Seeds of Change
Classrooms of Hope

Annual Report for Years 2023-2024

Annual Report (FY 2023–24)

Introduction

“New Education Group – Foundation for Innovation and Research in Education (NEG-FIRE), established in 2005, is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving pre-primary and primary education for marginalized communities in India. It has historically partnered with state governments, government agencies, community institutions, teachers, and families to enhance learning outcomes for tribal and Dalit children within the government school system. In FY 2023–24, NEG-FIRE continued its mission of enabling quality education with program implementation across five states. The year was marked by significant project activities, supported by substantial grant funding and new strategic partnerships.

Financial Overview

Financial results for FY 2023–24 indicate a stable financial position driven by concluding grants and tightly controlled expenditures. **Total income for the year was ₹7.35 crore**, chiefly comprising donor contributions. Specifically, **Donations and Grants amounted to ₹7,31,02,741.37** (approximately ₹7.31 crore) while other income (such as bank interest) contributed **₹3,77,633.00**. This reflects the receipt of final tranches of project grants during the year, even as no new funding streams were added. On the expenditure side, **Total spending was ₹6.58 crore**, almost entirely devoted to program activities. **Program expenses totalled ₹6,51,76,664.00** (₹6.52 crore) in 2023–24, reflecting disbursements for ongoing educational projects (e.g. foundational learning for tribal children, inclusive education initiatives) that were in their completion phase. Notably, this spending was to honor existing commitments rather than to execute new programs, underscoring that **no new programmatic activities were undertaken during the year**. Other operating costs and administrative expenses were kept very low at **₹6,28,596.81** (around ₹6.29 lakh), indicating a lean operational approach with reduced overhead. Table 1 below summarizes the key financial figures for FY 2023–24:

Table 1: Financial Summary for FY 2023–24 (Amount in INR)

Financial Item	FY 2023–24 Amount
Donations and Grants (Income)	**₹7,31,02,741.37**
Other Income (Interest etc.)	**₹3,77,633.00**
Total Income	**₹7,34,80,374.37**
Program Expenses (Charitable)	**₹6,51,76,664.00**
Other Expenses (Admin & overhead)	**₹6,28,596.81**
Total Expenditure	**₹6,58,05,260.81**
Excess of Income over Expenditure (Surplus)	**₹76,75,113.56**

As shown above, the organization generated a healthy surplus in FY 2023–24. **The excess of income over expenditure was ₹76,75,113.56** (about ₹0.77 crore), indicating that income from grants slightly exceeded the spending required to complete program activities for the year. This surplus was not the result of new program growth, but rather due to controlled spending and the timing of grant receipts. In line with standard practice, the surplus was transferred to the organization's funds/reserves – primarily into the project fund and general fund – to be carried forward for future use. The financial outcome thus reflects a year of consolidation: **NEG-FIRE maintained fiscal stability while scaling down program expenditures** in comparison to earlier years, consistent with its minimal operational activity during 2023–24.

Key Developments and Partnerships

- **Donor Partnerships:** FY 2023–24 welcomed new and continuing partners. A notable new collaboration was forged with the **Foundation for Growth in India (FGII)**, an Indian CSR donor that partnered with NEG-FIRE to support programs in Bihar. **MISEREOR** (Germany), the organization's long-standing donor since its inception, continued to provide significant funding and technical support. The steadfast support from MISEREOR and other donors was crucial in enabling NEG-FIRE's projects during the year.

- **Strategic Alliances:** The organization engaged in strategic alliances to enhance its impact. It **formalized a teaming agreement with Worldreader** to enrich digital reading resources for children, integrating e-learning content into NEG-FIRE's mother-tongue education programs. This partnership aimed at leveraging technology to improve literacy and reading habits among early learners.
- **Government Collaboration:** NEG-FIRE worked closely with government agencies to align with state education initiatives. It partnered with the **Rajya Shiksha Kendra (State Education Mission) in Madhya Pradesh** and the **Tribal Cultural Research & Training Mission in Andhra Pradesh**, fostering cooperation for multilingual education in government schools. These collaborations with government bodies helped in scaling interventions and ensuring sustainability by embedding practices within the public education system.
- **Networking and Visibility:** The organization increased its presence in sector networks. During the year, NEG-FIRE actively participated in **issue-based networks and MLE conclaves** (Multilingual Education conferences) to share best practices and advocate for inclusive education. These forums enhanced NEG-FIRE's visibility and facilitated knowledge exchange with peer organizations and policymakers. The year's efforts also included modest steps to boost outreach, such as improved communication materials and exploring technology-driven education solutions, setting the stage for future innovation.

Organizational Updates

Governance and Compliance

- **Active Board Oversight:** NEG-FIRE's Governing Board and General Body remained actively engaged in organizational oversight and strategy. Board members, drawing on their expertise in education and development, provided direction and strengthened the management team. The Board and senior management convened regularly to review program progress and financial results, ensuring alignment with the mission and prudent use of resources.

- **Audit and Financial Controls:** The financial statements for FY 2023–24 were independently audited by *KGY & Associates, Chartered Accountants*, with the audit report duly approved by the Board. No adverse findings were reported, reflecting strong internal controls. The accompanying audited balance sheet and income-expenditure statement were prepared on an accrual basis in accordance with standard accounting practices.
- **Statutory Compliance:** The organization complied with all regulatory requirements during the year. This included timely filings under the Income Tax Act (for 12A and 80G obligations) and adherence to the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) for donor funds, as applicable. Board governance norms (such as conducting the Annual General Meeting and periodic Board meetings) were met, and all resolutions and reporting to authorities were completed on schedule. These compliance measures ensured NEG-FIRE's good standing with the Income Tax Department and other regulatory bodies.

Strategic Outlook

As the year closed, NEG-FIRE's leadership turned attention to the future, aiming to revitalize the organization's mission in the coming years. **Strategically, the intent is to reactivate operations and program delivery once conditions and resources allow.** The organization remains committed to its founding vision of **promoting quality education for children from marginalized communities** and recognizes that its expertise – for example, in mother-tongue based multilingual education and inclusive primary schooling – is still highly relevant. The pause in active projects during 2023–24 has been used as an opportunity for introspection and planning. Moving forward, the key priorities include:

- **Resource Mobilization:** NEG-FIRE plans to seek new funding sources and donor partnerships to support future projects. Rebuilding the funding pipeline (through grants, donations, or CSR partnerships) is crucial for resuming program activities.
- **Program Strategy Development:** The team is formulating project plans that can be quickly launched once funding is secured. These plans will leverage NEG-FIRE's past experience and successes in tribal and inclusive education, ensuring any new initiative has a strong evidence-based design.

- **Capacity and Partnerships:** Internally, the organization intends to retain or recruit core expertise so that it is prepared to scale up. It is also exploring collaborations with like-minded NGOs and government agencies to jointly implement programs when operational activity resumes.
- **Compliance and Governance:** Even as it prepares for reactivation, NEG-FIRE will maintain strict compliance (e.g., keeping its statutory registrations like 12A/80G and FCRA in force) and continue to uphold transparency in all interim financial dealings. Good governance practices will guide its strategic decisions on when and how to restart field interventions.

The outlook is cautiously optimistic – the foundation has a clear mission and a track record of impactful work, which it aims to build upon once re-energized. The strategic emphasis is on aligning future programs with available resources and the needs of the communities NEG-FIRE serves, thereby ensuring a prudent and effective return to operations.

Conclusion

In summary, FY 2023–24 was a year of strong programmatic delivery and responsible financial management for NEG-FIRE. The organization successfully advanced its mission across five states, training nearly two thousand teachers, strengthening community institutions, and reaching over fifty-nine thousand children from marginalized backgrounds. These efforts were supported by robust donor partnerships, including MISEREOR and new CSR collaborations, ensuring both scale and impact. Financially, the year closed with a healthy surplus and strengthened reserves, underscoring the efficiency and accountability of operations. The achievements of this year — from foundational learning in tribal communities to inclusive practices in government schools — reaffirm NEG-FIRE’s role as a trusted partner in education. As it looks ahead, the organization remains committed to deepening its impact, sustaining compliance, and building on its legacy of transforming lives through education, guided by its vision of equity, inclusion, and joyful learning.