



One Step Forward Towards Inclusive Education

Quarterly Report

January - March 2024





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About Ek Kadam Aur

Ek Kadam Aur is a nonprofit organization registered in India (80G) and the US (501c3) that works towards delivering quality education to underprivileged children in India and Nepal. We work at the crucial juncture where blindness, poverty, and lack of accessibility converge.

Vision

The Ek Kadam Aur Foundation's vision is to create a world where every child has the right to quality education, access to skill enhancement, and healthcare.

Mission

Our mission is to help underprivileged children improve their lives through education, technology, and healthcare initiatives.

Our Values



Growth



Respect



Inclusion



Team
Work

Our Programs

Arunodaya (Sunrise) for Blind Program:

A Program through which the Foundation identifies visually impaired children aged 5 to 14 years from remote regions of India to provide personalized one-on-one training from mentors and special educators to prepare them for regular mainstream schools.

High School Leadership Program:

A flagship initiative of the Foundation that offers training in essential 21st-century skills like communication and leadership. Students in this program get the opportunity to participate in entrepreneurship boot camp and the I-Search (research-based) Program.

Active Learning Program:

It fosters student engagement by transitioning from teacher-centered to student-centered learning, promoting the development of 21st Century Skills. Regular workshops and training programs on Active Learning are conducted for teachers and students in partner schools.

Nurturing Youth Leadership:

We strongly believe in nurturing young leaders to public service. To facilitate this, we host several student interns from New York University, Harvard University, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) from the US each year. While we engage them in social impact opportunities, we also gain from their insights and perspectives, especially from an academic lens.

Highlights of the Quarter



Manoj Trivedi (Manager, Madhya Pradesh) and Namita Tripathi (Advisory Board Member) receiving Award of Excellence from the Madhya Pradesh Government's Public Works Department Minister.



Expansion and Impact of Arunodaya Program:

The Arunodaya Program continued to exhibit substantial growth and impact in the first quarter 2024. The program's reach has expanded significantly, with 261 students across seven states. Adding 107 new enrollments highlights the program's continued ability to attract and serve visually impaired children in underserved communities.



Educational Initiatives within the High School Leadership Program:

The High School Leadership Program continues to innovate and educate students through 25 webinars conducted in the first quarter of 2024. With a diverse range of topics, including STEM education, cybersecurity, and entrepreneurship, the program empowers students with valuable skills and knowledge for their future endeavors.



Development and Innovation Efforts:

Ek Kadam Aur Foundation's major CSR partnerships, such as those with J.C. Flowers Asset Reconstruction Private Limited, UnisLink, and First Source, demonstrate the foundation's commitment to expanding access to inclusive education and positively impacting the lives of visually impaired children.

Message from the President

Dear Friends,

As we embark on the eighth year of our journey in India, dedicated to narrowing the educational divide for underserved communities, particularly those with visual impairments, we reflect on our past impact and set our sights on the future. It is with great pleasure that we present this report, providing a comprehensive overview of our achievements during the first quarter of 2024.

The Arunodaya (Sunrise) for Blind Program is a testament to our commitment to providing quality education to visually impaired children. Originating with a modest group of 10 students in Uttar Pradesh, our enrollment now exceeds 261 students by the end of the first quarter of 2024. The program has made remarkable strides, reaching significant milestones in Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, and West Bengal, with expansions into Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Maharashtra, extending our reach to seven states in India. In January, our interns from New York University visited India to conduct an impact assessment, further igniting our dedication to this cause.

Our other flagship initiatives, the High School Leadership Program and Active Learning Program continue to enrich the lives of our students, teachers, and stakeholders by fostering enhanced learning and leadership development.



We are poised to make an even greater impact with relentless in-person activities and field visits.

We deeply thank our board members, volunteers, corporate partners, individual supporters, and well-wishers for their invaluable guidance, support, and contributions. With your unwavering commitment, the Ek Kadam Aur Foundation eagerly anticipates empowering future generations through education.

Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Satish Tripathi". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Dr. Satish Tripathi
Founder/President

Impact of the Quarter

Jan - Mar 2024

Arunodaya Program

261

TOTAL STUDENTS

140

**SPECIAL EDUCATORS
& MENTORS**

107

NEW STUDENTS

28

**VISUALLY IMPAIRED
MEMBERS
IN THE TEAM**

Impact of the Quarter

Jan - Mar 2024

High School Leadership Program

25

WEBINARS

13

MENTORS

221

**STUDENTS ENROLLED
FROM OUR PARTNER
SCHOOLS**



Our visually impaired special mentors providing braille training to the children.

Arunodaya (Sunrise) for Blind Program

West Bengal

Program Advancement:

21 children successfully progressed from Phase 1 to Phase 2 of the Arunodaya program, signifying their continued educational journey and integration into mainstream schooling.

Breaking Barriers:

Individuals with visual impairment made history by leading a car rally, utilizing Braille maps for navigation. This remarkable feat showcased their capabilities and broke barriers, demonstrating the impactful strides in empowering children with visual impairment in West Bengal through the Arunodaya program.

Media Recognition:

The car rally received significant coverage in The Telegraph, one of the leading newspapers in West Bengal. This recognition highlights the program's positive impact and the commendable achievements of its participants.



Ayantika Basak and Monika Mondal with our mentor Delafroj Khatun (in the centre)



“

My daughter couldn't see, so she stayed home with nothing much to do. I didn't know how to help her. Then, she joined the Ek Kadam Aur Foundation's program called Arunodaya. Now she reads books, learns English and Bengali, and knows Braille well. She can do a lot on her own now. Seeing her get better makes me very happy and thankful.

- **Soniya Akhtar**
Mother of Suraiya, West Bengal



“

I am visually impaired, and after graduation, I found myself sitting at home with little to do. But then, I became a mentor in the Arunodaya program. It feels really good to teach blind kids and help them learn different things. Because of this, I got an opportunity to receive scholarships while learning new things. Working with other teachers in West Bengal has been nice. I also try new ways to teach the kids.

- **Jesmina Khatun**
Mentor, West Bengal



Celebrating Ek Kadam Aur's Foundation Day with our children in Madhya Pradesh.

Arunodaya (Sunrise) for Blind Program

Madhya Pradesh

Digital Literacy Training:

In the first quarter of 2024, the Arunodaya Program significantly enhanced children's digital literacy in Phase 1. The children received comprehensive training on utilizing mobile phones, Daisy Players, and laptops through structured sessions. This initiative aimed to equip them with essential digital skills for their educational journey and future endeavors.

Expansion to Dindori District:

The Arunodaya Program extended its operations to the Dindori district to broaden its geographical footprint.

Continuous Communication with Parents and Community Members:

Ek Kadam Aur Foundation maintained regular, open communication channels with parents and community members. This ongoing dialogue was instrumental in fostering trust, collaboration, and engagement within the communities served by the Arunodaya Program.

Recognition and Award:

The Government of Madhya Pradesh recognized the outstanding performance and contributions of Ek Kadam Aur Foundation. The foundation received the prestigious Award of Excellence and Honor from the Madhya Pradesh government's Public Works Department Minister, Shri Rakesh Singh.



“

The Arunodaya program changed my life. It showed me new things and taught me skills for doing things on my own. Now, I can read, write, and move alone, which I never thought I could do before.

- **Sheetal Rajdhar**
Student, Madhya Pradesh



“

Teaching blind kids makes me happy. Seeing them get better every day makes me proud. I teach three students, and it feels really good. Ek Kadam Aur helps me a lot in doing this.

- **Satish Barman**
Mentor, Madhya Pradesh



Dr. Rajagopal Panigrahi and Mayank Ruhella, Arunodaya Program Managers (on the right), distribute the Braille kit to Bhavya (in the center) and her parents (on the left).

Arunodaya (Sunrise) for Blind Program

Andhra Pradesh

Expansion into New Districts:

We expanded our reach by adding three new districts – Anakapalli, Alluri Sita Rama Raju, and Srikakulam.

Collaboration with UnisLink Private Limited:

Through the partnership with UnisLink, we provide educational opportunities for five children with blindness in Andhra Pradesh.



Dr. Rajagopal Panigrahi with students and parents from Andhra Pradesh.



Teaching blind kids in our village is fulfilling. They've changed a lot since I started. At first, they were shy, but now they're more confident. Our unique teaching method helps them a lot. It gives them new chances and makes their world bigger. I'm proud to work with other teachers who love teaching. Being part of the Ek Kadam Aur Foundation means a lot to me.

-Galleli.Matsya Konda Babu
Mentor, Andhra Pradesh



Bonita Sarkar, Foundation Fellow (second from left), with students and parents from Andhra Pradesh.



Abhay Patel and Ritika Patel, accompanied by their grandmother, with Mayank Ruhella, program manager (on the left), and Ashuthosh, field coordinator (on the right).

Arunodaya (Sunrise) for Blind Program

Chhattisgarh

Progression to Phase 2

17 children graduated from Phase 1 of the Arunodaya Program, transitioning to attend government schools in their local communities. This milestone marks their continued educational journey and integration into mainstream schooling.

Recognition of Achievement

Dev Baret, a student in the Arunodaya Program, received recognition for his talent and dedication, winning a prize in a dance competition during the program's Annual Day celebration. This accomplishment highlights the holistic development fostered within the program.

Celebration of Festivities

The EKAF team, special educators, and mentors celebrated the Holi with the Arunodaya Program's children. This joyful occasion provided an opportunity for bonding and creating memorable experiences for the children under our care.

Evaluation and Assessment

18 children participated in the endline survey and tests, providing a comprehensive evaluation of the program's impact and effectiveness. These assessments are instrumental in guiding future program enhancements and ensuring continual progress toward our goals.



“

I was born blind. I didn't have many chances from the beginning. But then came the Arunodaya program. They helped me learn Braille and the language skills. Now, I do well in cultural events and inspire others. I dream of becoming a policeman and serving my community.

- **Devbareth**
Student, Janjgir, Chhattisgarh



“

My father is a farmer, and my mother is a homemaker. My brother and I have the same problem with our eyes. After joining the Arunodaya program, I go to school confidently. My dad used to worry about me going to school, but now he's happy to see me go daily.

- **Ritika**
Student, Janjgir, Chhattisgarh



Anoop Dubey, Manager of Rajasthan, with the children of Arunodaya .

Arunodaya (Sunrise) for Blind Program Rajasthan

Program Launch in Rajasthan:

In the first quarter of 2024, we launched the Arunodaya program in Rajasthan, marking a significant step towards extending our services to more regions.

Strategic Collaborations:

We have partnered with Nehru Yuva Kendra, Karauli, and government entities, including the District Education Officer, Sub Divisional Magistrate, and additional district magistrate.

These collaborations bolster our outreach efforts, enabling us to identify and support more children with blindness in Rajasthan while reaffirming our commitment to inclusive education for all.



Children practicing Braille and the Abacus.



“

I am honored to teach 12 students in District Dholpur. At first, teaching visually impaired students presented challenges, but witnessing their progress fills me with happiness. I am grateful for the chance to make a meaningful impact.

- Ajay Kumar
Mentor, Rajasthan



Braille kit distributed to our students in Rajasthan.



Shreyansh, a student of Arunodaya (in the center), with his mother (on the left) and Poornima, Special Educator (on the right).

Arunodaya (Sunrise) for Blind Program

Maharashtra

Recruitment of Key Personnel:

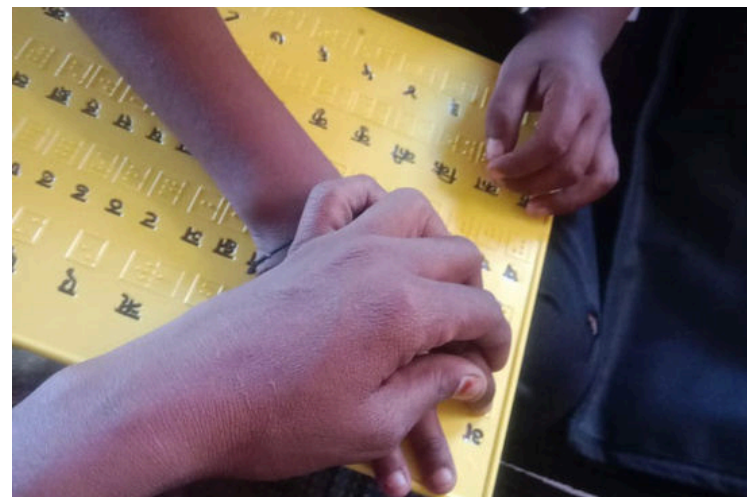
During this quarter, the Arunodaya Program made significant strides in bolstering its team. Dr. Pubali Agarwal was successfully recruited as the Director (Global), bringing with her a wealth of expertise and leadership essential for the program's success. We also recruited a Project Manager, two special educators, and a mentor cum Field Coordinator.

Partnership and Collaboration:

Collaboration efforts were strengthened through strategic partnerships with organizations such as Sahyogini Palak Sanstha, Navi Mumbai. Together, we are working to identify children with blindness in Mumbai, Maharashtra, as well as their mentors and special educators. This collaborative approach amplifies our reach and impact within the community.

Engagement with Stakeholders:

Mr. Biswajit Ghosh represented the organization in a collaborative meeting with key stakeholders in the disability sector in Mumbai city. His participation and presentation of the objectives of the EKAF initiative fostered valuable connections and opportunities for future collaboration, positioning the program for sustained impact and growth.



Students learning to use Braille Kits.



I'm Sonu Thakur from Navi Mumbai. I can't see since I was born. But now, I'm in the Arunodaya program, and it's making a big difference. They teach really well. I'm getting much better at English and reading Braille. Arunodaya is helping me to have a better future!

-Sonu Thakur
Mumbai, Maharashtra



Sonu Thakur learning to identify different currency notes.



Vikas receiving smartphone training from Passang Bhutia and Babu Singh (Special Educator.)

Arunodaya (Sunrise) for Blind Program

Uttar Pradesh

Digital Skills Empowerment:

Throughout the first quarter of 2024, the Smartphone Training program, led by Passang Bhutia, made significant strides in enhancing digital literacy among children.

Program Expansion:

The program expanded its operations to Agra and Farrukhabad, broadening its geographical footprint and ensuring more children access essential digital skills and support.

Graduation of Nineteen Children:

19 children graduated from the program this quarter. A memorable graduation day ceremony was held at Prathmik Vidhyalaya Panhar (Government Primary School) to celebrate the program participants' achievements and progress.

New York University's Team:

In January 2024, the NYU Capstone team conducted fieldwork related to the Arunodaya Program, furthering research and understanding of the program's impact and effectiveness in empowering visually impaired children.



“

Before joining Arunodaya, my life was tough. I couldn't see; making friends was hard, and I felt lonely. But after joining, things got better. I learned new things. Now I feel better about myself. I can do more things alone. I can help my sister too, who is also blind.

- **Heena Kushwaha**
Student, Uttar Pradesh



Students receiving prizes during the graduation day.

From Darkness to Dreams: Divyansh's Journey of Triumph



Divyansh reading Braille alongside his mother.

In a small village called Birpur, Uttar Pradesh, Divyansh faced big challenges because he couldn't see, and his family didn't have much money. But then, something wonderful happened: the Arunodaya Program came into their lives. With help from the special program, Divyansh's family felt hopeful again.

Divyansh's mother worked hard with him every day. They learned Braille and Abacus together. With each new thing Divyansh learned, he felt more confident. Soon, he was doing well in regular school, making friends, and dreaming of becoming a lawyer someday.

Today, Divyansh's happiness shines bright like a star. His story reminds us that anything is possible with support and hard work.

[Click here](#) to learn more about Divyansh's inspiring journey and the Arunodaya program.



Divyansh at school with his sighted peers.

Photo Gallery



- 1** Shreya Bardhan from Hooghly, West Bengal, practicing Braille writing.
- 2** Children of Arunodaya performing at Ek Kadam Aur's Foundation Day celebration.
- 3** Manoj Trivedi, Manager of Madhya Pradesh, with the newly recruited child, Aryan.
- 4** Passang Bhutia providing smartphone training to students.
- 5** Anoop Dubey (on the right), Program Manager, at the office of the Sub Divisional Magistrate, Sapotra, Rajasthan.



HSLP students from Lamdon Model Senior Secondary School, Leh, Ladakh.

High School Leadership Program

Foundation Day and Republic Day Celebration:

The High School Leadership Program (HSLP) joyously commemorated its 8th Foundation Day and Republic Day during a virtual event, marking seven impactful years of education for all Ek Kadam Aur participants and guests. Children from the Arunodaya Program and the HSLP showcased their cultural talents, captivating the audience. Dr. Satish Tripathi conveyed heartfelt appreciation to esteemed partners and supporters.

International Women's Day:

In honor of International Women's Day in March 2024, the High School Leadership Program collaborated with Firstsource Pvt. Ltd. to host a virtual session on the Power of Entrepreneurship.

Mr. Sairam. P, Manager, highlighted the pivotal role of women entrepreneurs in global innovation and growth. Students also discussed notable women leaders, enriching the knowledge of their peers.

Quarterly Senior Leadership Team Meeting:

The Quarterly Senior Leadership Meeting convened on March 28, 2024, facilitating collaborative discussions among the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). President & Founder Dr. Satish Tripathi, Senior Global Manager Salome John, and other leaders engaged in insightful deliberations, ensuring strategic alignment and progress.

Prize Distribution at Lamdon Model Senior Secondary School

The Lamdon Model Senior Secondary School prize distribution ceremony in Leh, Ladakh, honored students for their active participation in the High School Leadership Program and achievements in the I-Search Project & Entrepreneurship competitions, fostering motivation and recognition.

Corporate Volunteering

Throughout the first quarter of 2024, our corporate partners, Cognizant and Firstsource, continued their dedicated involvement in the High School Leadership Program, contributing significantly to its ongoing success through corporate volunteering efforts.

Number of enrolled students from our partner schools:

- Lamdon Model Senior Secondary School: 140 Students
- Ramakrishna Mission High School, Vishakapatnam, Andhra Pradesh: 30 Students
- Ramakrishna Mission High School, Sitanagaram, Andhra Pradesh: 16 Students
- N.K.Singh Memorial English Preparatory School, Kathmandu Nepal: 35 Students

List of Sessions (July - September, 2023)

MONTH	TOPIC	RESOURCE PERSON	AFFILIATION
January	Introduction to Stem and Skills to learn for the year 2024	Muthukumar.V.P Associate Director – Artificial Intelligence and Analytics	Firstsource Solutions Limited
January	Cyber Security & Ethical Hacking	Pranav Savla, Founder	Vidyadrishti & Phoenix Digital Media

MONTH	TOPIC	RESOURCE PERSON	AFFILIATION
January	TCS goIT Monthly Challenge – Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure	Salome John, Senior Program Manager, High School Leadership Program	Ek Kadam Aur - Foundation for Education and Health
January	Career Counseling for High School students	R. Rajalakshmi (Alias Raji), Manager – India Controllership Team (Finance)	Cognizant Technology Solutions Limited
February	The Virtual Envelope of the Internet and the TCPIP	Pranav Savla, Founder	Vidyadrishti & Phoenix Digital Media
February	Improvement in Food Resources (Biology)	Jayakumar Sridharan, Deputy General Manager	Cognizant Technology Solutions Limited
February	Quality Education – Sustainable Development 4	Pallavi Kaushik, Program Manager	Ek Kadam Aur - Foundation for Education and Health

MONTH	TOPIC	RESOURCE PERSON	AFFILIATION
February	Phone Cameras explained	Pranav Savla, Founder	Vidyadrishti & Phoenix Digital Media
February	Algebra – Polynomials (Mathematics)	Himabindu.V, Manager	Cognizant Technology Solutions Limited
February	Discover Greens – Part 2	Utkarsh Tiwari & Swaraj Karna, Ambassadors of Change, Nepal	Ek Kadam Aur - Foundation for Education and Health
February	Areas of Interest for a Happy Career and Life	Salome John, Senior Program Manager, High School Leadership Program	Ek Kadam Aur - Foundation for Education and Health
March	Smartphones Explained	Pranav Savla, Founder	Vidyadrishti & Phoenix Digital Media

MONTH	TOPIC	RESOURCE PERSON	AFFILIATION
March	Power of Entrepreneurship (special reference to Women Entrepreneurs)	Sairam P, Manager	Firstsource Solutions Limited
March	Introduction to the Internet of Things (IoT)	Pranav Savla, Founder	Vidyadrishti & Phoenix Digital Media
March	Why do we fall ill?	Poornima Anandan, Architect	Cognizant Technology Solutions Limited
March	Artificial Intelligence and Youth Employment	Salome John, Senior Program Manager, High School Leadership Program	Ek Kadam Aur - Foundation for Education and Health
March	Learning Corporate Communication	Sai Nikkhillesh, Process Leader	Firstsource Solutions Limited

MONTH	TOPIC	RESOURCE PERSON	
March	Role of Failure and Setbacks in fostering Creative Growth and Resilience	Vidya Sathyan, Associate Director - Finance	Cognizant Technology Solutions Limited



The High School Leadership Program classes differ from what we usually learn in school. They taught us important things for everyday life that aren't commonly taught. For example, we learned about health, technology like IoT and quantum computing, and skills like public speaking. We also learned about innovation, entrepreneurship, and career options. We did activities in groups to build confidence and improve public speaking.

At first, I wasn't excited about the classes, but I found them enjoyable and helpful once I joined. These classes taught us important 21st-century skills, like confidence and public speaking.

-Tsering Angmo

Student - Landon Model Senior Secondary School, Leh, Ladakh.



Swami Garishthananda and Swami Jnanapurnanda inaugurating the Educational Studio.

Active Learning Program

Establishment of the Educational Studio:

The College of Education in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, set up the Educational Studio to develop high-quality audiovisual aids for teachers to use in classrooms while implementing Active Learning Strategies.

Inauguration Ceremony:

Swami Garishthananda, Secretary of Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya, and Swami Jnanapurnanda from Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya inaugurated the Educational Studio, marking the official beginning of this essential resource for educational advancement.





NYU cohort visit the children from Arunodaya program in Auriya, Uttar Pradesh.

Nurturing Young Leadership Program

Ambassadors of Change:

During the first quarter of 2024, The Ek Kadam Aur Foundation collaborated with four outstanding high school students who served as "Ambassadors of Change," representing the United States, India, and Nepal. Let's delve into the remarkable projects they spearheaded during their tenure:

Aditi Dey, the Ambassador from the United States, partnered with Pranav Savla, the Ambassador from India, to develop the "Eye to Eye" initiative. This project aims to integrate blind students into visual classrooms through instructional simulations tailored for sighted peers. Additionally, Pranav initiated the Collaborative Creativity Workshop within the High School Leadership Program, focusing on enhancing computer science skills through bi-monthly sessions.

Utkarsh Tiwari and Swaraj Karna, the Ambassadors from Nepal, collaborated on the Micro Greens Project. This initiative involved conducting awareness sessions and engaging students in project-based activities to promote environmental consciousness and sustainability.

The commitment displayed by these Ambassadors extended beyond their projects. Their dedication and passion are a profound source of inspiration, driving impactful initiatives that resonate with Ek Kadam Aur Foundation's vision.



NYU capstone interns with the leadership team of Ek Kadam Aur.

Internships

MIT IAP Internship 2024:

During the first quarter of 2024, we welcomed two interns, Kanna O Pichappan and Brooke L Pulling, for the MIT IAP Internship. They dedicated their efforts to the Arunodaya (Sunrise) for Blind Program, which has been actively engaging for a month. Together, they undertook significant tasks:

- Analyzed the quantitative data of 19 children who completed Phase-1 of the program from Uttar Pradesh.
- Analyzed the qualitative data of these children's baseline, midline, and end-line surveys.
- Developed a manuscript for the International Journal of Inclusive Education.

NYU Capstone Internship: 2023-24:

Our internship program welcomed four interns from New York University: Faisal Alhedaib, Yeji Lee, Rishi Soneja, and Yue Feng.

Here are the key highlights of their contributions during the first quarter:

1. Three interns embarked on a four-day visit to Auraiya District in Uttar Pradesh in January. During their visit, they interacted with program stakeholders, including parents, children, mentors, special educators, and school teachers.
2. With guidance from the Ek Kadam Aur team, the interns meticulously prepared interview schedules for the stakeholders.
3. Upon returning to the university, the interns engaged in preliminary discussions with the Ek Kadam Aur team to interpret the data and responses gathered during their visit. They have since commenced work on the final report, which is expected to be completed in the second quarter of 2024.

**We thank you
for your continued support !**



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