the 12 new partners were selected for: (a) broadening the base of the Edu-leadership program and (b) organizing an advocacy workshop on the issue of child labor.



A community meeting organized by MAHITA inside a Government school in Adilabad district, Andhra Pradesh

a) The Edu-leadership Program

The Edu-leadership program is one of the key initiatives of NEG-FIRE that aims at creating a transformative force of 'edu-leaders' located at the local level, who with the right kind of training, engage with communities to demand good quality education for children. The strategy used under this initiative is slightly different from the flagship Edu-leadership program in Uttar Pradesh. Here the aim is to create leadership for education through various groups—women, youth and members of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in order to bring about systemic changes in education.

To initiate this program, a proactive strategy was adopted under which 10 credible NGOs were identified with whom the Edu-leadership concept was shared. Individual proposals were then received from five NGOs and these were presented to the Process Approval Committee (PAC). Prior to final selection, the proposed partners were taken on an exposure visit to Bodh Shiksha Samiti, an NGO in Jaipur that runs a good community-based development program for education, so that the partners could understand and adapt Bodh Shiksha Samiti's successful strategies for mobilizing communities as the edu-leaders work closely with, and in the community. Under this program, edu-leaders directly engage at the level of the community for generating awareness and rejuvenating structures such as PRIs, Village Education Committees (VECs) and School Development Management Committees (SDMCs). Under this program, 126 edu-leaders will be trained and developed over a period of 30 months, through four organizations—Sadhana in Andhra Pradesh, Suchetna in Uttar Pradesh, CADAM in Madhya Pradesh and PREM in Orissa.

Sadhana, Andhra Pradesh: Sadhana is being supported for developing 250 Panchayat-level edu-leaders in 50 Gram Panchayats (GPs) of five mandals in Nizamabad, Nalgonda, Warangal and Medak districts to uphold child rights and work for quality education. NEG-FIRE is supporting Sadhana through a grant of Rs. 3,411,500 for a period of three years (2010-2013).



A meeting with villagers during partner's exposure visit to Bodh Shiksha Samiti, Jaipur

Suchetna, Uttar Pradesh: Suchetna (Bareilly Diocesan Social Service Center) is being supported for developing 40 village-level women edu-leaders and 200 awakened and empowered women in 40 villages in Pilibhit district. NEG-FIRE is supporting Suchetna through a grant of Rs. 3,972,300 for a period of three years (2010-2013).

CADAM, Madhya Pradesh: CADAM (Centre for Alternative Dalit Media) is being supported for improving the elementary-level educational status in Rewa district through developing community leadership to ensure the right to education of dalit/tribal children. NEG-FIRE is supporting CADAM through a grant of Rs. 2,879,800 for a period of three years (2010-2013).

PREM, Orissa: PREM (People's Rural Education Movement) is operating in eight GPs of Padampur block in Ganjam district to empower the marginalized through the Edu-leadership program. NEG-FIRE is supporting PREM through a grant of Rs. 2,811,500 for a period of three years (2010-2013).

b) The Advocacy Program

The advocacy program aims at strengthening and mobilizing communities and community-based organizations/institutions on child rights and initiates people-centric advocacy campaigns to eliminate child labor. Through a five-day workshop organized by the National Center for Advocacy Studies (NCAS), Pune, and desk-based research, three states with the highest number of child laborers were identified—Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and Rajasthan. Since one of NEG-FIRE's flagship programs on child labor is already active in Rajasthan, Bihar and Andhra Pradesh was selected for initiating this program. NGOs were facilitated to develop proposals based on the advocacy program evolved through the five-day workshop. The pilot advocacy program aims to make 250 villages/habitations in five districts (three in Andhra Pradesh and two in Bihar) child labor free and will ensure RTE for 14,867 children. The following are the key partners under this program:

Andhra Pradesh

MAHITA: MAHITA is implementing this program in 10 Panchayats in Narnoor mandal of Adilabad district under the project 'Advocacy/Campaign to Eradicate Child Labor'. NEG-FIRE is supporting MAHITA with a grant of Rs. 1,200,000 for a period of one and a half years (March 2010-August 2011).

Kurnool Diocese Social Service Society (KDSSS): KDSSS is implementing this program in 10 Panchayats in Pathikonda mandal of Kurnool district. NEG-FIRE is supporting KDSSS with a grant of Rs. 1,200,000 for a period of one and a half years (March 2010-August 2011).

Conservation of Nature through Rural Awakening (CONARE): CONARE is implementing this program in 13 Panchayats of Lingal mandal in Mahaboobnagar district. NEG-FIRE is supporting CONARE with a grant of Rs. 1,200,000 for a period of one and a half years (March 2010-August 2011).

Bihar

Sugam Jagriti: Sugam Jagriti is implementing this program in five Panchayats of Hulasganj block in Jahanabad district. NEG-FIRE is supporting Sugam Jagriti with a grant of Rs. 1,200,000 for a period of one and a half years (March 2010-August 2011).



A rally in progress in Pathikonda district of AP on child labour day



Advocacy workshop in progress

Development Education and Environmental Program (DEEP): The project aims to eliminate child labor in one block Gaunaha (six Panchayats) in West Champaran district over an 18 month period through legislative and media advocacy campaigns. NEG-FIRE is supporting DEEP with a grant of Rs. 1,200,000 for a period of one and a half years (March 2010-August 2011).

c) Eradication of Child Labor Program

NEG-FIRE is supporting this intervention to build a supporting environment through a people-centric campaign and advocacy for eradicating child labor in five Panchayats of Sasaram block, Bihar, with a grant of Rs. 2,446,600 over a period of two years (2010-2012). The grant will also support the running of four short-term preparatory centers in the stone quarries for 400 child laborers and out-of-school children (potential child laborers) to prepare them for mainstreaming in government schools.

d) Education of Children Belonging to the Musahar Community

The objective of this program is to accompany children from the Musahar community in Madhubani district, Bihar, in their education and environment by mainstreaming them into local government schools and taking steps to prevent child labor. NEG-FIRE is supporting this program through a grant of Rs. 2,021,800 for a period of two years (2010-2012).

Orissa

a) Peace Education: A step towards conflict transformation in the violence affected community in Kandhamal: This program is aimed at ensuring the continuation of education of 250 children affected by communal unrest in Kandhamal by admitting them in 17 boarding schools with a grant of Rs. 1,458,500 for a period of one year (2009-2010).



Its Play time for Children at a learning centre from DEEP, Bihar



Key On-going
Programs 2009-2010



Children during group work in Azamgarh, UP

Key On-going Programs, 2009-2010

The Edu-leadership Program

The Edu-leadership program, formally launched in 2009-10 with support from the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust (SDTT) has now completed one full term. The program aims at ensuring quality education for 30,000 children in about 500 schools and mobilizing communities to seek quality education for their children through developing 39 edu-leaders in 16 NGOs in Azamgarh, Badaun, Maharajganj and Muzaffarnagar districts of Uttar Pradesh. The preliminary activities of this program began in October 2007 with a survey using a grant from NEG-FIRE's German donor, Misereor. Later a feasibility on-ground test was conducted using a seed grant from SDTT. All these efforts finally culminated in initiating focused educational engagement through 39 edu-leaders in the four districts of Azamgarh, Badayun, Maharajganj and Muzaffarnagar. Programmatically, two key resource groups—IGNUS-erg and Govind Ballabh Pant Social Science Institute (GBPSSI), Allahabad—have been providing continued support to the program through valuable inputs. IGNUS-erg has been providing inputs to edu-leaders on pedagogic practices and has equipped them with some innovative insights that they use in their field work. GBPSSI is focusing on collating and analyzing baseline data and sharing observations and insights through field visits to help make the program more effective.

Overall, the innovative concept of developing a transformative cadre of edu-leaders to intervene proactively in changing the face of education has worked successfully and their efforts are being praised at all levels—in classrooms, schools, the community and among government functionaries. However, like any new invention is bound to be tested against time, so has been the case with the Edu-leadership program. Though the program has now come a long way, it did encounter its share of hurdles and challenges at every step. However, the challenges faced are being considered as lessons for the future. Following this approach, there have been a few success stories at the end of each phase.



A community awareness rally on education in Azamgarh, Uttar Pradesh



'Bal Akhbaar' (children's newspaper) prepared by children in Badaun, UP

An edu-leader is...

One of us—Edu-leaders are innovators in education, located at different levels within the system. They belong to the community where they work and thus understand the problems regarding the current situation of education in their area; they can identify problems, envision a new response, are willing to take risks, put in all the efforts necessary to address these problems and make themselves heard. These leaders have been drawn through an intense search exercise and they have been placed in the community to bring about change.

A learner—Edu-leaders stand as representatives of their community and in this sense they are constantly looking for solutions to problems related to the education scenario in their area. Time and again the program equips them with the necessary knowledge related to pedagogy, curriculum and the schooling experience of children through capacity building and training programs. The change brought about by them can be clearly noticed in the school site, in classrooms as well as in their own personalities. Over time, edu-leaders have developed better planning and reporting skills. Their initial hesitancy has been replaced with confidence.

An innovator—Edu-leaders attempt to support teaching-learning processes in the schools where they work. This way they constantly engage in experimenting with pedagogical processes. They undertake simple tools and exercises with teachers whereby learning can be made simple and less burdensome. Designing innovative teaching-learning aids is another aspect of this process. The regularity and retention of children in schools has increased as a result of the interactive pedagogy used by edu-leaders. Thanks to their efforts, enrolment of out-of-school children has also increased. During July 2009, 105 children were enrolled in schools—45 in Muzaffarnagar, 45 in Badaun and 15 in Azamgarh districts.

A transformer—The prime goal of edu-leaders is transforming the face of the schools where they work, along with introducing innovations in teaching-learning processes. In this sense, an edu-leader constantly strives to introduce good practices in schools. These focus not only on learning but also on making the school look beautiful, greener, cleaner and more hygienic. During 2009-2010, edu-leaders organized 'gyan parties' for children to make them learn from their immediate environment and school exhibitions on occasions such as Gandhi Jayanti and Children's Day. A number of children's committees such as 'safai committees' (for cleanliness) and 'bagwani committees' (for gardening) have also been formed; these are all headed by children to ensure their ownership and responsibility.

A leader—Most importantly, edu-leaders are advocates of the rights of the child. They attempt to concentrate all their efforts at ensuring that every child is in school and learning well and is not denied any of the fundamental rights that he/she is entitled to. They also ensure that children are getting entitlements such as textbooks, uniforms and mid-day meals guaranteed to them under various government programs. They also advocate these rights at the community level generating awareness among the people. For instance, NEG-FIRE's NGO partners in Muzaffarnagar organized a rally at the District Collectorate to raise a demand for girls' education at the district level. A charter of demands was presented to the District Magistrate. In Azamgarh in collaboration with other NGOs and district-level educational functionaries a public procession was taken out to highlight the importance of quality education for all and about RTE. Such interventions reached out to more than 9,000 community members, significantly more than 50 per cent of whom were women.

Indravati continues her education...

Indravati completed her Class 5 studies from the primary school in Rasulpur and was eager to continue her education but she was not allowed to study further because of the prevalent socio-cultural practices in the village. Although her parents agreed with their daughter's desire to study further, they could not support her overtly due to compelling social pressure: 'When no other girl in the village was allowed to study beyond Class 5, how could they allow Indravati to break this norm?'

Jai Devi, the edu-leader working in this village came to know about Indravati during one of her visits to the village. She discussed the matter with Indravati's mother and with much persuasion she finally succeeded in motivating her parents to enrol Indravati in a private school near Rasulpur. Since no other girl from the village was attending this school, even the teachers were reluctant to admit Indravati as they were sure that



she would drop out after attending classes for a few days. It was only after Jai Devi's guarantee that she would ensure that Indravati was regular in school that the headmaster admitted her. Since then Indravati is regularly attending her classes. This one incident has opened the floodgates for other Class 5 pass-outs in the village and as a result out of the 48 girls in the 2009-2010 session, 38 have enrolled in Class 6 for continuing their education.

Jai Devi, NEG-FIRE

Community organizes Teacher's Day



Teachers' Day was celebrated on 5 September 2009 in all the 36 schools where edu-leaders are active. The program focussed on highlighting the importance of the day and acknowledging the contributions made by teachers. As a token of appreciation teachers were honored by children and community members. In this context, not just the actual event but also the 'behind the scenes' activities are worth mentioning. In all the 36 schools the program was organized with active participation of the members of the VEC and in 10 places the community took the onus of planning and organizing the event in its entirety.

Parents were particularly interested in their children's academic and cultural performances. Exhibitions of teaching-learning material (TLM) and projects prepared by children were put up to give a glimpse of the learning processes in schools. The children were also excited about performing in front of their parents.

Shailendra, NEG-FIRE



Story of Kanval Singh, an edu-leader

Kanval Singh of village Jhabarpur in Muzaffarnagar district of Uttar Pradesh worked in a brick kiln before joining a NGO as a volunteer two years ago. Today he is an edu-leader and proudly states that through his efforts he has been able to ensure school admissions to two orphaned children and five child laborers in the school where he is placed. He has also succeeded in enrolling 480 children in the school during one year. He feels that this program has given him social standing within the community along with helping him connect with educational issues in the area. Kanval Singh is working directly with 245 children and participates and develops activities for children of Classes 4 and 5 in the government school in Jhabarpur.

Mahendra Dwivedi, NEG-FIRE

The Rajasthan Child Labor Program

This program is being directly implemented by NEG-FIRE to address the rights of children working in and out of stone quarries in Bundi district of Rajasthan. The program aims at creating an enabling environment towards eradication of children labor through promotion of quality child care and mainstreaming 2,800 children in two Panchayats of Taleda block in Bundi district over a period of two years (2009-2011). While NEG-FIRE's work in the area started in April 2008, the project received formal sanction in March 2009 for a period of two years.

The key intervention strategies used during the first year of the program include:

- Strengthening the mainstream education system and running bridge centers for out-of-school children.
- Strengthening other mainstream service providing institutions (anganwadi and health centers).
- Community mobilization for promoting community ownership of the education system.
- Networking among stakeholders (community, school, ICDS, government officials, mine owners, cobbles contractors and NGOs).
- Capacity building of members of PRIs, VECs, Parents Teachers Associations (PTAs) and communities.

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Play time in progress.... children at Govt. school Budhpura, Rajasthan



Children exploring their creativity during summer camp in Bundi, Rajasthan

Impact of the Program:

Objectives	Achievements
Increased provision of quality and sustainable education for all the children in the age group of 6-14 years in seven villages of Dabi and Budhpura Panchayats.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The baseline information indicated that approximately 500 children were out-of-school. Within one year of the project, 218 of the 500 children had been put back in schools. More than 102 children are getting prepared through three short-term learning centers for enrolment in July 2010.
Increased provision of quality child care and pre-school education for children in the age group of 0-5 years through effective functioning of 20 anganwadi centers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Functioning of 20 anganwadi centers has become more effective as they open more regularly, provide nutritional food (balanced diet) of required quantities to younger children, conduct vaccination drives and provide health care support to pregnant and lactating mothers.
Increased awareness among community members and other stakeholders on child rights issues, particularly on the importance of education and child care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness generation in the community about education as a right has resulted in some parents accompanying their children to school and seeking updates on their performance and learning. Community members mobilized Panchayat funds in Budhpura to set up a hand pump for providing drinking water.
Improved linkages and networking between various stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members of the SDMC in Bevaria village in Dabi Panchayat discussed issues like shortage of teachers and drinking water for the first time and furthered the issues with government authorities. Local support structures like members of mothers' clubs participated in a Panchayat meeting for the first time and raised issues about teachers' absenteeism and drinking water. Liasoning with contractors and mine owners resulted in lesser instances of children working in and out of stone quarries in the program area. In the coming months, SDMCs will be strengthened for monitoring schools and preparing school development plans as mandated by the RTE Act.



Young boy makes other children learn

Phoolchand is 11 years old and belongs to the Patiyal basti of Budhpura village in Rajasthan. Till some time back he was illiterate and assisted his parents in agricultural fields. When NEG-FIRE started working in the area with 68 families belonging to the Bhil community, Phoolchand was found to be an active and enthusiastic kid who helped NEG-FIRE's team in bringing children to school. As a result, 54 children belonging to the Bhil community were admitted to the government school; Phoolchand was one of them. However, the one-teacher school had problems of its own. In this scenario, after some time Phoolchand took up the role of a kind of support teacher in the school and was found teaching alphabets and numbers to children of younger age groups. Such is his enthusiasm and interest in learning! Presently he is a student of Class 5 and continues teaching younger children whenever he gets the time

Avinash Singh, NEG-FIRE

The Inter-State Border Area Program

This program aims at providing quality education to 10,000 children in 20 villages along the inter-state borders of six states, with specific focus on language. Besides, it also addresses other educational issues such as enrolment and retention, quality of education and community participation. It also seeks to create a platform for dialogue and consensus on children's learning (with special focus on language) with education administrators on both sides of the border. In 2009-2010 two new states of Bihar and Jharkhand were included in the program. Hence, the program now covers Andhra Pradesh and Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh and Sahibganj and Pakud districts of Jharkhand and Katihar district of Bihar.

The reasons for intervention in the inter-state region of Bihar and Jharkhand include poor educational indicators, critical geographical locations (borders of three states merge in this area) and language issues related to education. Three NGOs are implementing the program in these areas which are predominantly Muslim and tribal populated. The focus of the program is on developing and empowering local leadership so that stakeholders from both the states come together to resolve inter-state issues related to children.

Bordering States: Andhra Pradesh/Orissa (2008-2011)

Districts of intervention: Vishakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh) and Koraput (Orissa)

Achievements:

- SOVA is running WRIP (writing reading improvement program) centers in 19 villages covering 423 children. The WRIP methodology includes introducing step-by-step pictorial cards from simple to complex forms in the local language. This intervention has enabled 249 children to read and write words, 96 children to read and write sentences and 78 children to read and write stories.
- Based on the success of the WRIP program a pilot study in mathematics was conducted in nine WRIP centers covering 197 children. Mathematics cards (including numbers from 1 to 100, subtraction and addition) were introduced to the children. It was found that in two months 74 children were able to read and write numbers till 50; they were also able to solve two-digit subtraction and addition problems. In the coming year mathematics material will be introduced in other villages.
- Due to continuous demands by community members, tribal departments have developed primers in 12 local languages that will be distributed in all government schools located in the inter-state border area.



Teacher's training on WRIP to bridge the language gap

- Core committees such as VECs and PRIs have been sensitized about inter-state issues. Gradually they are taking initiatives to improve the education system in their villages. During 2009-2010 the Community Development Through Education (CODE) committees enrolled 42 irregular children in five Panchayats in Vishakhapatnam and in six Panchayats the committees ensured that the Rs. 95,000 provided for construction and Rs. 6,000-8,500 provided for TLM in schools was utilized properly.

Bordering States: Madhya Pradesh/ Chhattisgarh (2008-2010)

Districts of intervention: Kawardha (Chhattisgarh) Mandla and Dindori (Madhya Pradesh)

Achievements:

- 212 children working in agricultural fields were enrolled in government schools; 168 of them completed the academic year.
- 58 teachers, anganwadi and PRI members were sensitized on inter-state issues after which their participation in addressing issues related to children's education has increased at different levels.
- Educational issues are included in the agenda of Gram Sabhas through community meetings and creating awareness. In many villages the issues of irregularity and absenteeism of teachers have been resolved through this mechanism.



A street Play being performed by children in Raisen district, Madhya Pradesh

Raju learns to read

In village Ippavalsa in the Sunki Gram Panchayat in Orissa, SOVA is running WRIP classes for 20 children who have been identified as having learning difficulties. Raju Aabudu is one such child. He scored a zero in the test conducted by SOVA staff members before the WRIP class. Unfortunately his parents did not allow him to continue at the center as he is their only child who helped with household chores and looked after the cattle while they were at work. The teacher in the center tried his best to convince Raju's parents but that did not help. Even when all the parents were invited and the benefits of the WRIP program were shared with them, Raju's parents were not convinced. Finally, Raju's friends and classmates at the center started visiting him on a daily basis and helped him read and write whatever they had learnt at the center. Today Raju is able to read words, sentences and even stories in Oriya language with confidence and has also gained knowledge of numbers. This has acted as an eye-opener for his parents. They are happy that their child can read and write and now send him to the center. The WRIP approach is being used in 12 schools of two Panchayats of Sunki and Ralegada in Koraput district in Orissa.

Rama Rao, SOVA, Orissa



Raju reading aloud the WRIP alphabet cards

- The program was able to establish linkages with the UNICEF initiated 'Child Reporter' program that has given tribal children a chance to report on educational issues and share them with government officials. Three non-functional schools were regularized after reporting of the news by children.

Bordering States: Bihar/Jharkhand (2009-2012)

Districts of intervention: Sahibganj and Pakud (Jharkhand) and Katihar (Bihar)

Achievements:

- Regular monitoring of anganwadis centers (children in the 3-6 years age group) by mother core groups increased enrolment of children from 139 to 246 and regularized 171 children in schools in eight villages.
- Government officials have been sensitized about the language issue and have been asked to post those teachers who are well conversant in local languages in schools.
- Teachers in the government school have been sensitized about language issues and government funds for TLM are being used for providing bilingual cards and charts in classrooms.
- The program has been able to build an environment of trust between communities that has given opportunities to Muslim women to come out and participate in the development process.

G



Children in Katihar district - creating awareness on girls' education through role play



Children's Club in progress organized by SOVA, Orissa



Innovative Programs

Baiga tribe children displaying the sculptures crafted by them and teachers during the 'Kala Ke Sang' workshops

Innovative Programs

NEG-FIRE is committed to bringing about 'transformation through education'. Towards this end, it seeks to constantly design innovative programs and field test them wherever its partner organizations are active. During 2009-2010, NEG-FIRE came up with two such innovative programs—'Play for Peace' and 'Kala Ke Sang'. These programs were designed after relevant background research and a contextual understanding of the communities with which NEG-FIRE engages. To make education holistic, it is essential to incorporate arts, crafts and play into it. Every child should get an all-round environment for development and arts, aesthetics and play cannot be alienated from it. It is in this background that these programs were undertaken.

Play for Peace

Play for Peace is a journey, a process in developing youth leaders and empowering organizations while providing critical tools for them to connect and express themselves in the way that comes most naturally to them—Playing! Peace, Leadership and Young People (PLAY), a Pune-based group led by Agyatmitra and Swati Bhatt introduced the process of cooperative gaming to NEG-FIRE. The spirit of cooperative gaming puts forth a universal, non-threatening platform around which all gather and learn together transcending boundaries of class, color, race and group. PLAY conducted two, three-day training workshops with six NEG-FIRE partner organizations during August and December 2009. The main objective of these workshops was to help organizations meet on a common platform and build a spirit of participation through cooperative gaming exercises thereby contributing to mutual growth. These games were then taken to the children in nearby schools. The larger objective of the program is to help build positive relationships, overcome differences and experience the joy of playing through non-competitive games. Some of the visible achievements of the program are:

- In Maharashtra (Karmala block of Sholapur district) a 6-year-old boy from the Pardhi community had a speech problem and hesitated and stammered while talking. However, during a play session with other children he started singing. It seems that the boy had late development of speech but the rhyme in the song caught his attention and encouraged him to sing.
- In other places parents/community members are encouraging children (mostly out-of-school ones) to participate in play activities conducted by animators who in turn are motivating these children to join schools.
- Teachers in government schools are appreciating the activities as these have helped children focus on their studies while their creativity is also getting harnessed at the same time.
- NGOs have also appreciated the benefits and want more animators to be sent to training workshops.
- The program is an interesting way of engaging with children with the larger goal of relationship building among them.



PLAY children in a training program, Rajasthan



PLAY animators training in progress

An audio-visual documentation of the program has been prepared to capture the significant processes and responses from the field. There are plans of scaling-up the program and taking it to other partners during the coming year.

Kala ke Sang

The 'Kala Ke Sang' program was initiated with the aim of developing the creative potential of children and for conducting a comparative study of the experiences of two tribes—Baiga and Bhil—and exploring the possibilities of integrating art in the school routine. Eight art workshops were conducted in various villages of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh during 2009-2010. These workshops were conducted under the supervision and support of Mr. Blaise Joseph, art consultant, NEG-FIRE and involved a step-by-step use of various media beginning with simple line drawings using pencils to use of crayons and water colors and later the use of clay and plaster of Paris. The approach used was non-judgemental and non-competitive so that everyone could explore their sense of creativity without inhibitions. These workshops have been successful and have been appreciated as a milestone in the educational realm in areas where NEG-FIRE partner NGOs are active. The workshops were conducted in Jhabua district of Madhya Pradesh with the Bhil tribe, in Mandla and Kawardha districts of Madhya Pradesh and in Chhattisgarh with Baiga tribes in six villages. Eight hundred and fifty children, 65 teachers and 233 community members participated in these workshops. Some of the visible achievements of the program are:

- The program allowed children to explore their creativity and gave them an opportunity to freely express themselves through art.
- Children now communicate freely and teachers have reported that some children who were reluctant to go to school earlier are now attending school regularly.
- Teachers are convinced about the methodology used where no instructions or lessons are given but the participants are still fully involved and concentrate on the processes because they are interesting and they can relate to them.
- Teachers in Chilpi and Kawardha have plans of incorporating and experimenting with the program in their daily teaching/learning processes.
- The plan for the coming year is to identify potential members from the tribal community and form a resource group on arts. The group will promote arts among marginalized communities and in educational institutions.

There are plans of making this program a part of complementary education classes under NEG-FIRE's new strategy.

An audio-visual documentary on the workshops has been prepared to document the processes involved. Considering the success of these workshops and the interest that they have generated, there are plans of scaling them up with other partners in the coming year.



Art workshop Participants with their creation in Mandla, MP



Teachers doing a wall painting during a workshop in Kawardha, MP



*Research and
Documentation*

Fellows and Mentors in the closing meeting of Round II of the Maharashtra fellowship in Pune

Research and Documentation

For an overall impact on critical issues related to questions such as access to education, pedagogic practices and quality of education it is essential that work on the ground is supported by constantly investigating themes/issues of concern. Purposeful research and regular exchange and sharing of information are therefore essential. At NEG-FIRE emphasis is placed on generating knowledge on issues related to the education of marginalized children and its dissemination for wider use, institutional learning and effecting policy. There is emphasis on linking the work done on the ground with research and NEG-FIRE has now adopted the policy of using research as a feed-in for both on-going as well as new programs to ensure that the approaches and strategies being followed on the ground are being translated in an informed manner.

The Fellowship Program

The fellowship program was initiated in 2008-2009 with a view of providing an opportunity to local-level people to undertake research work on key educational issues in their area. Maharashtra was chosen as the first state for this program because field-based data on the NT-DNT communities and their related educational problems was already available because of past research. Further, Maharashtra was also selected because of the high vulnerability of backward and tribal communities such as Pardhi, Lamani and Wadar in the state. Seventeen fellows worked on five broad themes (individual topics) under the guidance of seven mentors in the state. The second round of fellowships was continued in Maharashtra but with a change in its design and approach. With the coming of the RTE Act in 2010, one common theme of research now aims at generating awareness about RTE in the community through the fellows. This approach uses the Right to Information (RTI) Act for this purpose.

The second round of fellowships in Maharashtra started with a selection-cum-training workshop held from 22-24 September 2009. Thirteen fellows were selected for strengthening community-level advocacy and campaign by making communities aware of RTE and using RTI for education in two wards of urban Sholapur and 106 villages in seven districts of Latur, Beed, Osmanabad, Pune, Nanded, Solapur and Sangli in the state. Participants were given information on the Right to Education Act 2009 and RTI and a questionnaire was developed for gathering baseline information of all the 106 villages and two wards for preparing action plans.



'Fellows gearing up for presentation during the selection cum training workshop in Pune'



Parents and children in a meeting with fellow Suman in Ghotiya, Chattisgarh

List of Fellows and Mentors in the Second Maharashtra Fellowship Program

S. No.	Mentors	Fellows	Districts
1.	Baliram Balsaraf	Jamuna Gaikwad	Latur
		Mangal Shrimangal	Latur
		Santosh Gaikwad	Latur
		Santaji Rode	Osmanabad
2.	Pramod Zinjade	Sucheta Shete	Sholapur
		Shravan Itkar	Osmanabad
		Laxman Chavan	Sangli
3.	Satish Bansode	Shesharao Gaikwad	Nanded
		Shaikh Sofiya Javed	Beed
		Sanjay Bhagwan	Beed
		Avinash Gaikwad	Pune
		Vishwas Chakranarayan	Pune

The outcomes of the second round of fellowships in Maharashtra include:

- Mr. Pramod Zinjade's fellows motivated the youth to form youth groups and informed them about the RTI and RTE Acts. Almost 65-70 youth are now part of these groups. Fellows have used the RTI Act to get information about various seasonal hostel and scholarship schemes for children. This information has been passed on to VECs. In some villages where schools are only till Class 4, applications were given to sarpanches for scaling-up the classes. Awareness about RTI and RTE was generated among parents and teachers in parent teacher meetings.
- Mr. Baliram Balsaraf's fellows conducted various meetings with self-help groups (SHGs) and informed them about the RTI Act. Provisions under Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) were discussed and youth and community members were motivated to seek information on SSA through RTI.
- The fellows were successful in informing communities about the importance of children's corners in homes and about their reading newspapers. As a result, 169 houses in Shera, Niwada, Garsoli, Eti, Lakhmapur, Morwad, Kolgaon, Bawchi and Poharegaon have study



Fellow Manisha Mandvi playing with Government school children



Fellow Padoti in a community meeting in Mandavari village, Chattisgarh

corners and 180 houses in nine villages are subscribing to a few daily newspapers. Study corners are giving space to children for expressing their creativity and newspapers are updating the entire community about the latest political, social, cultural and sports happenings.

- While spreading awareness about the RTE Act, it was seen that parents and members of village committees were concerned about the quality of education after the RTE Act was implemented. Parents have started visiting schools to enquire about the progress of their children and about the other facilities available in schools.
- Mr. Satish Bansode's fellows are creating awareness about RTE and provisions under SSA among community members and parents who are motivated to seek information about the provisions mentioned in the Act from teachers and headmasters. With support of a fellow working in Beed district, a community member along with 25 other families in the village, took initiatives and filed appeals under RTI seeking information on various issues ranging from details about how the money received for school renovations was being utilized, free books and improving the quality of mid-day meals. New VEC members have been elected in a few villages as a result of a demand from community members.

Fellowships in Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand: Apart from the fellowships in Maharashtra, this year also saw the initiation of two more fellowship programs in Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. In Jharkhand the fellowships will be undertaken under the supervision of the Swaraj Foundation with the theme 'to build leadership amongst marginalized communities in the form of fellows who would take self-initiated steps and motivate the community to strengthen the educational system and child-centered schemes in their respective areas'. There are plans of having 14 fellows for a one-year period. In Chhattisgarh, the Parivartan Samaj Sevi Sanstha will supervise 18 fellows for a period of one year under the theme 'Education Rights in Chhattisgarh'. The fellowships in Chhattisgarh started late (in April) due to some FCRA problem faced by the implementing NGO.

Other Research Studies: Four new studies/action researches were sanctioned in the last quarter of the reporting period:

a) An action research to study the impact of the '**Emotional Resilience Curriculum on the Well-being of Children Affected by Communal Violence in Gujarat**': This study is being conducted by the Resource Center for Training and Development Society through local groups like Udaan-Education Resource Center and Samerth, Ahmedabad. The Emotional Resilience Curriculum developed by CoreStone (US) would be conducted by trained educators on 100 children in the centers. It is envisaged that along with supporting these children, the study will also emerge as an advocacy document for agencies working in conflict areas and help in putting the issue within a policy framework and make available special curriculum for children affected by communal violence.



Mentor Mr. Sahu in meeting with children and parents in Chattisgarh

b) **Study on School Education for Tribal Children in Rajasthan: Available Opportunities and Present Status:** This study is being conducted by the Center for Education Research & Practice (CERP), Jaipur, and would look into the status of existing educational facilities in the tribal areas of Rajasthan (in selected villages in Banswara, Udaipur, Dungarpur, Sirohi, Baran and Dausa districts). These will be understood in terms of access, availability of human resources, infrastructural facilities and options and quality available to the tribal children as compared to that available to other children in the state. The study will also entail exploring the community's views on the existing situation of high drop-out rates and low transition rates with a view to improving retention and transition rates in the area. Data collection from secondary sources is under progress. Data from state and district authorities is also being collected and compiled.

c) **Study of the Status of Elementary-level Schooling of Scheduled Tribe (ST) Children in Jharkhand and Bihar:** This study being conducted by Sunai Consultancy, will cover 45 schools in Jharkhand and 15 schools in Bihar spread over four districts with higher ST populations (three districts in Jharkhand and two districts in Bihar). The key objectives of the study are exploring the extent to which special educational needs of ST children are being addressed including effectiveness of the system in providing equal learning attainment, retaining children and bringing back out-of-school children if they drop out prior to completing elementary education. While assessing the availability of educational services and quality of teaching-learning in the visited schools, the study will also look into the level of engagement of parents in schools as well as in homes.

d) **Marginalization and Education—Children in Inter-State Border Areas:** This study will look at educational issues in inter-border areas of the two states of Orissa and Andhra Pradesh. The research is being undertaken by CORD (Collaborative Research & Dissemination). CORD will conduct the study in close collaboration with NEG-FIRE's field partners SOVA and NATURE in Orissa and Andhra Pradesh respectively. The focus of the study will be on the experiences and problems of children living in remote, difficult to reach and frequently troubled areas in border states. At the same time, the study will also throw light on tribal and minority identity; language and culture in children's homes and their relations with the school will also be dealt with. The study will be conducted in six states in a phased manner. In Phase I the study is being undertaken in one inter-state area (Orissa and Andhra Pradesh).

Children get their textbooks

Dhagewadi, a village in Beed district in Maharashtra is one of the five villages where fellow Sofiya Saikh Javed works with the communities under the NEG-FIRE supported fellowship program. This story is about the active participation of farmer Ramnath, a native of Dhagewadi village in demanding educational entitlements for village children. It all began when the teacher in the government school asked the children to buy textbooks. Due to regular community meetings and discussions with Sofiya, Ramnath was aware that the government provides free textbooks to all the children. He shared his concern with Sofiya and together they informed other parents that their children were eligible to get free books under the government's 'Education for All' scheme and motivated them to question the Panchayat about why they had to buy the textbooks. As a result of this enquiry it was revealed that the books meant for the children of Dhagewadi village had actually been sent and were lying in a nearby village school. Teachers and VEC members had been informed about this but no one had taken the initiative of bringing the books to Dhagewadi. Finally Ramnath took it on himself and requested the Panchayat for an authority letter so that he could go and collect the books. As a result of community pressure Ramnath received the letter, went to the nearby village and brought the books. Following this success, Ramnath has also taken other initiatives in filing queries under RTI to enquire about utilization of school development funds and mid-day meals. As a result of his efforts, the VEC and Zila Parishad have started acting responsibly.

Priyanka Sharma, NEG-FIRE



Ramnath sitting proudly with fellow villagers



Institutional
Development

Photo made out of colorful matchsticks during the Jodo Gyan workshop

Institutional Development

NEG-FIRE believes in constantly upgrading and building upon both its own capabilities and strengths as well as those of its partners. Towards this end, every year it revisits the goals set vis-a-vis the internal capacities available, the governance structure and internal mechanisms. Thereafter appropriate programs are designed to build the capacities of its members and bring changes in policies and structure.

Linking Partners with Nodal/Resource Agencies: Each year NEG-FIRE attempts to link its key partner organizations with relevant resource agencies/groups with expertise in various areas with the purpose of providing constant handholding support to them. This year need-based technical support through resource agencies was provided to several partners. Resource agencies like Eklavya, Mobile Creches, Samantar and Jodo Gyan and individual resource persons were identified and linked to partners. Some of the outcomes of such linkages are:

- Twenty-two teachers of the Jhabua Diocese (Madhya Pradesh) are being trained by Eklavya and they have improved the learning levels of 750 children.
- Thirty-five teachers from RDSS, Raisen (Madhya Pradesh) were enabled to develop child-centric activities for 900 toddlers in association with mobile crèches. This has resulted in making the classroom interesting.
- Three program staff members each in Bihar and Jharkhand are being capacitated in their documentation skills by individual resource persons.
- Nine animators of the Rajasthan child labor program have been trained in the tools of community mobilization, child rights and RTE by Samantar Sansthan, Rajasthan.
- The capacities of 17 program staff members from seven states are being built on innovative methods of teaching mathematics by Jodo Gyan.

Enrichment Support Provided to NGOs: To lay emphasis on the importance of arts, sports and music in children's education, particularly in rural children's education, NEG-FIRE has provided sports, arts and craft material and musical instruments to children by ensuring the active participation of community members, teachers and NGOs in the process. The partners have appreciated this initiative and support from NEG-FIRE as they too wanted the children to develop these aspects, but could not do so because of financial constraints. A one-time enrichment support of Rs. 28,19,541 has been disbursed to 35 partners working in 10 states that will benefit approximately 35,853 children. Some of the observed implications of this support include:



A well-equipped children's resource center in St. Paul's Charitable Society, Jhansi, UP



"Children enjoying music & sports" - These are Sahariya tribe children supported by our partner St. Paul Charitable Society, Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh

- Music and sports activities have attracted children towards schools.
- Some children are able to explore their potential in arts and practice it regularly; they also teach other children.
- According to RDSS, an organization in Madhya Pradesh, two teachers, Anita and Anasiya, were involved in teaching tribal dances and songs to boarding children in collaboration with women's SHGs. Children and SHGs are also trying to document tribal songs that have not been documented before.
- Efforts to promote arts, music and sports are being appreciated by the community as they can observe the changes in the children's level of enthusiasm, concentration and sharing.
- In most of the places, the children have received this kind of material for the first time. As a result, the experience has compelled NGOs to consider the significance of arts in the holistic development of a child.
- Two music teachers, Maruti Shinde and Baburao Sawant, from Sholapur district in Maharashtra with support from partner organization MPSSS, compose and teach songs and drama to children in their area.



"The Possibilities Further" - Future Search Workshop Participants

Future Search Workshop: Since NEG-FIRE completed five years in March 2010, a series of workshops were organized to discuss future strategies for its on-going work. In this context, a 'Future Search' workshop was conducted between 21-23 July 2009 with representative participants of all NEG-FIRE stakeholders (NGO heads, teachers, staff members and PRI representatives), with the aim of working together towards a preferred future. The Asian Centre for Organization Research and Development (ACORD) facilitated the workshop in which 56 participants from 11 states took part. The workshop aimed at charting out both short-term as well as long-term plans for NEG-FIRE through an inclusive and participatory process. Some of the major achievements of the workshop are:

- It helped identify organizational strengths and weaknesses based on which future course of action can be charted.
- At the end of the workshop four key strategic areas to focus upon were identified. These are: quality education, community empowerment, reaching the vulnerable and providing NEG-FIRE more visibility.
- Future areas were further put within a spectrum of short-term and long-term goals to be achieved for each group of stakeholders.

All the participants found the Future Search exercise useful and its aspects have been incorporated in the new strategic directions for NEG-FIRE.



Participants learning innovative methods of teaching Mathematics in the workshop conducted by Jodo Gyan

Task Force on Strategic Directions: In this meeting held on 23 February 2010 in Delhi, 12 members of the General Body, the Head of Asia and the Project Officer of Misereor and five staff members of NEG-FIRE took part. The meeting was facilitated by Ms. Vimala Ramachandran and it started with highlights of the Future Search workshop and culminated in identifying short- medium and long-term priorities for the future.



A PAC Meeting in Progress

Committees:

Process Approval Committee (PAC) Meetings: PAC is an important body that assesses the rationale, design and implementing strategies of any new program that is planned by NEG-FIRE through discussions and deliberations. All proposed projects are discussed by committee members and taken to the implementation stage only after their collective approval. Three PAC meetings were held during the year. Apart from approving proposals to be supported under the partnership promotion fund for 2009-2010, PAC also gave directions to enrich the partnership selection process.

Research Committee Meetings: This year only one Research Committee meeting was held in September 2009. This was due to the unavailability of members and also the need to reorganize the committee. However, the members contributed by providing feedback on the research proposals sanctioned, and by giving feedback on some completed researches. Some significant areas for consideration raised by the committee were: issues relating to guidelines for future research work, framework, process, whetting and sanctioning of proposals and identifying referees to whet and edit the finalized studies.

Finance Committee Meetings: The Finance Committee is a body that takes important decisions regarding financial policies and other related matters. Three Finance Committee meetings were held during the year in July and November 2009 and March 2010. Some significant recommendations made by the committee were with regard to providing gratuity to staff members and other matters relating to better budgeting and financial management.

List of Members: April 2009-March 2010

Governing Board Members (April 2009-March 2010)

1. Fr. Raymond Ambroise, Chairperson
2. Dr. Jaya Peter, Vice-Chairperson
3. Rev. Fr. Thomas Kunnankal, SJ, Treasurer, NEG-FIRE
4. Bishop Thomas D'Souza, CBCI Founding Institutional member
5. Mr. K.P. Fabian, President, IGSSS
6. Fr. John Ariapally, Institutional Member, CRI
7. Sr. Mariella CJ, Institutional Member, CRI
8. Ms. Azra Razzack, Individual Member
9. Mr. Martin Macwan, Institutional Member, Dalit Foundation
10. Mr. Martin Pinto, Co-opted Member
11. Ms. Marita Ishwaran, Secretary

General Body Members

1. Fr. Raymond Ambroise, Chairperson
2. Dr. Jaya Peter, Vice-Chairperson
3. Rev. Fr. Thomas Kunnankal, SJ, Treasurer, NEG-FIRE
4. Bishop Thomas D'Souza, CBCI Founding Institutional member
5. Bishop Joseph Augustine Charanakunnel, CBCI Founding Institutional member
6. Mr. K.P. Fabian, President, IGSSS
7. Fr. John Ariapally, Institutional member, CRI
8. Sr. Mariella CJ, Institutional Member, CRI
9. Ms. Azra Razzack, Individual member
10. Mr. Martin Pinto, Co-opted member
11. Mr. Martin Macwan, Institutional member, Dalit Foundation
12. Mr. Gagan Sethi, Individual member
13. Dr. G. Pankajam, Individual member
14. Dr. Ranjana Srivastava, Individual member
15. Dr. Prakash Louis, Individual member

16. Dr. I. Devasahayam, Individual Member
17. Ms. Annie Namala, Individual Member
18. Mr. Mohammed Atyab Siddiqui, Individual Member
19. Mr. Shankar Venkateshwaran, Individual Member
20. Ms. Mridula Bajaj, Individual Member
21. Ms. Marita Ishwaran, Secretary

Finance Committee Members

1. Fr. Raymond Ambroise, Chairperson
2. Fr. Thomas Kunnankal, Treasurer
3. Mr. Martin Pinto
4. Mr. Bhupinder Gupta, Individual Member

Research Committee Members

1. Ms. Dipta Bhog
2. Ms. Suman Sachdeva
3. Ms. Farah Farooqui
4. Dr. G. Pankajam
5. Ms. Priti Joshi

Process Approval Committee

1. Fr. Raymond Ambroise, Chairperson, NEG-FIRE
2. Bishop Thomas D'Souza, NEG-FIRE
3. Fr. John Airapally, NEG-FIRE
4. Mr. Dayaram

Key Milestones 2005-2010

2005

- NEG-FIRE a legal entity registered in March, 2005 under the Societies Registration Act and under Sections 12A and 80G of the Income Tax Act
- The first Annual General Body Meeting held
- Executive Director appointed in September 2005

2006-07

- Strategic Directions developed
- State/Regional Consultations for sharing the Strategic directions held
- Setting up of the Committees viz., Research, Finance and for selecting projects
- 36 partners across 11 states and 41 districts of India sanctioned

2007-08

- Three Research studies initiated and three research evaluations conducted
- 12 new partners sanctioned from 8 states and 13 districts
- New Board elected

2008-09

- NEG-FIRE registered under Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) in October 2008
- Grassroot Fellowship program in Maharashtra initiated
- Four new research studies sanctioned
- Piloting the Elimination of Child Labor program in Rajasthan
- 15 new partners sanctioned from 5 states

2009-10

- Launching the Edu-leadership program in Uttar Pradesh through a SDTT grant for a period of three years (2009-2012)
- Piloting innovative programs 'Play for Peace' and 'Kala Ke Sang'
- Fellowship programs in Chattisgarh and Jharkhand initiated
- Four new research studies initiated
- Development of handbook on cultural expressions for teachers and contextual Teaching-Learning material
- 12 new partners included from 5 states

Finance Report

New Education Group - Foundation For Innovation and Research in Education

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2010

(CONS A/C)

Particulars	Schedule No.	As at 31/03/2010 (Rs.)	As at 31/03/2009 (Rs.)
SOURCES OF FUNDS			
Reserves & Funds	1	1,897,965.67	1,565,608.23
Program Balances	2	5,510,416.91	858,325.43
Total		7,008,382.58	2,423,931.66
APPLICATION OF FUNDS			
Fixed Assets			
Gross Block	3	2,935,131.00	2,564,544.00
Less: Depreciation		1,437,165.33	1,002,728.00
Net Block		1,497,965.67	1,561,816.00
Capital Work in Progress		1,497,965.67	1,561,816.00
Investments (FD)		1,100,000.00	
Current Assets & Advances			
Cash & Bank Balances	4	1,958,535.20	840,932.09
Advances	5	585,109.71	21,183.57
		2,543,644.91	862,115.66
Less: Current Liabilities & Provisions	6	533,728.00	
Net Current Assets		2,010,416.91	862,115.66
Total		7,008,382.58	2,423,931.66
Significant Accounting Policies & Notes to Accounts			
	13		

Note: Previous Year's figures have been reclassified wherever necessary.

For & on behalf of Management

As per our report of even date annexed

M. Ishwaran
Executive Director

Fr. Thomas V. Kunniakal
Treasurer

For Vishal R Gupta & Co.
Chartered Accountants

Vishal R Gupta
(Proprietor)
M. No.: 502686

Place: New Delhi
Date: 1-7-10

New Education Group - Foundation For Innovation and Research in Education

Income and Expenditure Account for the Year Ended 31st March 2010

(CONS A/C)

Particulars	Schedule No.	For the Year Ended 31/03/2010 (Rs.)	For the Year Ended 31/03/2009 (Rs.)
INCOME			
Programme Fund Allocated		43,772,968.60	30,705,586.79
Bank Interest			3,140.00
Donation Received			
Total		43,772,968.60	30,708,726.87
EXPENDITURE			
Continuation of the National Education Programme (2005) in India	7		5,440,583.00
Continuation of the National Education Programme (2007) in India	8	6,992,768.00	10,346,025.00
Continuation of the National Education Programme (2008) in India	9	7,087,866.00	14,053,363.79
Continuation of the National Education Programme (2009) in India	10	72,906,633.72	
SOTY Project Expenses	11	6,179,620.00	457,626.00
Administrative Expenses	12	171,841.75	4,374.00
Depreciation		438,437.33	385,815.00
Total			
Surplus of Income over Expenditure			1,240.08
Total		43,772,968.60	30,708,726.87
Significant Accounting Policies & Notes to Accounts			
	13		

Note: Previous Year's figures have been reclassified wherever necessary.

For & on behalf of Management

As per our report of even date annexed

M. Ishwaran
Executive Director

Fr. Thomas V. Kunniakal
Treasurer

For Vishal R Gupta & Co.
Chartered Accountants

Vishal R Gupta
(Proprietor)
M. No.: 502686

Place: New Delhi
Date: 1-7-10

AUDIT REPORT

We have audited the attached Balance Sheet of New Education Group – Foundation for Innovation and Research in Education (NEG – FIRE) as at 31st March 2010 and also the Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended on that date, annexed thereto. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Management of the Society. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

We have conducted our audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards in India. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.

We report that :

- a. We have obtained all the information and explanations, which to the best of our knowledge and belief were necessary for the purpose of our audit.
- b. In our opinion proper books of account as required by law have been kept by the organization so far as appears from our examination of the books.
- c. The Balance Sheet and the Income and Expenditure account dealt with by this report are in agreement with the books of account.
- d. In our opinion and to the best of our information and according to the explanations given to us, the said accounts, read together with notes thereon give a true and fair view in conformity with the accounting principles generally accepted in India :
 - a) in the case of the Balance Sheet, of the state of affairs of the Society as at 31st March 2010.
 - b) in the case of the Income and Expenditure account, of the surplus for the year ended on that date.

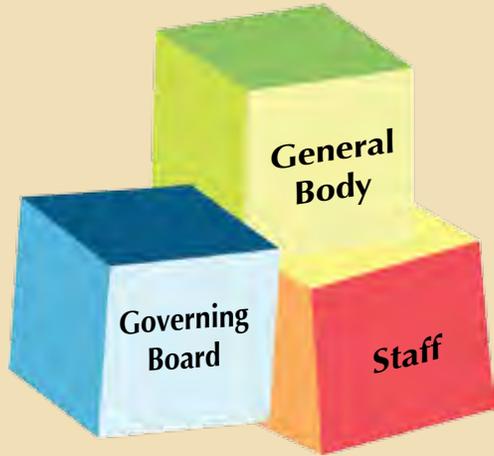
For Vishal R Gupta & Co
Chartered Accountants


Vishal R Gupta
Proprietor

Place: New Delhi

Date : 1.7.10

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 donations are eligible for tax relief under
section 80 G of the Income Tax Act)



NEG-FIRE

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Email: info@negfire.org
Visit us at: www.negfire.org

Let us Reflect

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