



# JOYFUL INCLUSIVE QUALITY LEARNING

ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22



## ABOUT US

New Education Group - Foundation for Innovation and Research in Education (NEG-FIRE) promotes quality pre-primary & primary education for marginalized communities.

We partner with multiple stakeholders including government departments, community institutions, teachers and families to enhance performance and development of tribal and dalit children within the government school system across four states in India.

## OUR MISSION

We promote quality education for children from marginalized communities resulting in social transformation in India while upholding the values of transparency, accountability, pluralism, equity, justice, peace and respect for all.

## OUR VISION

NEG-FIRE aims to transform the lives of children from marginalized communities through education and by strategic partnership with local NGOs and community groups.



The background image shows two young girls walking barefoot on a dry, reddish-brown dirt path. They are wearing blue short-sleeved shirts and dark purple dresses. The girl in front has a pink backpack. They are walking towards the left. The background features a hilly landscape with scattered trees and a clear sky.

# TRANSFORMATION THROUGH EDUCATION

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## CHAIRPERSON'S NOTE

All communities have prescribed norms for care and socialization of the young. However, at times due to uneven distribution of resources the disparity puts constraints in caregiving processes. Families are unable to provide for the optimal growth of young children. Deficit often leads to denial and deprivation. Economic discrepancy specially disallows access to opportunity specially education and other resources for development and growth. How a society organizes itself to reach out to the not so privileged members is often a mark of its of civility.

NEG-FIRE steps in to assist and enable the resource-restricted communities to access routes for development to explore their dreams. Indeed, the promise of the organization as spelt in the name (New education group for innovation and research in education), was most evident in the last two years of state enforced constraints or prohibitions. The pandemic brought all organizational services to a halt disrupting children's educational experiences. Covid 19 has been discussed in the last two years as a testing period for educators in the discharging of their duties. Minus easy access to internet services, rural and remote geographies have presented challenges of sustaining learning among children. The open freedom to move around in any case offers distractions to children presenting an arduous context for engaging children. Only formal processes of teaching learning lead children to avoid watchful adults in structured settings. Lockdown provided a legal sanction for childhood propensity to play and explore independently.

Team NEG-FIRE capitalized on children's choice of peer play and conceptualized ghar ghar padshaala and seekho aur seekhao (school in every home and learn and teach). Playful experienced based situations were created to appeal and capture children's attention. Children gathered in small groups and were kept engaged with literacy and educational features through both field staff as well as minimal training of parents

to sustain their children's bonds with school-based learning. Altered methods in altered circumstances indeed served to fire the imagination and commitment of the rural and tribal communities in the wake of mandatory school closure. The innovative methods reiterated the significance of education in the modern world to dream for their children. My words of praise are heartfelt for the work achieved in difficult circumstances.

After the initial adherence to 'work from home' NEG-FIRE took stock and reoriented its work patterns to initiate community based small learning centres changing the lament of 'learning loss' to moments of hope and self-exploratory learning contexts. The different regional managers organized small story-telling camps to engage with community elders and document folk histories contained in everyday forms of social conversations and dialogue. Gratitude to all the regional managers and Head, Programme and Development for their commendable initiatives. Congratulations to all the Academic Supervisors for their courage in daring to be different. Community acts of group gatherings kept alive the connections with NEG-FIRE centres, educational settings indirectly maintaining the bonds with literacy. Neglect, loss of opportunity, losing out and forgetting educational inputs would have been damaging leaving little scope for any forgiveness from children growing in covid cohorts.

I would also place on record the benefits of intensified trainings in boosting self-confidence of teachers who now felt free for children to engage in art activities and not stress the 3Rs. Creating colour and form enhanced and animated children's focus for classroom activities. The increased interest in learning with mother tongue-based learning materials has also motivated the state education departments to sponsor competitions to create teaching learning materials. State level

support is heartening and inspiring for the staff and organizational mission. Art and language familiarity for classroom interactions have been the defining feature for NEG-FIRE's intervention, which now receives added significance through the NEP 2020 advocating for child-oriented classroom pedagogy.

I join all the members of the Board in acknowledging, appreciating and applauding the team at NEG-FIRE for their refreshing enthusiasm and energy. The FCRA directed change to direct implementation has changed the relation with the community. It is not always easy to work in areas with thick flora and fauna specially in the monsoon season. The field staff was ready and have been putting their best foot forward to deal with hazards of floods or cope with sudden appearance of pythons or other animal attacks.

It's been delightful to see administrative staff take interest in issues of trials and triumphs of the community. Intermingling of departments is always a positive push for harmony and conviviality. Much thanks to the Accounts and HR department for going beyond boundaries to enrich the work environment.

The zeal to open the opportunities to those who may be unaware of what can be in store for nurturing the optimal potential for growth and progress speaks volumes for humane efforts. Indeed, it is time to reflect and document on our successes and limitations such that experience can be evidence for later generations to strive and build upon what worked and how communities remember acts of civility. It is important to assess, analyze and comprehend the need for human cooperation, collaboration and some acts of kindness.

I quote a story attributed to a famous anthropologist about the beginning of civilization which in my opinion summarizes and justifies the need for presence of non-governmental organizations. It goes like this:

In a commonly shared story, the anthropologist Margaret Mead was supposedly asked by a student what she thought was the earliest sign of a civilized society. There are many variations of the anecdote, but the general details are similar: To the student's surprise, Mead replied that the first sign of civilization is a healed human femur—the long bone that connects the hip to the knee.

Mead proceeded to explain, as the story goes, that wounded animals in the wild would be hunted and eaten before their broken bones could heal. Thus, a healed femur is a sign that a wounded person must have received help from others. Mead is said to have concluded, "Helping someone else through difficulty is where civilization starts."

My best wishes to the all the staff, the communities and the children who continue to ignite the spirit of the organization.



Asha Singh, PhD





# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

It is a humbling situation for us to learn that NEG-FIRE has directly reached over 8.33 lakh pre-school and primary school students, in the most remote corners of India, in 2022, since 2005. Indirectly though, through teacher training and anganwadi workers' training, our reach is more than 20 lakh students.

We ensure quality in education by training primary school teachers in mother tongue based multi-lingual education.

Quite often, people who don't know about NEG-FIRE ask us the much cliched question: where do you work. on a lighter note we say, that our map starts where Google map stops. As rubber hits the road, our team of over 150 highly motivated staff, we work in the most remote, hilly- forest or river basin locations across four states in India.

Then again, we are asked another cliched question: what's so unique about our educational interventions.

As an organization that empowers students through mother tongue based multi-lingual education, our impact contributes to the national goals of reduced drop outs and increase in retention among children belonging to Scheduled Tribe and Scheduled Caste communities.

Our successes and achievements would simply be impossible to realize, without the partnership and support from respective Ministries and Departments of Education, Tribal Affairs, in the four states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha.

With great anticipation and enthusiasm, we usher in 2022-23 by expanding our work to the state of

Chhattisgarh, which further increases our scope of impacting the lives of early learners.

Our acknowledgements are due to the many hundreds of education-volunteers, members of Mata Samitis, SMC members, PRI members, block and district level government officials; Directors and Commissioners of Tribal Affairs & Education.

The management and implementing team expresses its gratitude to our advisors, the members of General Body, Governing Board and our donor organizations, who provide insights and pathways to make NEG-FIRE a robust and sustainable organization.



Suresh Rao

# THEORY OF CHANGE

## PURPOSE

Children from SC and ST communities will complete formal school education when they have the following:

- Access to quality and joyful learning opportunities
- Safe and inclusive environment that promotes learning in homes, communities and government schools

## ENSURING

## OUTCOMES

- Access to education

Community values children’s education, is aware of educational rights, and actively participates in school and anganwadi management
- Quality Learning

Pre- and primary school students acquire grade-appropriate learning levels (language and numeracy)
- Equity And Inclusion

SC and ST children receive fair and equal treatment in schools and anganwadis
- Joyful Learning

Children from SC and ST communities display confidence and a positive outlook

## RESULTING IN

## IMPACT

- Say, Stay and Strive

Children are interested to pursue and complete formal school education

## LEADING TO

## DESIRED CHANGE

- Empowered and responsible citizens

# PROGRAM FRAMEWORK

## IMPROVED ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN FROM MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES



Contextual Pedagogy for Education



Evidence Based Engagement with Govt. and Other Stakeholders



Child-friendly Safe-spaces for Learning



Community Engagement to Access Educational Services



# IMPACT

571

Remote villages in India started experiencing an upward trend in education.

Our storytelling festivals, community engagement activities and awareness campaigns are not only instilling a sense of pride among marginalized communities we work with, but are also helping these villages prioritize education as a key development area for sustainable growth.

77416

Children from marginalized communities of India started attending schools regularly.

Through NEG-FIRE's innovative teaching-learning activities, these children are showing improved learning outcomes. Regular attendance is also ensuring these children receive nutritious meals as per the Government scheme.

25

Different marginalized communities

14

Scheduled tribes

7

Scheduled classes

across India are breaking away from regressive social norms, understanding the importance of education and enrolling their children in schools.

Through our multi-level community engagement programs, thousands from

11349

School Management Committee members

3098

Members of Mothers Committees

714

Edu volunteers were sensitized about their roles and responsibilities.

They are ensuring that children studying in schools and anganwadi centres in their villages are receiving uninterrupted access to education and child protection services.

140

teachers across India were trained in NEG-FIRE's unique Mother tongue based multi-lingual education pedagogy based on the premise that children best understand in their home language/ mother tongue.

These teachers are implementing the learnings in their classrooms, which is increasing both attendance and interest among children.

248

Pre-school teachers were trained in NEG-FIRE's 11 step-methodology that ensures high quality early childhood care and education through play and activity-based learning routine.

This is ensuring that all students entering grade 1 are school ready.

In line with the National Education Policy, in an effort to make learning maximally relatable, relevant, interesting and efficient, NEG-FIRE produced

3219

Teaching-learning materials (TLMs) on language and

31

on Mathematics.

2614

Homes in isolated pockets of India dedicated a corner for learning in their homes.

From asking their children to help them with domestic chores than going to school to now spending time with them in these corners is symbolic of the change NEG-FIRE is bringing in the grassroots.



# 10 YEAR TRAJECTORY



883899

CHILDREN  
EDUCATED IN THE  
LAST 10 YEARS

[Year 2021-22]



18373

TEACHERS  
TRAINED IN THE  
LAST 10 YEARS

[Year 2021-22]



5907

VILLAGES  
COVERED IN THE  
LAST 10 YEARS

[Year 2021-22]



7402

SCHOOLS  
COVERED IN THE  
LAST 10 YEARS

[Year 2021-22]



64847

[Year 2012-13]

1883

[Year 2012-13]

749

[Year 2012-13]

827

[Year 2012-13]



# OUR WORK

## CONTEXTUALIZING PEDAGOGY



### Mother tongue based multi-lingual education

We train anganwadi workers and government school teachers in adopting the local community's mother tongue as the medium of instruction to eventually teach the State approved language. This facilitates faster and engaged learning. We also develop contextual teaching-learning materials and textbooks in tribal languages to make education responsive and relevant to the development needs and interests of the learners.



### Early Childhood Education

We train anganwadi workers in our 11-step methodology, which ensures optimal outcomes in the domains of physical and motor development, cognitive development, socio-emotional-ethical development, cultural/artistic development and the development of communication and early language, literacy and numeracy of children through everyday activities.

## TRAINING TEACHERS



We train teachers on mother tongue based multi-lingual education, inclusive practices, and usage of locally relevant teaching-learning material to create child-friendly and joyful classrooms that help children achieve age and grade appropriate outcomes.

## SENSITIZING COMMUNITY



### Community Institutions

We ensure School Management Committees, Mata Samitis and Panchayati Raj Institutions understand their roles and responsibilities in promoting education in their villages. We empower them to influence relevant government structures for uninterrupted access to quality education and child protection services.



### Parents

We sensitize parents on the importance of education and encourage them to send their children to school. Through engaging activities like story telling, we encourage families to participate in their child's learning process.



### Edu-volunteers

We create a cadre of 16-18 year olds from within the community to inspire children to go to school. They also help us run supplementary centers and treasure houses.

## BUILDING INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS



### Treasure Houses

A treasure house is a safe space where children collaborate in engaging activities leaving no room for discrimination on any grounds. They are specially designed to encourage mind stimulation through creative activities and sports so that learning is fun, contextual and effective.

## PARTNERING WITH THE GOVERNMENT



We collaborate with state governments, education departments and government structures for replication and integration of our child-centric and joyful learning pedagogies in schools and anganwadi centres.



# OUR STORIES

**Education, especially for the tribal and Dalit children cannot take place in silos.**

From parents of these children who do not understand the importance of education, to teachers in government schools who need special training to address their unique needs, from panchayats that need to recognize their role in driving social and economic progress of their villages to the village youth who solely possesses the capability of leading by example; we believe each of our stakeholders plays a specific and important role.

**The following stories provide a glimpse into some of our intricate connections with our stakeholders that make up the extended NEG-FIRE team to realize our common objective of joyful, inclusive and quality learning.**



## VISHNU PRASAD CHAUDHARY

Vishnu Prasad Chaudhary teaches a class of 40 in a primary government school in a village called Badbani in Madhya Pradesh. His class is a mix of children from the Gond and the Korku communities.

Like most teachers, he would teach in Hindi. While he made numerous efforts, children's' participation in school activities was not up to mark.

It was only after NEG-FIRE's intervention in his school in 2019, he understood how Hindi as a medium of instruction was making these tribal children, who speak a completely different language at home, find their school education irrelevant.

NEG-FIRE's mother tongue based multi-lingual education (MTB-MLE) is based on the premise that children best understand in their mother tongue. With the organization's team applying this methodology, he started noticing a change in the way children started joyfully participating in learning activities ultimately affecting their learning outcomes.

While he was impressed, he also knew that he was

not equipped with the right skills in teaching these children who came from different backgrounds with varied needs. He hence participated in NEG-FIRE's 4-day teacher training workshop on MTB-MLE.

**“Pehle mein bachon ko bolta tha- hindi bolo. Ab mein unhe apni bhasha mein baat karne se nahi rokta, balki uske madhyam se unhe Hindi sikhata hun.”**

Today, one of the walls in his classroom has a folktale painted in Gondi. Since Gondi, like many other tribal languages does not have a script of its own, the letters are painted in Hindi. The thoughtful placement of this story on the wall constantly makes children connect the sounds with letters, understand and enjoy reading, and learn Hindi akshars on the go. He is also building a library of regional storybooks to encourage children to read. His efforts have increased the retention among children and are also motivating other teachers to adopt this unique contextual teaching pedagogy with the objective of **'education for all'**.





## SUSMI RANI TELAGANJI

With a Bachelors degree in Education, Susmi Rani could have joined any school to teach. Instead, she chose us. Hailing from the Valmiki tribal community but having studied in convent schools, she knew that not everyone was as fortunate to speak and understand languages other than their mother tongue.

Many children from tribal communities in and around Araku Valley in Andhra Pradesh face a huge language barrier that hinders their learning process. The teachers teach and interact in Telugu while the tribal children, who speak and understand only their mother tongue, struggle to make a connect. While teaching remains most close to her heart, she took cognizance of the fact that education does not begin and end with teaching alone. Today, as one of the block trainers with NEG-FIRE, she spearheads our intervention in 20 anganwadi centres and 20 schools across 20 villages in Andhra Pradesh.

She ensures proper implementation of our mother tongue based multi-lingual education pedagogy and prepares locally relevant teaching learning material.

This ensures that the children not only understand what is being taught but also enjoy classroom transactions.

**Once shy and reserved, Susmi Rani today, confidently goes around engaging with parents, teachers, ward members, and Mandal (Block) Education Officers, leaving no stone unturned in ensuring continuous access to learning opportunities for children from her own and other marginalized communities. In addition to her time in the field, she manages and guides six learning facilitators who support her role.**

Susmi Rani is a living example of the change that NEG-FIRE strives to achieve. Just as the organization provided her a platform to hone her skills and transform into a leader, we strive to employ education as an instrument to achieve an equitable society in which no child loses an opportunity to learn, dream, thrive and contribute to the nation.

Susmi Rani not only chose us back then but chooses to work with us everyday.



## RAMA RAO MADALA

**“Pedha nana ebene manan!”**

136 kms away from Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh), in a small and remote village called Urumulu, children excitedly fill the air with the information that ‘Pedha nana’ is here as soon as they hear the rumble of his two-wheeler approach. Contrary to a few months back, when children seemed dispirited at the thought of going to school, 18 children now wait for Pedha nana to start the lesson for the day. He is so good with children that he could give some teachers a run for their money!

Meet Rama Rao Madala fondly addressed as Pedha nana (father like), Anna (brother) and Mama (uncle) by the children. Rama Rao facilitates learning in four schools and four anganwadi centres in four remote villages located in the Araku Valley in Andhra Pradesh. The Kondadura, Adivasi and Kuvi communities inhabit these villages. To the children’s’ joy, Rama Rao speaks all three tribal languages and seamlessly implements NEG-FIRE’s MTB-MLE pedagogy. No wonder he has been able to build an exceptional rapport with the children who would otherwise feel alienated in their

classrooms and eventually drop out.

His stardom doesn’t end here.

**The only one school in Urumulu, for the longest time, did not have a teacher, making 18 children suffer from a huge learning loss. He not only took over as a temporary resource but also ensured that ward members and other community institutions approached the Mandal Education Officer for a solution. Today, a contract based recruitment teacher has been appointed to ensure learning doesn’t stop because of resource issues.**

As a learning facilitator with NEG-FIRE, one of his core responsibilities in addition to teaching in mother tongue is to mobilize the community and facilitate grievance redressal to ensure uninterrupted access to education. Rama Rao excels at kalajaata. His contextual songs to highlight issues and charismatic persona has inspired and capacitated the villagers so much that every time they see him, they say- “Naidu nana vaathan!” (our problem solver has come).





## BINDU MANDVE

Education is a key to escaping poverty. Yet, many children in Bindu Mandve's village remained out of school. The reasons were abundant and so was Bindu's resolve to tackle each one of them.

Understanding the massive task that was ahead of her, she knew she couldn't do it all alone. But what if she shook up the existing structures so the community could collectively share the responsibility of educating its children?

Yes! That was her plan and things look good today in Khitoli- a small village in district Dindori of Madhya Pradesh. In 2019, when women in her Self Help Group were being assigned different issues they'd be working on, she voluntarily chose education- a topic that never surfaced in her village's development plan.

**With NEG-FIRE's constant support, Badlaav didi- as she is called in her village, has changed that and much more. She goes around the village interacting with parents and families making them aware about the importance of education and its potential positive**

**impact on their future. Parents' active participation in organizing events and tracking the progress of their children is encouraging teachers and children to perform better at teaching and learning respectively. From 40-45, the attendance has today increased to 90%.**

There would often be disagreements on trivial matters like time and date and the school management committee would never meet. Bindu didi has not only regularized these meetings but is also encouraging participation from teachers, SMC members and even members of the Panchayat. Discussions are being held and solutions are being sought during gram sabha meetings for effective functioning of schools and anganwadi centres.

Thanks to her efforts, the community is coming together to ensure uninterrupted access to education with a greater mission of creating a learning society. With NEG-FIRE's guidance, Bindu Mandve is innovating every single day and living up to her role as shiksha badlaav didi.



## VAIJANTI KUMARI

"Close your eyes. Picture an ideal school and tell me what you see." Lalchandra Yadav (one of the block trainers with NEG-FIRE) asked at a community meeting. All sorts of responses came in.

**"The attendance is 100%. There is a balanced student-teacher ratio. There are separate rooms for conducting classes for different age groups. There are tables and chairs so children do not have to sit on the floor. Safe drinking water is available at all times. A boundary line defines the school premises. There is a playground for children to play. The teachers make learning fun and enjoyable."**

To a metropolitan, some of these might already sound bizarre. What school doesn't have safe drinking water or benches to sit on! Yet, this is all it would take to make an ideal school for the residents of Vrindavan village in Gaya, Bihar. As per Section 21 of the RTE Act, all government schools must constitute a School Management Committee (SMC). Through positive actions and constructive dialogues with stakeholders, SMCs have an immense potential to establish a well

functioning school. The problem however, is that most SMC members do not understand their role or the provisions of RTE. This is where NEG-FIRE comes in. Through capacity building workshops and trainings, we capacitate community institutions such as the SMCs to not only understand their roles and responsibilities but also use their stature in changing the dynamics of their schools. At the "Prathmik Vidyalaya", Vrindavan, the washroom always remained locked, discouraging children, especially girls from attending school. Vaijanti Kumari, one of the SMC members after having been trained by NEG-FIRE, boldly took it up with the Head Master. Narrating the problems this was causing along with the right of children to have access to a functioning toilet, she ensured that the washroom would never see a lock again. Thanks to her efforts, today the attendance in school has increased. SMC is holding monthly meetings to find solutions for proper functioning of the school.

Vaijanti Kumari, along with others, is on her way to making it the ideal school that all of them had pictured with their eyes closed.





## SUNAINA DEVI

**Naav chali, naav chali, naav chali re  
Paani mein chhoti si naav chali re  
Aage ko chali re aage ko chali  
Peeche ko chali re peeche ko chali  
Dayein ko chali... Baayein ko chali...  
Haiyya ho haiyya ho**

The whole anganwadi centre echoes as Sunaina Devi sings the poem and 40 three to five year olds cheerily repeat after her. They copy her actions too. And this is how; they joyfully learn words, meanings and directions in the process. Over 85% of a child's cumulative brain development occurs before the age of 6. This makes it all the more crucial for early education to consist of flexible, multi-faceted, play, activity and inquiry-based learning to ensure optimal physical, motor, cognitive and socio-emotional development. Sunaina Devi is an anganwadi worker in a village called Jalsar in Gaya, Bihar. Like many other anganwadi teachers, in addition to not understanding the critical importance of her role, she was also struggling to incorporate activities that would ascertain holistic development of the children coming to her center. She was always

short of stories, poems and ways to draw children towards learning. Inevitably, the children and parents kept losing interest and the attendance at the center gradually reduced. Understanding the need to inspire and empower anganwadi workers with the ultimate objective of benefitting the children, NEG-FIRE introduced the 11-step methodology and preparation of local TLMs (teaching-learning material) for all anganwadi workers in its intervention areas. This methodology that includes circle time, show and tell, planning time, working time, story time, cleaning time, recall, snack time, outdoor and indoor games time, small groups and closing time; not only ensures overall development of children but also helps anganwadi workers structure their day.

Today, Sunaina Devi's center is a crowd-puller. Using stones, leaves, matchsticks, mud balls and other materials from their immediate surroundings and culture, Sunaina Devi is devising games and classes to make learning holistic, fun and engaging for the children. The attendance is 100% and the whole village is rejoicing the echo of the children's play and laughter.



## PHOOL SINGH MARAVI

**"Laangar jotat rahe" "Kisaan hal chala raha hai"**  
(The farmer is ploughing the field.)

30 children from the Gond community look at a picture and tell their teacher what they see. In a far-flung village called Barwani (Madhya Pradesh), a teacher uses contextual examples and engaging activities to teach Hindi to these children who have by far only known one language- their mother tongue- Gondi. The teacher is trained in NEG-FIRE's mother tongue based multi-lingual teaching pedagogy and has witnessed a drastic change in attendance, rapport and learning outcomes of the children in her school.

**But how did the children get to school?** The children from marginalized communities, who we work with, are often the first in their families to ever step into a classroom. Regressive social norms, domestic chores and lack of awareness about the right to education, its importance and future opportunities discourage communities from sending their children to school. However, understanding how communities unite to take inspired action and bring about change together,

NEG-FIRE creates a cadre of local volunteers to steer the education scenario at the village level. We call them edu-volunteers. Phool Singh Maravi is one of our volunteers, who, being from the same community has been able to build an exemplary rapport with the children and villagers in Barwani. When the schools were shut during the pandemic, Phool Singh went door-to-door informing everyone about the learning centers that were opened so there were no gaps in learning. Thanks to his efforts, today, 28 houses in Barwani have dedicated a corner to learning in their homes. Parents and children narrate stories, exchange learnings and commit an hour to knowledge exchange in this corner. Small changes like these are reaping big benefits making both parents and children take active part in education.

**"I want the children to understand their right to education and how it can lead to a better life."**

While Phool Singh is actually ploughing the field, he wishes that the children from his community only have to use it as an example while studying in their classrooms.





## JYOTI CHANDEL

Its 5:30 am and Jyoti along with her team has reached Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh. They huddle up in a taxi now to drive to Harra Tola- a small village about 4 hours from here. This will be their base for the next 10 days in which they plan to visit 18 villages in the interiors.

Everyday, they carry notepads and recording devices. The road (sometimes for real and sometimes imaginary) is bumpy. However, they must reach and meet community leaders, teachers, children, elderly, and the village Sarpanch who have gathered to meet the NEG-FIRE team after prior discussions.

The Gond community primarily inhabits these regions. After Jyoti is done explaining how the organization is working towards educating the tribals, she poses a vital question to the listeners. "How about we teach your children in Gondi?" she asks. The community does not look impressed. "Everyone is progressing towards English. Why would we want our children to learn in Gondi!" they all say in unison. When a child goes to school and tries to learn in the official language of the state which, when different from his/her mother

tongue, a) the child is unable to understand and grasp new concepts b) the child's expression is limited which makes the teacher misjudge how much they already know and c) the child is unable to relate to what is being taught and hence does not enjoy learning. Jyoti explains this to the villagers and this is when they start having animated discussions about how their language is at the risk of dying. They realize the importance of retaining their language and through it, huge human capital and rich cultural diversity. They share their folk tales, songs, riddles, poems, short stories and much more!

Upon returning, Jyoti and all our content development team gets to work. They read and re-read the notes. They listen to the recordings. They connect with the language experts. They work with an illustrator so he/she is able to carry every minute detail in their design. They re-check all content with the community. They sort the content so it is in line with the state defined competencies. And after a long and strenuous process, they finally develop books for the children from the Gond community.



These books hold the essence of their culture. The illustrations and tales make the children feel connected to the curriculum. They don't feel the content to be foreign anymore and excitedly jump into discussions in class. They feel proud of their heritage and learn the state approved language with the help their own mother tongue and grasp concepts faster!

Jyoti Chandel is one of our team members who works with NEG-FIRE on content development. "Its easy to just produce content and have it translated in as many languages as you want. But that's now what we do here at NEG-FIRE. We go an extra mile to ensure that the textbooks are not only relevant nationally, but also contain desired nuances and supplementary material as per local contexts and needs."

**NEG-FIRE has published 10 books each for class 1 and 2 in Gondi, Korku and Baigani. We are now making headway in producing tri-language books, which the esteemed Rajya Shiksha Kendra has agreed to publish and distribute to schools with tribal students all over Madhya Pradesh.**







## ARUNA KUMARI

### Ujaale ki aur badhte nanhe kadam..

"I always believed in a better future for Vishal, always. Neither my husband nor I ever got a chance to go to school. This is the reason that despite working as daily wage laborers on a farm nearby, we made sure that every penny we earned is used wisely to fund our children's education.

One day, Vishal came home from school and told us that he stood first in grade 3 with first division. We were overjoyed! I made his favorite sweet and his father gave him a small amount of money to celebrate. It seemed like all our efforts and sacrifices were finally paying off.

On inquiring, I got to know that NEG-FIRE bhaiya (\*Learning Facilitator) had been visiting Vishal's school and teaching complex mathematical concepts through games and songs. While Vishal had been initially facing some challenges given the language barrier, this intervention of learning through activities was doing wonders for him!

"Rang Rang Kon Pasand?" he keeps asking me... It is one of the many games NEG bhaiya had taught him. He has started to recognize different colors and often makes me notice so many colours around me too. Vishal collects all the sticks in our house, small stones, pebbles, and anything that seems useful for his activity-based learning class. NEG bhaiya teaches simple addition and subtraction through these objects and everyone's understanding has only become better. The parents are recognizing the benefits of activity-based learning, and the children now wait all week for NEG bhaiya's class.

**Vishal says he wants to be a teacher when he grows up, and we believe in him. He can be whatever he wishes to be; we are here to support him in his endeavors. I believe every child deserves to have their dreams fulfilled and their future shaped through education.**

Taking first place in grade 3 is just the beginning, and the future we've imagined for Vishal is starting to take shape now."



## APARNA KUMARI

**"I asked the students to bring me a stick. When they brought it to me... I asked them again to bring another stick and then asked them to add the two sticks. Two sticks... three sticks... four sticks... we kept on adding and together we learned additions. That's when I noticed how happy and excited they were to learn something through activities.**

My classrooms consist of students coming from different backgrounds. I would notice how students coming from marginalized communities were less active and reserved in classrooms. I would ask them to speak up and participate. But despite my efforts, I was somehow unable to make these students feel welcomed.

Fortunately, things changed.

I attended a training on social inclusion through mathematics organized by NEG-FIRE. My outlook towards teaching changed. Change is important. It is necessary to keep on learning new things and what a welcomed change this was!

I soon began to notice a positive change in my classroom upon implementing activity-based learning in mathematics as demonstrated in the training. These activities required collaboration and I saw the students working together. While there was no obligation to do so, these activities also instilled a sense of belonging.

I even started communicating in their native language, and that's when I noticed how they started responding to me freely and easily. They started talking to me as a friend and a mentor. The students began opening up to me, coming to me with queries.

I have attended a lot of other trainings too, but this one taught me to be more aware of social inclusion inside our classrooms. I believe the modules and activities we learned during the NEG-FIRE training were designed keeping in mind the students' willingness to learn, regardless of age, caste, or social standing."





## SUNIL KUMAR

**"When we were in school, rote learning predominated the curriculum. Whether the information we were memorizing was correct or incorrect was irrelevant. We simply memorized and repeated our instructions without giving it a conscious thought. We would dread going to school and were terrified of our teachers."**

I had a similar notion of what a school was, when I first started as a headmaster twenty years ago. But I desired a change. Instead of simply cramming, I wanted the students to LEARN.

To this effect, I actively began involving the parents. Conversations with them helped me understand the students' backgrounds and where they were coming from. It wasn't unusual to tell the children from marginalized communities apart from the rest as they would hardly participate in their class.

The change I desired began to happen when a learning facilitator from NEG-FIRE started visiting our school once a week. I'd watch him play various games with the students. One day, he'd pick up some sticks and

pebbles from the schoolyard and teach them how to do simple math calculations; another day, he'd tell them all about colors through flowers, leaves and other things available in the nature. Even the inactive students became deeply engrossed with their classmates during these activities.

This is exactly the change I wished to bring in the education my students were receiving in comparison to how we were taught. My students happily come to school everyday. Their parents assist them in their schoolwork as well. This, in my opinion, is a critical shift in our education system that will help the child realize his/her full potential.

**The activities created by NEG-FIRE to make the classrooms inclusive may seem like a small effort, but I believe this is the kind of effort that will have a lasting impact on the lives of the students."**



## RINKI DEVI

"Someone who everyone was referring to as 'NEG bhaiya' was becoming increasingly popular in our village. When I found out that he had joined our school to facilitate learning and teach the students through activity-based learning, I could not hold my curiosity. Along with the other SMC members, I went to see him.

On being asked as to who the president was, I raised my hand. He then inquired about my responsibilities, to which I replied that my commitment was to go to school and sign the register. After all, that's exactly what we'd been doing since we became SMC members!

He smiled, patiently sat us all down and took us all through the actual roles and responsibilities of the School Management Committee. He explained the role we could actively play in addressing issues like dropouts, mid-day meals, hygiene, and ensuring that each and every child going to school has access to basic amenities. Until that day, we didn't realize the importance of our job as SMC members. That meeting both empowered and motivated us all.

That's when the real transformation began... We began inquiring about the students and discovered that only 16 of the 26 students enrolled in the school were regular. I personally visited them, and re-enrolled them after elaborate discussions with their families. I also began to accompany them to school. I took the onus to ensure that no one is denied growth simply because they come from a disadvantaged community in our society.

**Today, nothing stops me from playing my part in ensuring these children have access to learning- not even the river that makes it difficult to sometimes get to school. I help the children cross the river and bring them back with me.**

**I frequently and fearlessly argue with the headmaster and teachers to ensure that the students are well taught and that the premises are well-equipped. I hope this small role we're playing will have a big impact in building their future. "**





## AKASH KUMAR

**"Mann mai hai vishwaas, pura hai vishwaas, hum honge kamyab ek din..."**

I love this song... It motivates me whenever I feel down or discouraged ...

In addition to music, I love making new friends, meeting new people, and exploring places. I was super excited when I heard about the opening of NEG-FIRE's learning center in our neighborhood. Earlier, I would waste a lot of time loitering around. However, at the learning center, we played educational games. The games always taught us something. We started learning addition, subtraction, colors, shapes, songs, and so much more!

Participating in such activities and creative workshops conducted by trained NEG-FIRE professionals gave me the confidence I now wear with pride. They served as an excellent platform where I learned to communicate my thoughts without hesitation. My mother was persistent that I join her and my father to earn daily wages and help sustain our family. We never had

many resources to explore other options. Being the eldest among my siblings and sharing the load with my parents, I knew where they were coming from. Daily wages were more important than education as it helped us earn our meals.

But thanks to NEG-FIRE that made my parents and me see the bigger picture. I gave equal importance to education, kept learning at the centre, got to know about various fields as career options, understood the value of education and am looking forward to a successful career in banking today.

I am certain that this career choice would not only provide my life with much-needed stability, but will also assist us in overcoming financial barriers. I am hopeful I'll soon get a decent job with enough to sustain my family.

**My knowledge from the Learning Center has been my superpower, and I plan to use it to combat my years of hardship and illiteracy. Education gives us the tools that we need to succeed in life and build our future."**



# FINANCIALS



New Education Group - Foundation For Innovation and Research in Education

Balance Sheet (Consolidated) as at 31st March, 2022

(Figures in Rupees)

Particulars	Schedule No.	Foreign Contribution	Local	31st March, 2022	31st March, 2021
<b>SOURCES OF FUNDS</b>					
Reserves & Funds	1	2,298,032	795,194	3,093,226	3,018,191
Program Balances	2	34,521,274	-	34,521,274	3,849,417
Current Liabilities & Provisions	3	57,210	19,505	76,715	587,276
<b>Total</b>		<b>36,876,516</b>	<b>814,699</b>	<b>37,691,215</b>	<b>7,454,884</b>
<b>APPLICATION OF FUNDS</b>					
<b>Fixed Assets</b>					
Gross Block	4	8,571,520	788,109	9,359,629	8,737,460
Less: Depreciation		6,299,490	688,778	6,988,268	6,462,873
Net Block		2,272,030	99,331	2,371,361	2,274,587
<b>Current Assets &amp; Advances</b>					
Cash & Bank Balances	5	34,023,444	673,549	34,696,993	3,488,403
Advances	6	581,042	41,819	622,861	1,691,894
Sub Total		34,604,486	715,368	35,319,854	5,180,297
<b>Total</b>		<b>36,876,516</b>	<b>814,699</b>	<b>37,691,215</b>	<b>7,454,884</b>


Significant Accounting Policies & Notes to Accounts 9  
Note: Previous Year's figures have been reclassified wherever necessary.

For & on behalf of NEG-FIRE

As per our report of even date annexed

  
Suresh Rao  
Executive Director

For NEG-FIRE  
  
Dr. Siji Chacko  
Treasurer

For V. Sankar Aiyar & Co.  
Chartered Accountants  
FRN: 109208W  
  
M S Balachandran  
(Partner)  
M. No.- 024282



Place: New Delhi  
Date: 27 July 2022

New Education Group - Foundation For Innovation and Research in Education  
Receipts and Payments Account (Consolidated) for the Year Ended 31st March, 2022

(Figures in Rupees)

Particulars	Schedule No.	Foreign Contribution	Local	31st March, 2022	31st March, 2021
<b>Opening Balance</b>					
Current liabilities and Provisions	3	417,839	169,437	587,276	1,053,886
Cash & Bank Balances	5	2,432,388	1,056,015	3,488,403	21,978,452
Advance and Prepaid Expenses	5	1,604,796	87,098	1,691,894	3,746,015
<b>Sub - Total</b>		<b>3,619,345</b>	<b>973,676</b>	<b>4,593,021</b>	<b>24,670,581</b>
<b>Receipts</b>					
Contribution to Projects	2	86,817,277	1,313,189	88,130,466	56,258,541
Interest	1 & 2	906,745	26,063	932,808	899,040
Unrestricted grants		-	50,017	50,017	-
<b>Sub - Total</b>		<b>87,724,022</b>	<b>1,389,269</b>	<b>89,113,291</b>	<b>57,157,581</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>91,343,367</b>	<b>2,362,945</b>	<b>93,706,312</b>	<b>81,828,162</b>
<b>Payments</b>					
Education Program for Dalit and Tribal children	7	56,173,922	-	56,173,922	74,014,599
Project Expenses - Additions to Fixed Assets	4	622,169	-	622,169	45,430
Transforming Learning outcomes in primary schools of antyodha blocks	8	-	1,576,962	1,576,962	3,173,569
Other Expenses	1	-	90,120	90,120	1,543
<b>Sub - Total</b>		<b>56,796,091</b>	<b>1,667,082</b>	<b>58,463,173</b>	<b>77,235,141</b>
<b>Closing Balances</b>					
Current liabilities and Provisions	3	57,210	19,505	76,715	587,276
Cash & Bank Balances	5	34,023,444	673,549	34,696,993	3,488,403
Advance and Prepaid Expenses	5	581,042	41,819	622,861	1,691,894
<b>Sub - Total</b>		<b>34,547,276</b>	<b>695,863</b>	<b>35,243,139</b>	<b>4,593,021</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>91,343,367</b>	<b>2,362,945</b>	<b>93,706,312</b>	<b>81,828,162</b>


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

For & on behalf of NEG-FIRE

As per our report of even date annexed

  
Suresh Rao  
Executive Director

For NEG-FIRE  
  
Dr. Siji Chacko  
Treasurer

For V. Sankar Aiyar & Co.  
Chartered Accountants  
FRN: 109208W  
  
M S Balachandran  
(Partner)  
M. No.- 024282



Place: New Delhi  
Date: 27 July 2022



New Education Group - Foundation For Innovation and Research in Education

Income and Expenditure Account (Consolidated) for the Year Ended 31st March, 2022

(Figures in Rupees)

Particulars	Schedule No.	Foreign Contribution	Local	31st March, 2022	31st March, 2021
<b>INCOME</b>					
Funds Allocated For Program expenditure (to the extent of funds expenditure incurred out of the same)		56,669,982	1,606,197	58,276,179	77,675,848
Other Income (unallocated)		-	52,007	52,007	21,644
<b>Total</b>		<b>56,669,982</b>	<b>1,658,204</b>	<b>58,328,186</b>	<b>77,697,492</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>					
Education Program for Dalit and Tribal children	7	56,173,822	-	56,173,822	74,014,599
Transforming Learning outcomes in primary schools of antyodha blocks	8	-	1,576,962	1,576,962	3,173,569
Other Expenses		-	90,120	90,120	1,543
Depreciation		496,160	29,235	525,395	487,680
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>56,669,982</b>	<b>1,696,317</b>	<b>58,366,299</b>	<b>77,677,391</b>
Excess of income over expenditure transferred to General Reserve		-	(38,113)	(38,113)	20,101
<b>Total</b>		<b>56,669,982</b>	<b>1,658,204</b>	<b>58,328,186</b>	<b>77,697,492</b>

Significant Accounting Policies & Notes to Accounts

9

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

For & on behalf of NEG-FIRE

As per our report of even date annexed



Suresh Rao  
Executive Director

For NEG-FIRE

*S. Siji Chacko*  
Treasurer

Dr. Siji Chacko  
Treasurer

For V. Sankar Aiyar & Co.  
Chartered Accountants  
FRN: 109208W

*M S Balachandran*  
(Partner)

M S Balachandran  
(Partner)  
M. No.- 024282



Place: New Delhi  
Date: 27 July 2022

SPECIAL  
THANKS





GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS

- 1. Dr. Asha Singh, Chairperson
- 2. Dr. Siji Chacko, Treasurer
- 3. Most Rev. Bishop Thomas Pius D’Souza
- 4. Bro. (Laurence) Abraham Kadaliyl Abraham
- 5. Sr (Inigo Joachim), Kurapatti Joachim Alphonse
- 6. Dr. Cherian Joseph
- 7. Dr. Shailendra Bhaskar Awale
- 8. Mr. John Peter Nelson
- 9. Mr. Suresh Rao, Executive Director & Ex-Officio Secretary, Governing Board

GENERAL BODY MEMBERS

- 1. Most Rev. Abp. Elias Gonsalves
- 2. Most Rev. Bishop Joshua Mar Ignathios
- 3. Dr. Kulandai Swamy Veda
- 4. Mr. P.V. Krishna Rao
- 5. Ms. Sachi Kumari
- 6. Dr. Ashok Kumar Agarwal
- 7. Dr. Yogesh Kumar
- 8. Mr. Narendhar R (Ramasamy)
- 9. Mr. George Koshi
- 10. Mr. Padinjarapurakkal Balan Sajeev
- 11. Ms. Ganta Hymavathi

ADVISORY COMMITTEES AND THEIR MEMBERS

Finance Committee

- 1. Mr. Siji Chacko, Treasurer – Governing Board
- 2. Dr. Shailendra Bhaskar Awale, Member – Governing Board
- 3. Mr. John Peter Nelson, Member – Governing Board
- 4. Mr. George Koshi, Member – General Body
- 5. Mr. Suresh Rao, Executive Director
- 6. Mr. Nirmal Pathak, Finance Manager

Program Committee

- 1. Dr. Shailendra Bhaskar Awale, Member-Governing Board
- 2. Dr. Prakash Louis, Convener
- 3. Dr. Rekha Abel, External Expert
- 4. Mr. V Janardhan Rao, External Expert
- 5. Mr. Suresh Rao, ED
- 6. Ms. Pragya Majumder, Head-PMD

Human Resource Committee

- 1. Dr. Rekha Abel, External Expert
- 2. Ms. Meenu Venkateswaran, External Expert
- 3. Mr. Suresh Rao, ED
- 4. Ms. Sincy Joseph, HR & Admin Manager & Ex-officio Secretary

Internal Complaints Committee

- 1. Ms. Pragya Majumder, Presiding officer - NEG-FIRE staff representative
- 2. Dr. Rekha Abel, External Expert
- 3. Dr. Sana Contractor, External Expert
- 4. Mr. Amitabh Bhushan, NEG-FIRE staff
- 5. Mr. Raj Kumar, NEG-FIRE staff

Child Protection Committee

- 1. Dr. Asha Singh, Chairperson - Governing Board
- 2. Ms. Sachi Kumari, General Body Member
- 3. Dr. Prakash Louis, External Expert
- 4. Dr. Rekha Abel, External Expert
- 5. Mr. V Janardhan Rao, External Expert
- 6. Mr. Suresh Rao, ED
- 7. Ms. Sincy Joseph, HR & Admin manager

OUR TEAM



Northern Regional Team



Delhi Team



South Eastern Regional Team



Central Regional Team





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