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Introduction

The Sri Aurobindo International Institute of Educational Research (SAIIER) is an umbrella organization that coordinates and develops educational initiatives in Auroville. SAIIER provides regular support to schools, libraries, cultural centers, arts organisations, sports programmes, outreach programmes and other Auroville entities. SAIIER also sponsors diverse activities and research projects in its scope: that of education of the whole person and of research towards perfection of human life on earth.

Sri Aurobindo and The Mother foresaw the need to create a laboratory where human unity could be manifested; that laboratory is Auroville. The agenda set for Auroville by The Mother is based on a deep vision of the aims of human existence, the processes of individual and collective life, and the forces at play that influence our unfolding human story. One of the aims of Auroville is to be a place of unending education and constant progress.

According to The Mother, education should begin at birth and continue throughout one’s life. “Education to be complete must have five principal aspects corresponding to the five principal activities of the human being: the physical, the vital, the mental, the psychic and the spiritual. Usually, these phases of education follow chronologically the growth of the individual; this, however, does not mean that one of them should replace another, but that all must continue, completing one another until the end of his life.” (On Education)

Thus SAIIER has a vast field of work in which to explore, experiment and learn.

The reports compiled here reflect the diversity of the community of Auroville. They describe some of the educational activities and insights gleaned over the course of the year. They are personal and group reflections, and at the same time contributions to a growing body of knowledge from Auroville about education in its many facets.
SAIIER sub-units

A SAIIER sub-unit is an entity which SAIIER is formally accountable for. SAIIER receives grants from the Government of India and allocations from the Auroville City Services budget for dispersal among its sub-units. Representatives of the sub-units interact with the SAIIER administrative staff, who work from the SAIIER building in the Administrative Area of Auroville.

Photos:
Aha! Kindergarten
Transition School
Center for Research in the Performing Arts
The Learning Community
Pitanga Cultural Centre
Auroville Theatre Group
Aha! Kindergarten

Introduction
Aha! Kindergarten is a school for children of 3 to 7 years old. Our objective at Aha! is to develop consciousness and the inner will to grow and progress. Children naturally possess the curiosity to know and learn, and this is to be nurtured intentionally. It is by children's free will that they grow into self-determining individuals, striving consciously towards excellence not only in studies but also physically, emotionally, esthetically and spiritually.

Activities of the year
At Aha! Kindergarten children are in an environment where they can express, explore, interact, discover and develop their own skills and talents through activities throughout the day. It is a space where children experience freedom with responsibility. The main activity is creating a learning atmosphere where each child can explore and experience her or his highest interest. We have created a few corners for e.g. puzzles, Legos, blocks, books, sand and water play, cycling, group games, gardening, painting, and clay work. Children move organically from one activity to another according to their inner interest. We often go for nature walks. To feel the beauty of harmony and togetherness we sing songs and rhymes in English, Tamil, Hindi, Sanskrit, Oriya, and Telugu accompanied by musical instruments like harmonium, tabla, flute, mouth organ, and metallophone.

Outcomes
At Aha! Kindergarten children are encouraged to strengthen their own abilities and talents, discover their own areas of interest and, finally, explore their inner self at their own pace. In response to the environment at school many of our children know how to use the given freedom and they come up with their own ideas of work. For example, in the morning a child wanted to celebrate his mother's birthday, so he make some gifts for his mother. We gave space for the child to materialize his own creative ideas, rather than imposing an activity. Through this approach, children learn to be independent in handling things on their own. Children feel the beauty of working together in group as well as the joy of being with oneself. We have mixed-age groups, which result in bigger children taking care of younger ones. We see prominent progress in the children's physical capacities through cycling, long jump, high jump, tree climbing and running.

Reflections
We believe that the children are progressing over time toward the goals and objectives of the school. We notice that by giving them the right environment, and guidance when it is needed, they learn progressively how to be more independent and take responsibility for their actions. We see that children come up with wonderful work in which they develop their own creativity and ideas. By being able to chose their own activities they develop concentration as well. If a child is interested in what he is doing, he is concentrated.

Another aspect that enriches our approach is the harmony we see building up among children of different ages. They learn how to understand each other's natures and temperaments. The older ones are naturally protective and have a caring attitude towards the younger ones; the whole group builds up together a beautiful sense of cooperation. When there are conflicts they are solved with the support of the facilitators such that the children gradually learn how to understand and respect each others needs. We see that many times they are able to solve their own conflicts as they have a natural sense of fairness.
Future direction

We plan for an extension of the kindergarten building to create more prominent learning corners and to accommodate more children.

Conclusion

The methodology of education used at Aha! demands that a teacher become a student, facilitator and friend, instead of a task manager. At Aha! we aspire for soul-to-soul relations with the children. We aspire to respect individual rhythms of growth, as different parts of the being are gradually woven together, expressing themselves spontaneously in free and living movements.

Aikiyam School

Introduction

The mission of Aikiyam School is to provide an appropriate kindergarten, primary and intermediate education for children from Kuilapalayam and other villages that are geographically connected to Auroville, based on the principles of integral education as defined by the founders of Auroville, the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. The school strives to maintain a creative and joyful atmosphere where the uniqueness of each child is respected and nurtured, and to prepare children for life in a rapidly changing world while maintaining contact with their Tamil cultural heritage.

The school aims to provide a quality bilingual education in Tamil and English, covering all of the standard academic subjects, physical education, and a wide variety of vocational options, giving children a range of choices in the type of education they will pursue when leaving the school. Aikiyam School is an Outreach day-school for more than 250 children, with classes which range from pre-kindergarten to the eighth grade. All tuition, educational supplies, nutritious snacks and mid-day meals are provided free of charge to the students. In April 2008 the school received provisional affiliation for a period of three years from India’s Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and is entitled to issue a recognised school leaving certificate.

Activities of the year

Aikiyam School had 259 children during 2014-2015 academic year. Teachers specify their goals every year before they start the year. Some of the goals teachers expressed this year were:

- (Kindergarten) “I want to do activities that can improve the motor skills and the five senses of my children. I also want to cultivate good social behaviour so the children can learn together.”

- (1st grade) “I want to add more activities so that all my classes will be ‘activity-based’. I also want to read more stories this year so that children can improve their imagination.”

- (4th grade) “This year we decided to change our classroom into an inclusive classroom with the help of the Auroville Teachers’ Center. One of the resource persons of the Teachers’ Center accepted to be our mentor to execute the change.”

- (Special needs) “This year, I would like to simplify all the units that teachers need to teach according to individual students’ abilities. I also decided to have regular meetings with the class teachers to discuss the learning problems of each student, and see how to include them during regular classes.”

- (Vocational training team) “Apart from regular classes, we want to include model-making according to classroom needs.”

In order to achieve these goals, teachers worked hard to finish the syllabus; they also included special activities in order to keep the ‘integral education’ philosophy in
practice. This year different classes enacted 6 plays in English and Tamil. Students also organized a one-day exhibition for the public about what they were learning in school, including science models, ecosystems and craft works. Some other projects of the year were:

1. Land art at Auroville Botanical Gardens
   Children went to create land art with Ishta at the Auroville Botanical Gardens. Ishta guided the children’s discoveries in the creative world using minimal materials and interference, and the results were quite amazing.
   Ishta describes this project, called "NIRMITY": It is an approach to art in Nature using what Nature gives, and also an approach to the vision of our deeper being’s connection with the Divine. Contact with Nature allows the innate qualities of children to remain clear and creative in the way of ‘free progress’. This ephemeral Art develops creativity in the ‘here and now’, avoiding the desire for possession of one’s own creation. The Botanical Gardens and I were delighted to share these moments of joy and creation with Aikiyam school students.

2. Tidying the school campus and Kuilapalayam village
   The school organized a campus and village cleanup project in which more than 150 Aikiyam students participated. The children went around in small groups near the campus and picked up non-biodegradable materials that had been thrown out by people in Kuilappalayam. This waste was then sent to the Auroville Eco Service. This activity was part of the school’s ‘Creating Awareness on Solid Waste Management Programme’.

3. Partnership Story writing
   Professor Jean Eisele from the University of Washington at Bothell in the United States has been mentoring the teachers of Aikiyam School for many years. She has connected teachers in the Seattle area with Aikiyam teachers through various projects. One of these is the ‘Partnership Story Project’. This year, our 4th grade teacher Selvaraj and volunteer teacher Ms. Kaya (German) did the story project together. The 4th grade students from Bothell wrote the first part of a story, and sent it to the fourth grade partner students at Aikiyam, along with illustrations. The Aikiyam students read the story, discussed it in small groups, making sure they understood its meaning, and thought about an ending. Then they completed the story along with their own drawings. The teachers in Bothell compiled and formatted the book and sent a hard copy to each student at Aikiyam.
   For our students the highlights were:
   - Taking photographs of their parents and siblings and writing about their village, family, and daily routine.
   - Each receiving his or her very own copy of the partnership story book, for which they felt much joy and pride.

4. Real and Imagined Ancestors – a writing project
   Kate Strassman, who teaches 3rd grade in the United States, was at Aikiyam School for three weeks in July where she led a writing project called "Real and Imagined Ancestors" with the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade classes.
   The students each chose one of their ancestors from long ago as basis for the project. They did a prewriting exercise, drew their family tree, and gathered facts about the ancestor by interviewing family members. Then the students were taken on a guided visualization in which they met their chosen ancestor. Using what they learned and imagined from these exercises, the students wrote a first draft paragraph about this person. Kate modeled, by giving a personal example, how to take facts and
imaginings and weave them together using sentences that flow in a logical sequence. After the first draft was completed, the students received feedback about their writing from the teacher: a positive point to be proud of, as well as some points that could be made better. Students also read each other's paragraphs at this stage and gave extra comments. With this feedback and with some instruction on fixing common grammar errors, the students wrote a second draft. Then Kate went through each student's paper carefully, editing for grammar, punctuation, spelling, and sequence, from which the students wrote final drafts in their best handwriting.

After the writing was completed, the students created portraits of their ancestors. The students looked at famous portraits by artists like Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, Frida Kahlo, and David Hockney. They learned how to draw proportionate faces and also how to layer many colors of oil pastel to create realistic skin tones. The teachers and students talked about how the background of a portrait can tell the story of a person, inspiring many students to include Tamil landscapes in their portraits.

These 'real-imagined' ancestors were very meaningful for the students, connecting them with their own family history. At the end of the project, children had an exciting showcase of all the work. It was a gorgeous and colorful show, full of vitality! Kate, the students and the school were truly proud of all the students at Aikiyam who completed this project.

5. Language education through plays

Our long time Aurovilian teacher Simone has been helping our younger-grade language teachers. She observes classes and helps teachers by suggesting appropriate teaching tools and skills that they can use. She also teaches language through plays. Simone explains her work:

*I use acting stories as a tool for language education. Stories, when told with the support of illustrations, are a wonderful way to captivate the attention of young students. They make it possible to communicate meaning through context in a direct, intuitive way, similar to the way language is acquired by children in their natural environment. They facilitate the introduction of new, simple vocabulary and idiomatic expressions. As the story is being told, I ask the students to repeat the dialogs of the different characters in groups and individually, as well as to translate them in their own language to ensure that the meaning is well understood. Translation helps build a strong bridge between languages. It reinforces vocabulary in the child's language that may be poorly developed. It stimulates a part of the brain which might not have been used before in such a way; 'learning by heart' without necessarily understanding seems to be the more traditional method. Fun is an important and indispensable ingredient in this exercise.*

*For young children, I deliberately choose stories with repetitions. These help engrave language in the memory. "Gruffalo" is full of repetitions, is funny, and captivates the attention of students, allowing them to get familiar with simple expressions and to gain confidence.*

Through this method English becomes closer, more familiar, and accessible in a playful manner. Theater also gives children experience with the technical aspects of performance, such as stage direction, props, and costumes. In the context of our school where English is a second language, repeated exposure to well articulated language is beneficial particularly for those who have difficulties in expressing themselves in English. Improvement in students' writing skills often follows a performance.

Along with these benefits, theater is a way for children to understand that work and cooperation are measures of success. The joy that follows the performance, the feeling of success and achievement give the students a wonderful reward for the efforts they have made.
6. Teacher training

This year, Aikiyam teachers participated in several trainings and workshops given by Auroville’s visiting teacher trainers:

- Professor Jean Eisele gave a workshop on creative story writing, particularly ‘partnership stories’. The workshop resulted in “A Seed for a Tree”, a story created by Aikiyam teachers in partnership with candidates of the education programme at the University of Washington, Bothell.
- Kate Strassman, who led the ‘Real and Imagined Ancestors’ project described above, gave a weekend workshop on getting children to write imaginary and real stories.
- Professor Heidi Watts gave weekly classes for two months, for teachers of higher grades, on how to practice principles of education in classrooms. She also led a course comparing Auroville educational practices with Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) educational principles.
- Marion Meakin gave weekly training sessions on phonics for teachers of younger grades. This year Aikiyam teachers started using three levels of phonics books, from lower kindergarten through 3rd grade. In addition to her regular classes for the teachers, Marion observed teachers’ lessons in their classrooms and helped them with necessary materials and training.

Reflections

Every year Aikiyam School makes some progress. This year, the school has introduced new phonics course in younger grades. It was another wonderful year. Children were able do all the activities planned by the teachers. The highlight of the year was the solid waste awareness programme organized by WasteLess, a project of Auroville.

Future direction

For next year, the school wants to strengthen its Second Language programme. Teachers will be trained with new methods and materials to teach English well, from the lower grades onwards.

Conclusion

The classes and activities the children participate in at Aikiyam help them to develop the ability to face different situations. Overall the children learn their lessons well and with good understanding.

---

**Aranya**

**Introduction**

Aranya is a reforestation site and wilderness preserve that today includes more than 80 acres of indigenous forest. The forest is a living gene bank of threatened and endangered species of plants and trees, many of which are valuable for their medicinal properties. Birds, mammals and butterflies have taken up residence in the forest, which forms a complete and rich ecosystem.

**Activities of the year**

This year Aranya continued conducting awareness programs for school students, Self-Help Groups and panchayats, with a focus on learning about the landscapes of seashores and forests. Visiting students and teachers participated in preparing lists of plants and trees they knew which are found in the two habitats.

A special project this year was research into the five Sangam Tamil landscapes. We
prepared a list of the original plants and trees that were found these landscapes, and created materials that communicate about the Sangam landscapes for students, teachers and self-help groups.

We continued growing the plant nursery in which we propagate rare species, and continued with the reforestation work: planting suitable species along the bunds, foreshore, terrain and slopes of Aranya land.

**Outcomes**

Over 2500 children visited Aranya and participated in our programs this year.

We created posters and booklets about the five Sangam Tamil landscapes, which can be used as resources in future programs.

**Reflections**

We face a constant demand for educational multimedia material, such as DVDs and posters, from teachers, NGOs, elected Panchayat leaders, and government staff.

**Conclusion**

Aranya offers a unique experience for children to learn from nature and to visit firsthand a recovering, growing forest.

---

**Arka**

**Introduction**

Arka is a residential centre with community focus that seeks to create an holistic environment for aging Aurovilians. It aims to help seniors sustain a healthy, balanced and harmonious lifestyle as well as to provide a space and atmosphere for one’s inner work.

**Activities of the year**

Arka continued to offer therapies and activities through its Wellness Centre and community spaces. Wellness Centre offerings included acupuncture, Ayurvedic treatments, Body Logic massage, Cranio-sacral therapy, graphology, diet programs, face massage, hairdressing, hypnotherapy and chakras healing, manicure and pedicure, psycho-spiritual work, Reiki with foot reflexology, tarot for self-knowledge, and Yogic Healing massage. Regular activities and classes included: Acro Yoga, body awareness, dance therapy, hatha yoga, health seminars, Qi Gong, and Vocal Yoga.

Arka’s internet browsing centre continued offering its service to the wider Auroville community, and the Arka library and other spaces hosted several art exhibitions open to the public.

Maria Grazia and Rama continued to support the Art & Craft Atelier this year and its explorations of art as therapy. The Atelier is meant to be a place where senior people can come and interact through pleasant and creative work, in an ambiance of tranquility, together with people of different ages.

**Reflections**

The activities in Arka have been quite successful. Aurovilians of all ages have benefited widely, and the elder population has participated with interest in certain types of therapies and activities.

The recovery of the people in need of assistance in the convalescence rooms of Arka has been good and the rooms have been fully used by different people in need during the year.

The cooperation between Arka and the Auroville Health Service is very good; we
follow the advice of the therapists that work with the Health Service and also provide them with space for special treatments.

**Future direction**

We would like to develop the Art & Craft Atelier to a larger scale, creating a working space open to all who would like to participate in producing crafts. We would like to give seminars and workshops on different art and craft techniques including patchwork, embroidery, quilting, silk and cotton painting, and making flowers from recycled plastic (as exhibited in March 2015).

We always try to better link the elderly population with the rest of the Auroville community, by finding new possibilities according to the needs they express.

**Conclusion**

Health and wellness are integral; treating people medically is not always the proper or only solution to physical problems. Activities can help in the process of healing, and integrating people of different ages can prevent the loneliness that often comes with old age. The atmosphere of a place can help people to maintain a positive, healthy attitude towards life.

---

**Arulvazhi Education Centre**

**Introduction**

Arulvazhi means in Tamil "Way of Grace". This Education Centre, situated near the Promesse Community of Auroville, caters to the educational and cultural needs of children aged 3 to 18 of the neighboring village, in the light of the teachings of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. Over the years Arulvazhi expanded its scope to include women's education and also to serve as a platform for interaction with delegates from different parts of Tamilnadu and Auroville. Its aim is to provide value-based education in an atmosphere of simplicity, beauty, joy and harmony, wherein children develop naturally. Arulvazhi has a crèche and kindergarten on campus; all other groups go to outside institutions for their studies.

**Activities of the year**

Arulvazhi has seven areas of activities:

1. Crèche and kindergarten group, where importance is given to the development and use of the sense organs, the cultivation of aesthetic sense, the capacity to choose what is beautiful, simple, healthy and pure. (12 children)
2. Primary school group, with activities of physical exercise daily, stories, songs, and drawing classes in the evenings. (32 children)
3. Computer group, held in the evenings. (8 children)
4. Yoga asana group, held in the mornings. (35 children)
5. Adolescent girls group, held in the evenings and focusing on asanas, cultural expression, health education, and social awareness, particularly in relation to gender problems. (10 children)
6. Games and sports group, held in the evenings. (10 children)
7. Study of Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* in Tamil, as well as cultural education thorough *slokas* and stories, held on Saturday evenings.

Highlights of the year included:

- An educational tour to Maharishi Vethathri Yoga Centre was organized in May 2014, in which 15 students, 3 captains, and one yoga teacher took part. There the
students fine-tuned their knowledge of yoga. They also visited Kodaikanal and saw the flower show, and visited Palani Hills.

- Students gave yoga *asana* demonstrations at several events:
  - The Morattandi village temple festival
  - Seminars held in November 2014 and March 2015
  - Auroville’s sports festival held at the New Creation sportsground
  - The Sahitya Academy childrens’ writers’ workshop held at Ilaingnarkal school
  - The inauguration of Morattandi Community Centre, sponsored by the Auroville Foundation

- Festivals like Navarathri, Deepavali, Pongal, Christmas and New Year days were celebrated bringing out their inner significance. Independence Day, Sri Aurobindo’s birthday, and Republic Day were celebrated. On Sri Aurobindo’s birthday, the children gave a cultural demonstration in Bharat Nivas after the hoisting of the flag.

- Children were taken to the Matrimandir inner chamber twice, and to Sri Aurobindo’s room and the Mother’s room, to experience the special atmosphere.

- The students and teachers were invited by the Cuddalore, Chingleput, and Trichy Sri Aurobindo Centres where they gave demonstrations and had useful interactive sessions.

- Students performed a short Telugu drama during the celebration for Saint Thyagaraja Aradhana in Bharat Nivas on February 1st 2015.

- The teachers and students participated in various Auroville birthday week celebrations, and in the annual science exhibition held in New Creation.

- In May 2014, a summer camp was held for about 50 children over 20 days.

**Outcomes**

The beneficiaries of our programmes are children from the village, who go to outside schools, where they are not exposed to the idea of Human Unity, let alone the experience of Human Unity in practical life. These children are given the experience of the best of Auroville, while staying connected to their roots. The impacts on them and improvements in terms of human experience become quite visible when relatives and friends visit them from other rural areas.

Among the Kindergarten children, two who were not speaking at all began to speak three months after joining the classes; their parents were very elated with this progress.

We see a ripple effect among the peer groups of participating children, which spreads what they learn through our centre to other children.

**Reflections**

In his “Renaissance in India”, Sri Aurobindo states: *The method of India is to discover the spirit within and the higher intensities of the superior powers and to dominate life in one way or another so as to make it responsive to and expressive of the spirit and in that way increase the power of life. Its tendency with the intellect, will, ethical, aesthetic and emotional being is to sound indeed their normal mental possibilities, but also to upraise them towards the greater light and power of their own highest intuitions.*

This objective is to be gained following the guidelines of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo on education: “*To love to learn is the most precious gift that one can make a child, to learn always and everywhere*”; “*...the finest present one can give the child would be teach him to know himself and to master himself*”.

**Future direction**

Our goal is to perfect more and more our methods.
Aurofilm

Introduction

The aim of Aurofilm is to use Cinema as a tool for education and artistic and creative research. By organizing regular screenings of high quality films and producing several short films during the year, we aim to offer the Auroville community a way to develop taste, discernment and openness.

Aurofilm is a team of three Aurovilians: Gérard Carabin, Surya C. Rimaux, and Susana Cabra. In addition to providing regular film screenings, we organize at least one thematic film festival per year, and are involved with other film-related activities such as producing films and inviting relevant personalities for educational and cultural work.

Activities of the year

Our work involves finding out which suitable films are available in India that could be borrowed and/or rented for the weekly screenings we present at the Sri Aurobindo Auditorium. We find or renew contact with various persons in the film industry and in institutions, particularly certain Indian organizations and individuals. These are doing research, production, promotion and preservation of films from India and the world and their knowledge is of help to us. We then screen the films which involves setting up the right equipment for the film’s format, as well as a mixing table and amplifier to connect the speakers on stage.

This year we also screened a good number of documentaries from different countries. We had Satyajit Ray’s Rabindranath Tagore made in 1961, a beautiful three-film series by BBC on the river Ganges, a feature film on Hatha Yoga with the four main Indian masters, and a film about Piotr Anderszewski, a young pianist from Poland. We hosted two special screenings: a selection of movies from the “Festival of Independent Italian Films”, in collaboration with the Italian Pavilion group of Auroville, and an evening of the “Environment & Wildlife Film Festival” in collaboration with CMS Vatavaran, New Delhi and Auroville’s Cinema Paradiso. We also provided projection settings for Manoj Pavitran and Hemant Shekar’s new documentary on Sri Aurobindo’s Yoga.

One highlight of the year was collaborating with renowned Australian musicians Kim Cunio and Heather Lee, who have been coming to Auroville for musical research work. They offered to perform musical accompaniment to the silent film “The Adventure of Prince Ahmed”, a 1926 German animated film directed by Lotte Reiniger and based on “The One Thousand and One Nights”. The musicians had been commissioned in Sydney to write a score for the film, which they have performed for sold-out houses in Australia. Aurofilm organized this film show and music performance in the Auditorium. In light of the great response to this event, the musicians offered to create a second music accompaniment to another silent film of Aurofilm’s choice. We selected “Prapancha Pash” (A Throw of Dice), a film based on an episode of the Mahabharat, made in 1929 by Frank Oz and Himansu Ray. The musicians came up with an original score which includes beautiful Indian songs and melodies played in their own style.

In March and April 2014, we documented the work of Aurovillian artists Véronique and Michel Nicolet and Eva, and their respective exhibitions held in the Centre d’Art of Citadines. We also made short films on both events involving Dr. Kim Cunio and Heather Lee. As usual, we also made a short documentary about our annual Panorama of Contemporary Indian Cinema film festival (see report p. 142).

During the year we met and exchanged with a few filmmakers, students and others involved with film-making and film production. These included Mr. Girish Kasaravalli, P. Sheshadri, Vishal Prabhu, and Jean-Marc Boisseau. We were also interviewed by two film teams: an Indian film crew (for a documentary on the French Diaspora in India), and the team of Heidrun Hozfeind and Christoph Draeger.
Outcomes
The audience for our weekly projections at the Sri Aurobindo Auditorium is composed mainly of Aurovillian adults, guests of Auroville, volunteers, students and trainees. For these regular film shows we had an average of 275 people of mixed nationalities and cultures. This year we screened a total of 59 films.

Reflections
We are happy to see a good audience coming to these weekly film screenings. As a matter of fact, with the availability of several other screening facilities in Auroville, both public and private, we note that the audience always likes to attend Aurofilm’s programs at the Auditorium, be it for the quality of the venue or the offered programs, or for both. We also notice that even the more ‘difficult’ films that are selected (classics, experimental, about a particular culture or topic) do attract a sufficient number of people. We believe this is due to the regularity and consistency we have put into this activity over the last three decades. However, during the “guest season” (from December to the end of February), overlap with other events does affect the audience turnout. Better coordination between the various providers would help in this regard.

Last summer we did not take a break as we sometimes do, but continued regular screenings in May and June. There was a sufficient audience for these, and people were grateful to have a comfortable place like the Sri Aurobindo Auditorium in the midst of the summer heat!

Future direction
Aurofilm will carry on with these activities into the future, Cinema being an art and the action of projecting its final product, on a big screen for an eager audience, being worthwhile. We will continue with a will to improve whatever can be improved, such as the film selection, schedule, and communications.

Conclusion
Screening of classics from around the world and from Indian cinema is a must for inspiration and education. We want to expose the public to these stimulating works of art that open up new perspectives onto the world at large and at the same time convey a sense of quality and creativity. Of all art forms, Cinema comes closest to the flow and stay of life. Cinema is a natural rallying-point for various human experiences and expertise.

Aurohamsadhwani Art Centre
Introduction
Aurohamsadhwani Art Centre offers Indian classical music and dance lessons to children and adults. We believe that music and dance can transcend the barriers of any religious or cultural differences between people, embracing all differences within. Classical music and dance have been used for ages in India and elsewhere as a medium of worship and to enhance one’s connection with the Divine. Learning classical music and dance requires concentration, commitment and self-discipline. Through Aurohamsadhwani people come together to concentrate on these arts.

Activities of the year
Aurohamsadhwani offers five different classes, taught by professional teachers. The students are children and adults from Auroville and the surrounding villages. Students are of ages 4 to 50 years and include boys, girls and women. Classes are held in the Last...
School Heritage building.
The classes offered this year were:
- Veena class – Saturday and Sunday from 1 to 5pm (15 students)
- Bharat Natyam class – Saturday and Sunday from 1 to 5pm (25 students)
- Vocal class – Saturday and Sunday from 1 to 5pm (8 students)
- Keyboard class - Monday, Thursday, and Friday from 6.30 to 9.30pm (13 students)
- Guitar class - Monday, Thursday, and Friday from 6.30pm to 9.30pm (5 students)

Outcomes
This year a total of 61 students participated in our programs. The students performed Veena, Bharat Natayam and Vocal music in several temples and at the Arts & Science College in Tindivanam, as well as in Auroville. Each student gave a solo performance in Veena and Vocals.

Every year our students attend a competition conducted by few music centres in Puducerry, Chennai and Madurai. This year our students received First prize, Second prize and Outstanding awards in Veena. Four students performed an arangetram (debut performance after completion of training) in Bharata Natyam. One student graduated through the last level in keyboard. This year five Veena students, five Vocal music students and four Keyboard students reached their next levels.

Reflections
Each year the students are learning new lessons, and practice also helps the new students. Students are the first beneficiaries of learning classical music, then the public.

Future direction
The teachers are planning to teach at higher levels. Through practice we hope to get a few students to do an Arangetram next year. Already one student is able to teach new students, and in the future more of the experienced students may teach new ones.

Conclusion
This type of programme offers an opportunity to the Auroville and village students who are not able to join such classes in the city. Doing a single music class is always very expensive; when we do it in groups the cost is less since it is shared by many students. Learning music together and understanding each other, helping each other, brings unity among the members of the group.

Auroville Botanical Gardens

Introduction
Environmental education in India – a land of ecological, bio-geographical, cultural and social diversity – requires efforts that are rooted in the local context. The Auroville Botanical Gardens offers environmental education programs for children and adults that focus on the forests indigenous to the region. Government schools provide the largest organized base for environmental education and action; self-help groups and others also benefit from learning about these issues.

Activities of the year
Our educational content for students emphasizes the conservation of the tropical dry evergreen forest, wildlife protection, and waste-free lifestyles. We educate students about their interdependence with the environment through visits, demonstrations and activities. Our intention is to help the students understand the local ecosystem and to
develop their ability to identify and analyze information relating to environmental problems.

This year 3366 students from 102 schools visited the Botanical Gardens. During these visits we introduce indigenous flora and fauna, identify native tree species, and discuss about the impacts of ecosystem destruction and need to protect wildlife.

The Botanical Gardens also hosts awareness camps with the aim of enthusing students to take measures to safeguard the environment. These programs enhance attitudes, values and skills. This year three camps were organized: Sky Watch (60 participants), Summer Camp (37 participants), and NSS Camp (38 participants).

In addition, some special programs were organized this year including celebrations of important environmental days and cycle rallies for environmental awareness.

Though our focus is mostly on children, we also organize educational programs for teachers and self-help group members. This year 244 teachers from 15 schools participated in our “Eco teacher training” programs. The purpose of these is to educate teachers about what they can do at the individual and community level to maintain a sustainable environment, as well as how they can incorporate environmental education in academics.

This year 491 members of 13 self-help groups took part in the exposure visits. Most of these participants are from rural and agrarian communities, so their programs focused on agriculture-related activities and waste management in daily life.

**Outcomes**

The Botanical Gardens environmental education team visited some of the schools of students who had participated. We noticed that the exposure visits had had a positive impact on students’ attitudes and awareness, resulting in student initiatives such as planting local plants in their villages and organizing clean-ups of public places.

The teacher training programs received a overwhelmingly positive response. Several participating teachers on their own initiative organized tree planting programs and herbal gardens at their schools.

Following the self-help group visits, many members started their own vermicomposting units, set up home gardens, started using food waste as garden compost, and started segregating household wastes.

**Reflections**

There are many challenges for environmental educators in India. Reaching out to large numbers of people in a cost-effective way is one of the main challenges we face. We would like to extend our programs beyond Auroville and its bioregion, but face financial limitations in doing this.

**Future direction**

We are planning to bring in more students from various schools, virtually a school per day, and increase the number of visitors to the gardens. We get regular calls from schools of various districts requesting to take part in our education programs.

We are also planning to form eco clubs in villages, and help motivate the students to undertake activities including rainwater harvesting, plastic-free village campaigns, and the planting of indigenous trees. We plan to launch an awareness campaign through screening videos and staging street dramas in the villages.

**Conclusion**

The programs run by the Botanical Gardens motivate students towards an understanding of the environmental problems of the day, and involve them in efforts for environmental preservation. The programs result in initiatives and practices that children and adults adopt into their lives. Every individual can do something, no matter
how small or insignificant it may seem, to care for the environment. This is something we will continue to communicate in the coming years.

Auroville Budokan

Introduction

Auroville Budokan is the new name of Auroville’s Aikido school that has been running for many years. Aikido is known as a spiritual martial art as it emphasizes self-discipline and mastery of the self. Aikido not only develops a combative stance, it is also a path through a martial art form that teaches how to develop awareness and consciousness in all levels of the being.

Activities of the year

Classes were imparted daily to about 50 students of ages 7 to 64 years. The classes were conducted at Pitanga like in all preceding years. The Aikido teachers are Surya, N. Murugan and Cristo.

We had the visit in March of a Door Darshan television crew who produced a half-hour documentary on our training, and this was broadcast nationally.

Progress of students is evaluated yearly during the concluding sessions of the workshop conducted by of our Master Teacher from France, André Palméri. Grades are attributed after passage of an examination during which the knowledge of various techniques is evaluated. The examiners look also at the students’ attitude and psychological profile. Grades vary from 6th kyu (beginners) to 1st kyu, then from shodan (Black Belt or 1st dan) to 6th dan. There is no notion of competition in Aikido. The exams are not compulsory but are sought after by students who want to get their progress estimated.

Reflections

This year, emphasis was on going back to basics. There are about 10 basics techniques that need to be mastered in order to make any progress. This year these bases were dealt with in great detail. We have a goal to probe who among the older students have the stuff to become future teachers.

Future direction

During the year 2015-2016 the opening of the new Auroville Budokan building at Dehashakti is expected to see an increase in the number of students that join this activity. Before its opening we were bound by limited access to a classroom at Pitanga that provided insufficient timing for training.

The television crew will return for the inauguration of the Dojo in July. We already receiving inquiries from Pondicherry, Chennai and Bangalore. We are also interested in bringing the knowledge of Aikido to youth from our neighboring villages. More about this next year!

Auroville Nature Camp

Introduction

Auroville Nature Camp brings together the children of Auroville and those of its surrounding villages for a collective experience of nature in the forest of Kavunji near Kodaikanal. Each camp offers a range of experiences designed to introduce the children
to the flora and fauna of the area, to increase their environmental awareness, to awaken the spirit of adventure through treks and climbs, and to deepen their relation to and appreciation of nature. In the simple rustic camp setting children learn to live together in a group and to care for each other and the environment. Everyone, including students, teachers and other adults, works together to create the camp and to maintain a harmonious atmosphere. In short, Auroville Nature Camp aims to foster increased communication, cooperation, and connection amongst a diverse group of students and adults while simultaneously connecting with and learning about the environment.

Activities of the year

Throughout the month of May 2015, three Nature Camps were held in Kavunji, just outside of Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu. 30 students participated in the first camp, 33 were in the second camp and 29 were in the third camp. Both Auroville and Outreach Schools were represented, including Aikiyam School (10 students), Udavi School (10), Transition School (41), The Learning Community (6), Future School (3), New Era Secondary School (5), Last School (5), Deepanam School (6), Pondicherry (2), home-schooling (1), and Child Development (2).

In addition, 10 Auroville and Outreach teachers attended Auroville Nature Camps and were supported financially by funds from SAIIER.

Reflections

Despite a skeletal Auroville Nature Camp team, we again executed another successful summer with three full camps (unlike 2014 with only two camps). While in 2014, we hosted 57 students, this year we had 92 in total, which is a tremendous increase! In addition, with the support of SAIIER and others, we have begun work to complete the infrastructure of the camp.

We would like to access other teaching and outdoor leadership resources within Auroville to further enhance the educational outcomes of Auroville Nature Camp.

Future direction

Goals for the coming year include completing the infrastructure of the camp and working to fundraise further toward this goal.

Conclusion

This year Auroville Nature Camp exposed 92 students and 10 teachers to the wonders of nature and helped them develop skills for living and working outdoors. While these students were the direct beneficiaries, indirectly, their experience in and appreciation for nature will hopefully manifest itself in the Auroville bioregion in the future through nature conservation efforts.

Auroville Pre-Crèche

Introduction

The Auroville Pre-Crèche offers the small kids of Auroville a safe and harmonious atmosphere for being, exploring and learning. We have a baby group for the youngest children, 6 months to 1 ½ years old, and a toddler group for children who start the school year at 1 ½ to 2 ½ years old. The parents can find here a supportive place to meet and share their experience raising children.
Activities of the year

This year about 30 babies and their parents participated in the babies group, and 24 kids regularly attended the toddlers group. The school has 5 Aurovilian teachers, 1 part-time volunteer and 1 temporary helper, as well 3 workers for campus maintenance.

1. Babies group

At the babies group parents bring their babies and stay with them. We have one teacher, two rooms and a separate playground available for them two mornings a week. The number of participating kids varies, as not all of them come regularly.

The baby team is essential for the kids as well for the parents. We observe that the environment is enriching and supportive for the babies, who experience the collective atmosphere, and who gradually learn to increase the distance from their parents, to mingle, interact and share. The babies gently learn good habits like washing hands before snack, putting things back, keeping inside toys inside and outside toys outside, and sitting in a circle for some singing or activity.

Here we put a lot of effort into the interaction not only with children, but with their parents too. Our work with parents is important and can be delicate and hard. We try to listen to the parents and suggest positive lines of bringing up children. Parents happily observe the changes in their children. Some parents are very happy to come to the Pre-Crèche, to share about education and feel the community life, while making new friends – especially those who are living more isolated or far away.

2. Toddlers group

Children of the toddlers’ group come every morning and stay without parents. Our focus of work at the Pre-Crèche is mainly with this age group. We take great care to help the children settle in gently, feel safe and cared for, get used to the team and the place, and gradually learn to be separated, in as much as possible harmonious way, from their parents.

Our intention is to offer them possibilities for stimulation of all the different aspects of their personality. We focus on physical expansion and balance, fine motor skills, senses and free play. Due to their tender age, we try to keep a good balance between free play and organized activities, offering a flexible structure but also following and channeling their interest and the flows of energy. We provide time and space for them to choose by themselves their area of interest and to explore and understand themselves and each other. They are encouraged to learn to follow some basic discipline and simple rules. We try to nurture their independence, their active involvement in their play, and their interaction with each other.

One essential part of our daily routine is the circle time. We start with a moment of silence, followed by action songs in three languages with body movements, and end again with quietness, to prepare for the following snack time. This activity is a challenge and we go for it gradually, but we are happy to observe the progress the children make over the course of the year.

Walks to the nearby Matrimandir are really beneficial for quieting the class. This year we also started using one fascinating tool, Tibetan singing bowls, which bring beauty and charm to the atmosphere.

At this age kids change very fast, and the one-year age spread in the class demands that we offer different stimulation for the younger and older kids. We also change and adapt the activities throughout the year to keep pace with the growing kids.

Outcomes

Gradually the kids bloom joyfully and make great progress. The babies group is of great help in preparing the children for the next year - the first year of school, without
parents. The teacher puts a lot of energy in preparing the kids to acquire simple rules and good habits.

The toddlers group sees great changes in the kids over the course of the year. The first term sees adaptation, feeling good with each other, developing a sense of security, potty training, and acquiring simple rules and habits. Toward the end of the year we have more collective games and activities which stimulate the kids’ growing interest and interaction with each other.

**Reflections**

The most important aspect of our work remains the atmosphere we create for the kids, and so we focus a lot on the teachers’ work. At this age the kids are most receptive to influences, so we take care to work constantly on ourselves and on our relations in the team. Our primary care is that we ourselves grow more centered, loving, vigilant and responsive to the needs of the situation while being with the kids.

It is very important for us to give space for the kids to develop concentration and focus. As we are in one big group, we can face difficulties with the children’s excitement and with holding concentration during activities, as well as with quietness during meal times. In our new building we have more rooms and spaces, so this year we experimented with regularly separating the team into smaller groups for different activities.

Every year we need to find two new volunteers to help the team. As volunteers come and go, it is disappointing to lose them every year after the hard work of training them.

**Future direction**

With the increasing population of Auroville and the fact that we accommodate most of the Auroville kids of this age group, the school needs one more full-time teacher. Our budget has always been very tight, but we are happy with what we have created and with what we have achieved in two years at our new site and new building. We still need to create quite some facilities like more structures and shade at both playgrounds, a parking shade, a store room, a dining space at the babies’ side, two small swimming pools, and to make some adjustments in the building for safe passage during heavy rains. More generally, we keep our objective for continuous improvement.

**Conclusion**

Auroville Pre-Crèche is on a never-ending process of evolution as different teachers and parents contribute and share their various sensibilities and concerns. Our growth since the beginning has been very much according to the needs and the attitude expressed by the community for childcare, and with the aspiration to be in tune with what Mother has said about bringing up children. In the process of our individual progress as teachers we keep discovering ways to improve our organization and the way we are with ourselves, with each other, with parents and with kids.

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**Auroville Sports Resource Centre**

**Introduction**

The Auroville Sports Resource Centre (AVSRC) initiates, promotes and conducts sports and cultural activities in Auroville and its bioregion.

**Activities of the year**

In the period between April 2014 and March 2015 the Sports Resource Centre facilitated the following activities:
a) Cricket Tournament, for clubs in Auroville and the surrounding villages
b) Badminton Tournament, for clubs in Auroville and the surrounding villages
c) Volleyball Tournament, for clubs in Auroville and the surrounding villages
d) Basketball Tournament during Auroville’s birthday week, open to all
e) Table Tennis Tournament, open to all
f) Sports Festival in March 2014, open to all
g) Sports Festival in March 2015, for women and children
h) Support for AV Kabaddi Club to attend Kabaddi Tournaments in Puducherry State
i) Completion of an all-weather basketball court and open-air stadium
j) Visit to the Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu and its Member Secretary, Shri Shambhu Kalloliker, IAS, in Chennai
k) Visit to the proposed site for an indoor stadium and track (facilities for the Auroville bioregion)

Outcomes

The sports and cultural activities were given a vigorous boost from all the tournaments and especially the two Sports Festivals in March 2014 and 2015, which united the youth from Auroville and the surrounding villages. Short videos were produced about each event.

Promising athletes were identified through the tournaments, and hopefully some will be sponsored through schemes of the Tamil Nadu State Government and Central Government.

Participants of the tournaments were awarded certificates of participation, with prizes for winners and runners-up. Activities of the AVSRC supported the multipurpose play-fields in Auroville and the villages, including financial encouragement for infrastructure and sports-goods.

Reflections

These sports activities induce goodwill and companionship while encouraging kids and adolescents to build up physical strength, endurance and abilities. The mingling of youths from the surrounding region with the international youths of Auroville promote integration and an aspiration for fraternity that transcends borders of race, religion and heritage.

Future direction

We are working toward building an indoor stadium under a Tamil Nadu State scheme. We have laid the foundation for infrastructure under the Urban Sports Infrastructure Scheme of the Ministry of Sports, as part of a three-year program culminating in the 50th Anniversary Celebration of Auroville, February 2018.

Conclusion

The interdisciplinary activities for the youths of Auroville and its bioregion in the fields of education, culture, sports, skill-development and adventure can be strengthened. AVSRC is taking active part in this, and is growing a fraternal sports culture shared through Auroville and its bioregion.

Auroville Theatre Group

Introduction

The Auroville Theatre Group, founded in 1991, aims to provide Aurovilian actors, technicians, and creative talent with the opportunity to work on meaningful, challenging
and thought-provoking work from around the world.

Activities of the year
This year the Auroville Theatre Group's big production was *The Merchant of Venice*, one of William Shakespeare’s great comedies. It has within it themes of great richness and depth, including parental responsibilities, the attitudes of children towards their parents, discrimination against minorities, friendship, and marriage, which we wanted to share with our audience in a traditional setting and with traditional costumes. We hoped that the mixture of Aurovillian actors and visiting artists would let both groups learn together, work together and inspire each other.

*The Merchant of Venice* was performed on January 21, 22 and 23, 2015 at the Visitor’s Centre in Auroville. Jill was the director. A cast of fifteen people worked for five months (September through January), rehearsing at the CRIPA rehearsal hall four times a week, and then at the Visitor’s Centre for the final week. The cast consisted of Aurovilians and invited artists from India, plus costume designers and light and sound crews.

Outcomes
Our three performances at the Visitor’s Centre were the result of our intensive, five-month process. We hope that the audience of over 300 people, and the whole cast and crew, have benefitted and been enriched from the experience. We are working on editing a video of the event.

Reflections
Each year we grow in skills, reputation, and enthusiasm, sharing our theatre work with invited artists who come to play with us from within India as well as from abroad. As a result, many Indian actors and designers are now asking if they can work with us. We always challenge ourselves to work in unusual spaces and this year we chose the Visitor’s Centre.

Future direction
Next year we will create a dance and theatre piece based on *The Glass Menagerie*, a well known play by American playwright Tennessee Williams. We will invite actors from Auroville as well as guest artists from India to participate.

Conclusion
Auroville is, to a degree, a hub of performing arts in India. In music, dance and theatre, we are reaching out to invite young as well as known artists to come and work with us. So far we have been happy to collaborate with theatre artists from Pune, Bangalore, Mumbai, and Delhi. It has been a very enriching experience.

Centre for Research in the Performing Arts (CRIPA)

Introduction
The aims of CRIPA are:
- To offer a space for the development of the performing arts in Auroville through classes, workshops and performances.
- To enrich Auroville’s cultural life through theatre, music, dance and the visual arts.
- To enhance the consciousness of our audience through the performing arts.
- To increase inter-cultural understanding through the performing arts.
- To offer the ground for a cross-disciplinary exploration of the performing arts.
Activities of the year
CRIPA offers classes, workshops and a rehearsal cum performance space for performing arts, which includes music, dance and theatre. These activities are led by Auroville artists and teachers as well as those coming from outside Auroville. We welcome choreographers, directors, singers, actors, musicians, and composers from India and abroad. Students can sign up for regular classes, attend a weekend workshop, or as audience members enjoy a performance at CRIPA. Three of the main activities at CRIPA are the Auroville Choir, the Youth Choir and the Auroville Theatre Group.

The Auroville Choir consists of 53 singers of 15 different nationalities, in the age group of 17 to 70 years. The Auroville Choir meets regularly twice a week and performs two or three times each year, in Auroville and occasionally in Puducherry. This season we presented a program on Romantic and Contemporary classical music, including 3 pieces composed by a young Aurovilian composer. This year we also performed in the Sir Muthu Venkata Subbu Rao Concert Hall in Chennai, as the opening show for the festival “What is Auroville?” held in Chennai during the second week of March 2015. Articles and photos about the show were published in The Hindu, Indian Express, Chennai Online, etc.

The Youth Choir consists of 30 singers of 10 different nationalities, in the age group of 10 to 17 years. The Auroville Youth Choir meets once a week for rehearsals and performs 1 or 2 times a year in Auroville. This year the Youth Choir participated in the concert in Chennai together with the adult choir.

Outcomes
More than 500 children and adults use CRIPA regularly for classes, workshops, performances and rehearsals. Our performances are also very well attended.

Reflections
CRIPA has been very busy this year with rehearsals, dance workshops, performances, and ongoing classes. We are very pleased that CRIPA has become a valued addition to Auroville’s performing arts scene.

Choir members have the opportunity to learn about singing and music making, and can develop their voices and the ability to sing in tune with other harmonies. Choir singing also brings many different types of benefits to the singers: it tones and stimulates the heart and the breath, it releases endorphins, brings joy and healthy fun, balancing the emotional and mental planes of the being. While it is a big challenge to work with a group of people from many different cultures and musical backgrounds, it is very rewarding for the singers and audience alike to see, and hear, how well they can blend together, manifesting unity and harmony.

Future direction
Next year, we look forward to expanding our student/teacher base with more and varied offerings, acknowledging that our schedule is always full and, in fact, more artists would like to be given timings in CRIPA. When we can implement Phase 2 (separate office, additional bathroom/toilet facilities, piano room), we can enhance the user experience of CRIPA even further.

Deepanam School

Introduction
Inspired by the guidelines of integral education laid by the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, Deepanam School aims to offer the children an atmosphere of freedom and creativity
which supports their natural development and imparts the joy of learning with independence and responsibility. Our ultimate objective is to help identify in each child their full potential and bring out their best. Each child is given a chance to develop at his her own pace. Deepanam School caters to children aged 7 to 14 years.

**Activities of the year**

This was our second year working with multi-age groups. In a multi-age classroom the children have varying abilities, and the class becomes a community where everyone learns from each other. Each child can find his or her own pace without feeling "ahead" or "behind" in relation to peers. We have found that this way of organising adds a richness to the learning environment, helping to encourage cooperation instead of competition. Children in multi-age groups grow to value and respect the differences of each person.

In this model of working at Deepanam, a student continues for three years with the same group and with the same teachers. This lets the school give ample support and confidence to a child. A deeper bond is cultivated between the teacher and children, and the teacher can follow each child’s development over a longer period. This allows the teacher a greater possibility of seeing and meeting the needs of each child.

Another integral aspect of Deepanam School is our emphasis on the prepared environment. We are working towards creating an environment in which children can do things for themselves. The prepared environment makes learning materials and experiences available to children in an ordered way. This encourages children to take charge of their own learning process.

This year student groups were:

- **Light group:** 7, 8, and 9 years old (17 students + 3 with special needs)
- **Peace group:** 10, 11, and 12 years old (11 students)
- **Faith group:** 13 and 14 years old (4 students + 1 with special needs)
- **Welcome group:** for new and guests students of all ages (7 students)

1. **Light Group:** 7, 8, 9 years old

   The main aim of this group is to welcome new children, help them feel at ease, and impart and strengthen their study skills. Areas include reading, writing, numbers and their operations, basic concepts of geography, and science. We follow a project-based approach of teaching.

   There is a daily class routine. The day begins with concentration, and children chant Sanskrit shlokas. The aim of chanting is to introduce Sanskrit to the children, and this is followed by stories, questions, discussions and finally with integral concentration. Then in the classroom each child reads sight words - basic words that are used for writing and reading - according to their levels, before starting their "work plan", their learning plan for the day and near future.

   New concepts are introduced on Mondays and Thursdays. The various class subjects follow a schedule, and these include English, Math, French, Tamil, Gardening, Clay, Crafts, Art, Field study, Awareness Through the Body, and Sports. Highlights of the year included:

   - A special reading program was developed for the children. Books were categorized into levels and each child had to finish a particular set of books before moving on to next level. Each child read with a teacher or a reading buddy in weekly sessions, so they received individual attention.
   - The class went on a field trip to the Dehashakti Sports complex to work with the horses. Trips such as these build self confidence and a love for the animals and understanding of their importance.
   - Our second term gave us lots of opportunities to work as a group. We took up the subject of Light and its different aspects. Our main focus, and the challenge of
this project, was to cater this single topic to three ages with same enthusiasm. We also tried to keep the attitude of students and teachers “learning together”. For this project we guided our older students to share their knowledge with their younger classmates, which was a unique and a wonderful process. There were moments when each child found him/herself responsible, powerful, loved, respected. The project finally took the shape of a small presentation, “Light in Life”, which included a magic show, French narration, song, drama and dance.

In the last term we took up as a project ‘myself’. Through this topic we touched the different aspects of a child. They were asked questions about themselves, which made them aware of their own thinking, and in certain cases they were also surprised to learn about their own likings and dis-likings.

The study of earth was taken up by the older children of the group. Topics like the Solar System, maps and globes, and continents and oceans were covered. Each topic involved hands-on activities, drawing and colouring which made it very interesting. The children made mobiles of the planets.

2. Peace Group: 10, 11, 12 years old

The Peace group follows the Work Plan method whereby children’s progress is monitored through their work in Math and English. This is the group where the older kids are on the threshold of teenage years; the multi-age age group stabilizes them, as they have to set a good example for younger kids. These children are ready to explore the world. To meet to their needs subjects like History were introduced. Highlights of the year included:

- The class did a geography project on the seven continents, learning the countries and capitals of the world through coloring and labelling of maps. In the second term each child selected one country and researched the details of the country such as its physical geography, wildlife and culture. Presentation of the project was done by making a folder of the country.
- Each child made his/her own anthology of poems. Works and biographies of Ruskin Bond, Rabindranath Tagore, and Ruby Redfort were studied.
- The students gave a presentation for parents and schoolmates of recitation, performance of science experiments on stage, and a geography quiz. It greatly enhanced their level of confidence.
- History was introduced to the older children of the group. We started by connecting the subject to the children themselves, through studying their personal timeline and family tree. After personal history, we explored the history of Auroville and biographies of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. Children were greatly inspired and could connect with young Aurobindo and his fantastic academic skills, his love for poetry and writing. The Mother’s biography inspired them to develop aesthetic sense and love for sports. Continuing on the theme of biographies, each child chose one famous person to focus on and made a biography booklet about him or her.
- Inspired by “The Great Lessons” given by Maria Montessori, we did a project on the history of the universe including the story of the earth, coming of humans, and evolution. Presentation of the project was done through booklets, charts and paintings of each geological period. We made time lines to understand the subject visually.
- The subject of Creative Writing spontaneously turned towards Auroville. For different titles we visited the Matrimandir, Visitor’s Centre and Savitri Bhavan. We invited veterans to share their stories of the early days and their work in Auroville. After collecting information we processed it and the outcomes included stories relating to the qualities of the Matrimandir petals, a poem about Auroville, descriptive articles and reports.
3. Faith Group: 13, 14 years old
The Faith group uses the broad spectrum of work in Auroville as a base for their curriculum. This includes having Auroville as their resource for exploration and learning, inviting Aurovilians to interact and share their knowledge with children in the school, and reaching out to different units and workshops in Auroville where the children participate in the work throughout the year. Highlights of the year included:
- Together with students of The Learning Community the group did a project on solar energy. Three groups were formed and each was given the assignment to make a prototype solar collector - conical, rectangular or parabolic shape - of cardboard and foil. The students tested their prototypes, measured temperature and inferred which model worked better. They took the project further by making a solar oven with wood and glass which could be used in school. One important outcome of this project was a strengthened feeling of cooperation between schools.
- The students attended weekly art classes at Cuboid Last School Campus where they explored various media including clay sculpture, painting and carpentry.
- At the beginning of the year the students built a clay oven at Deepanam with Johnny’s help.
- We took up the “Localicious” movement with Krishna of Solitude Farm and planted fruit trees, tapioca and sweet potato as well as vegetables. Children took up preparing snack and serving to the school once a week. Local dishes like idli and vadai were prepared with produce grown by Auroville farmers.
- A filmed documentary “Life science at Deepanam” was prepared with Rakhal’s assistance. Children were exposed to the various aspect of movie making including script writing, direction, sound, editing and filming.
- Theatre was given major importance in the Faith group. Two hours weekly are devoted to theatre and the aim is to perform for parents and community. This year we had visiting teacher Francesca who worked with the group through games, improvisation techniques and preparation for the play “The White Elephant”. The children also took up designing the stage and preparing props.
- The group had a recycled art workshop with Zeevic at Well Paper.
- The students made some interactive math games and a science presentation with the Scratch computer program.

4. Activities common to all ages
a) Life Science Lab and Eco Trips
Life Science and Ecology have been an integral part of Deepanam. To learn about the local wildlife of our bio region and realize the need of conservation in our own backyard is most needed today. Three type of activities are undertaken in life science:
- Rescuing reptiles, taking care of animals, fishes, birds and insects.
- Preparing habitats for the animals (cages, shelters, etc).
- Maintaining the freshwater and saltwater aquariums.
An exhibition about Auroville wildlife was organized. All children contributed towards this event through posters, charts and presentations. During the year there were several field trips to explore and learn about nature for all classes as part of their study programs. Topics like reptiles and birds were most sought out by students. The awareness that comes through spending time in nature ensures that the children will automatically be sensitive to the need for conservation.

b) Languages
Our team of language teachers worked at creating practical and interactive sessions through games, stories and theatre. The intention is to make the process
of learning languages more effective and at the same time lively and fruitful. During the last two terms the children were encouraged to present their language skills in the form of songs and drama. The students worked on culture, vocabulary, pronunciation and memory to present their work to their friends and family. On the 25th of April we had our Language Day where children presented dramas, songs, and dance, in Sanskrit, French and Tamil.

c) Arts and Crafts (see report p. 104)

d) Gardening

We try to bring the awareness that “we are what we eat” to the kids and have made gardening part of our curriculum. Activities this year included designing, planting, soil experiment, preparing beds, sowing seeds, mulching, watering, weeding, harvesting and... cooking then eating.

Reflections

In a multi-age classroom the children have varying abilities, and the class becomes a community where everyone learns from each other. Each child can find his or her own pace without feeling "ahead" or "behind" in relation to peers. We have found that this way of organising adds a richness to the learning environment, helping to encourage cooperation instead of competition. Children in multi-age groups grow to value and respect the differences of each person.

Teacher’s comments on the Light group: “It is actually wonderful to work with this age as they are so pure, innocent, and curious. Their sense of wonder keeps us also wondering. We look forward for the next day of school.”

Dehashakti Sports

Introduction

In physical education, the main concern is not winning or losing but the educative experiences that an activity or game provides to the students. At Dehashakti Sports we have two parallel programs: regular daily group activities, and club sports. Students from all schools of Auroville are welcome and most come regularly. We try to cater to an integral, methodical, and harmonious development by offering children a weekly schedule that provides for all of their fitness needs, nurturing a joyful and balanced growth.

Activities of the year

Over 250 children and adults took part in activities at Dehashakti this year. Students are of age 7 and above, including from Deepanam School, Transition School, The Learning Community, Future School, Last School, and New Era Secondary School. Dehashakti offers games, athletics, swimming and gymnastics. The regular activities at Dehashakti are planned as a year-long program that gradually prepares students to reach their full physical potential, culminating in the Aurolympics (see separate report).

Apart from the Aurolympics we organize club sports including Basketball, Football, Volleyball, Tennis, Table Tennis, Horse Friends Club, Archery, Juggling, Capoeira and Gymnastics. New activities include Aikido, Body building (for older students and adults) and Ultimate Frisbee. These are offered as free choice, chosen by students in addition to their regular activities at Dehashakti. Club sports give special satisfaction to students who want to excel in a specific sport.
Outcomes
By providing a rich variety of activities through Dehashakti we encourage children to become self-aware and committed in their physical education. We hope that these experiences inspire them to strive for an integral awareness—i.e. of their mental and vital beings as much as their physical. Through the activities the children and teachers work together toward conscious control of growing bodies, and through the gender and cultural mix move towards unity and peace in the groups and teams.

Reflections
We have over the past couple of years succeeded in offering more activities for the children. This has created a richer program and allowed more students to be involved in serious trainings. We notice that gradually more students are taking on club sports, which can be challenging in many ways, and with strong perseverance they make great progress.

Future direction
The number of students are increasing as well and so are the needs. We need to plan on a larger scale the needs and spaces for all activities that have started and for those that may come. For example we are happy to host sports and want to involve children from local villages, for more integral development, understanding and goodwill between Auroville youth and village youth. It is essential now for our team to work together to make a clear projection for the next 10 years or more.

Conclusion
Dehashakti Sports has become the centre of various activities offered to all students as well as adults who are serious in their physical development. We would like to continue to improve, and welcome activities, teachers and trainees who would like to help build this program.

Future School
Introduction
Future School seeks to provide an environment in which Auroville youth and those dedicated to their education may reach their own unique potential through a balanced development of body, mind, emotion and spirit. Inspired by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, the school aspires to create a platform for self-discovery. Students are encouraged to follow a value-oriented approach to life in which they have an opportunity to create a deeper understanding of their responsibility to self, community and the world.

The school reflects the international character of Auroville, bringing together students and teachers from many different nationalities, cultural and ethnic backgrounds in a spirit of openness and harmony. The diversity of the school community creates a very special opportunity to be immersed in a rich and positive sharing of experiences.

Activities of the year
Future School offers a high school equivalent education to primarily Aurovillian students. This year there were 91 adolescents and young adults of 15 nationalities enrolled in the school.

Subjects offered at Future School:
- Languages - English, Tamil, Hindi, French, German, Italian, Spanish and Russian
- Mathematics
- Pure Sciences - Physics, Chemistry, Biology
- Social Sciences - History, Geography, Economics, Psychology
- Extra-curricular subjects - Information Communication Technology, Fashion Design, Photography, Film, Art, and Theatre

Where suited, we also offer the possibility of Practical Training with Auroville units, making use of the diverse possibilities offered by Auroville at large.

Through our mentoring program we assist the students in making good individual choices that help them to explore and discover, progress and grow.

The school incorporates many different teaching/learning methods and environments including projects, tutorials, independent research, traditional lectures, small and large groups, one-on-one mentorship, peer teaching, work experience, and self-study. In this way we hope to meet the needs of each individual.

We feel that the combination of required areas of study and chosen subjects gives students a balanced experience, allowing them to get in touch with new areas of knowledge and well as explore their own interests and needs.

Reflective assessments are shared during mentor meetings and other conferences. We also use school seminars to engage the students and teachers in reflective assessment. Skill-based assessment include the following:
- Internal tests, assignments and journals of activities and progress
- Project work with presentations, internal and/or public
- Written progress reports
- External examinations (UK IGCSEs and A-levels) if requested by the students

a) Weekly Seminars
   The Friday seminars at Future School have been an ongoing feature of our school for many years and are open to all students and teachers. They feature guest presenters from Auroville and elsewhere who share about their work, experiences or other chosen topics.

b) Open House and Fundraiser
   In September we hosted an Open House organized by the Student Council and with help from the student body. There was plenty for the visiting friends and families to take in: demonstrations in the Chemistry laboratory, a flea-market, music and dance performances by the students. The students ran a lively kitchen, serving snacks prepared by them with ingredients donated generously by local Units. With the help of the students and the community Future School was able to raise a significant amount of funds to help it to keep its activities on track.

c) Potluck and Open-mic Night
   This year, triggered by a request made by an anonymous student in the suggestion column of our the student newsletter Future Scribbles, the Language Arts class organised a Potluck and Open-mic Night. On January 23rd, students and teachers gathered together for a delicious dinner with a wide variety of mouth-watering dishes from all over the world. Then everyone gathered in the Multi-purpose Space for an evening of performances by the students: dancing and singing, poetry, a humorous speech and a 'Wacky Awards' ceremony. The evening was a great success, and we hope it will become an annual tradition.

d) Graduation
   This year 21 students graduated from Future School. As per tradition, on the last day of school their fellow students, teachers, staff members and parents gathered to
honour the accomplishments of these students. The program opened with melodious strains of the Veena played by two talented students, and continued with songs, speeches, and poetry readings. The now-traditional powerpoint presentation compiled by Angela, with photos of each of the graduating students at different stages of their lives was, as always, most touching. Each student received the gift of a "Goodbye Book" and a personalized poem. The event concluded with another tradition: the planting of a tree by the graduating class. This event has become a very important one in our school and is always filled with laughter and tears, joy and some sadness; it reminds us that we are a family.

e) Field Trips

An important element in any learning program, field trips connect classroom topics to real world experiences. They create an opportunity for closer bonding within the school 'family' and provide a break from routine. This year our field trips included the following:

▲ Petrified Forest: After a scientific talk in a seminar, Jeff Goodchild accompanied several students and teachers to see this geological phenomenon. The park visited, only 50 minutes away, is near Tiruvakkara village on the road between Tindivanam and Pondicherry. It contains petrified wood fossils approximately 20 million years old, scattered throughout the park, which covers about 250 acres. The fossils were formed during massive flooding that occurred millions of years ago.

▲ Chemistry Field Trips: Three field trips were organised for the students of different Chemistry classes. Teacher Evgenia organized a visit to The Colors of Nature, an Auroville research and development unit focusing on natural dyes. The Colors of Nature is one of the few remaining natural dyeing units in the world using entirely environmentally-friendly, vegetable-based dyes. The students were given a tour around the unit by its founder Jesus, during which they learned about the process of extracting indigo dyes from indigo plants. They also studied chemical procedures for the production of indigo dye, its storage, and its use for dyeing clothes.

The next trip was to the Water Laboratory (Environmental Monitoring Service - EMS) in Aurobrindavan with teachers Sergei and Evgenia. Igor, the head of the laboratory, showed the students around and demonstrated the work of the flame chromatography apparatus, the variety of equipment in the lab for testing water and food samples, and the bacteriology facilities of the laboratory.

Evgenia, Sergei and Tapas later arranged a visit to Pondicherry University's Chemistry department. There the students checked out the laboratory facilities, visited several research laboratories and had a talk with the dean of the faculty, Dr. Anbalagan, about study opportunities at Pondicherry University.

▲ The Hindu: In March the Language Arts Class and members of the "Future Scribbles" editorial team went to The Hindu newspaper's headquarters and printing press in Chennai. They spent a some hours at the offices where friendly and welcoming members of the editorial staff explained the workings and history of the newspaper, shared experiences, and fielded questions. This was followed by a visit to the printing press where the students could witness the impressive sight of hundreds of thousands of newspapers being printed on a Japanese assembly line.

▲ Rocket Launch: In March, 23 students and a teacher went to witness a rocket
launch in the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh. The rocket launched was India’s Fourth Navigational Satellite. The students traveled in a convivial atmosphere for ten hours, then observed the event 20 kilometers away from the launch site. The trip was deemed a great experience by all.

_The most interesting moment was when the rocket started off from the ground, in a blaze of red flame and smoke. All was silent until the wind carried the sound and vibrations of the rocket towards us. We could feel the energy of the rocket and the power that was used to push off from the ground. It was breathtaking feeling._

f) Community Service

For the past eight years, Future School has been participating in a Community Service program that allows new students joining the school to participate in a unique experience. During the three weeks before a new school year begins, each student works in three different Services, Units or ongoing projects in Auroville. We find this important as students learn to adopt a sense of commitment and responsibility. They also get to experience working with and around different people. This activity has been an integral part of the school program and has been well received by the students and the community.

g) Medical Clowning

Two Aurovillians, Fif and Hamish, offered a Medical Clowning course to our students for the second year. The students met once a week and learned a great deal about human behavior through exercises of play and theatre, how to actively listen, how to create a sense of trust, and how to handle ethical issues that they may be presented with.

h) Pillar Painting

One of the Art classes lead by Sasikanth was assigned a project by the school to paint the new dining area pillars. The project was led mainly by Karen, a visitor from Sweden studying to be an Arts and Psychology teacher. Eventually the project was opened to the wider student body, and everyone came together to enhance the space, creating a harmonious design that combined individual designs. The colour palette was selected based on the colours of the surroundings. The project began in November and was completed in April.

i) Future Scribbles

"Future Scribbles", a monthly student newsletter, was launched by the Language Arts class in December. Run by a student editorial team, it serves as a platform for both school and community news. It provides students with opportunities to create and present a wide variety of work including art, announcements, news, poems, comic strips, stories and commentaries. "Future Scribbles" is sent by email to everybody who is part of the school, and a few print copies are circulated as well. It is both an entertaining and an intellectual project which is appreciated by the whole school.

j) Art Exhibition

In November the students shared their art with the community through a two-week exhibition, titled ‘Artsea’, at Pitanga.

k) Reading Sessions for Transition School

As a part of the Language Arts activity, students visited Transition School for a series of story reading sessions over several weeks. They were warmly welcomed by the students and teachers of Transition. When sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds read
aloud to eigh-year-olds, magic happens.

l) Alternative Living Spaces Project
The advanced Geography class comprising of 5 senior students started a hands-on project aimed at creating a model for an alternative living space. Early tasks included tree cutting, wood peeling, granite pillar fixing, leveling. The project underwent a few changes as the students revised their targets based on their growing experience. They are continuing to work on the project and plan to complete it next year.

Reflections
A noteworthy point is that our student body increased by 20% this year, and we were able to absorb this large increase well.

We were able to successfully raise funding for, and execute to completion, the expansion of the outside dining and study area. This space is now able to accommodate our larger student body, and allows us to enjoy the outdoors during meal and study times.

Future direction
While we are happy to have made some additions to our teaching team this year, we continue to look for creative and committed individuals to grow the team so as to meet the educational needs of Auroville youth. We would like to be in a better position to address the different academic needs of our growing student body with high standards and a wide perspective. In addition, we would like to be in a place where we are not required to turn away students for lack of space in the classrooms.

In keeping with our aim to honor self-motivation over academic achievement, we would like to create an environment where self-motivated students are encouraged and supported. We also intend to actively work to strengthen the feeling of identification with the school amongst the students and the teachers.

Conclusion
Future School seeks to balance independence and freedom on one hand with respect and responsibility on the other. Students are supported in an interactive and open communication environment, while being encouraged to be aware of their choices and to forge their own path for growth and progress. We hope that this environment and educational program helps the students become self-aware, self-motivated and self-controlled. Our primary goal continues to be the development and implementation of an integral education that is deeply rooted in the ideals of Auroville.

House of Mother’s Agenda

The House of Mother’s Agenda, originally founded in 1988, was shifted to Savitri Bhavan in 2006 and has its own room in the Main Building. It is run by Aurovilian Gangalakshmi, with the support of Aurovilian Martin Sobieroj. It houses copies of the Mother’s Agenda in many languages, as well as the original recordings of the Mother’s talks, and caters especially for French speakers and activities in French.

At The House of Mother’s Agenda, Gangalakshmi receives interested visitors from around the world, and holds regular sessions three times a week for people to hear original recordings of the Mother’s Agenda conversations. She answers reference queries about the Agenda, contributes a regular page in the weekly News and Notes on the basis of her on-going research, and gives presentations on the Auroville Radio.
Ilaignarkal Education Centre

Introduction
Ilaignarkal Education Centre provides further education opportunities for workers of Auroville and their wards. Training is offered in vocational and communication skills that can improve employment opportunities and income-generating potential. The Centre contributes to a cordial relationship between the Auroville township and its neighboring villages through its educational, cultural, social and economic activities guided by experts.

Ilaignarkal also creates research materials in Tamil and English that are used by teachers, school managers and parents. The educational materials aid in raising the standards of life of youth and women via alternative schools in the Auroville region.

Activities of the year
Regular classes are held on campus Monday through Friday, open for drop-in students any time from 9.30 a.m. to 6.30 p.m. Three adult teachers are present for language courses, vocational training, health and healing. Nearly 35 students attend every day. The majority, from 20 to 25 students, attend in the evenings. Our teachers and guides also give regular classes for Auroville workers at their work places. This year classes were held for 25 women workers at Well Paper and 30 women workers at Naturellement.

Two years ago Ilaignarkal started a mobile (bicycle) library for the benefit of Auroville workers and their children living in remote areas. It is called Bharati Mobile Library and came from a suggestion made by local youth. The Library travels through the hamlets near Auroville from 6pm to 8pm daily, throughout the year, taking advantage of existing youth groups and night schools.

Every Thursday evening Ilaignarkal holds Viyazha vattam classes where we read classical Tamil works, listen to lectures by scholars, and hold discussions. This year the study circle concentrated on the classical literature of Tamil Sangam poetry (300 BC – 300 AD) for the second consecutive year. Previous years focused on Silappathigaram, Manimegalai, Thirukkural, and Kamba Ramayanam; next year we plan to move on to medieval literature.

This year our centre continue to take care of 22 girls born and brought up in Auroville region. Their educational and health needs are met by friends of Auroville (Italy) through our school in collaboration with SEWA. The parents and children meet at our campus twice a month to share their life experiences and support each other.

Another ongoing activity is the publication of our monthly Tamil magazine, Auroville Seythi Madal (see report p. 110).

Special activities of the year included:

Summer camp:
This year we had more than 25 students attending our summer camp classes. Activities included painting, upcycled crafts (how to utilise waste materials such as used plastic bottles, pebbles, dry twigs, old newspaper, etc. to create useful items), yoga, language classes, music, embroidery and needlework, social games, cultural events, tours, visits, and meeting with parents on campus.

Bharati Tamil Course:
An experimental Tamil course using the writings of poet Bharati was carried out with 32 field staff, teachers, animators, administrators and librarians sponsored by
Vidhyashram (an NGO in Chennai). Participants were all women of ages 25 – 40 years who work in various districts in Tamil Nadu. They stayed with us for three days, where they learned through theatre, illustrating stories, recitation, storytelling and group singing.

The course left a deep impression on the participants, who wanted to extend the training for more days. They were touched by the serene atmosphere and personal attention given by our staff, guides and learned professors from Tamil departments of nearby colleges. It was a successful course that spread new light on teaching Tamil to kids in a joyful way. The teachers and the taught created a new learning community.

Teachers and trainees educational tour:

Around Teachers’ Day a group of our teachers and trainees went on an educational tour to Kumbakonam, where we visited the ancient temple at Gangaikondacholapuram which is more than 1000 years old. We learned the story of the temple from the local people. We also visited Thiruvarur, a site well known for Chola architecture, with its huge wooden *rather* (car) and large *theppakulam* (water tank). This tour allowed the participants to share space, time and knowledge with one another and the positive group energy was strengthened.

Two-day Ther Ratham temple architecture workshop:

Forty temple architects and sculptors from Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry and Andhra Pradesh participated in a workshop to share their life experiences and bridge the generation gap. The traditional artists shared knowledge through documents, powerpoint presentations, and practical drawings and by sketching traditional designs. The workshop was guided by senior artists along with professional sculptors and artisans of the Auroville region. Participants shared time and space with Auroville youth at SVARAM, bringing new hope for further collaboration, goodwill and friendship. This was a remarkable event and unique of its kind. Thanks to the Tamil Heritage Centre, Bharat Nivas for its grant to carry out this wonderful programme.

Tamil writers workshop on Children’s Literature and creativity:

Twenty writers from all over Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry, and nearly 120 local children with their teachers and parents, participated in a workshop on Tamil literature for children. Three groups were guided by experienced authors and illustrators, focusing on stories, songs, and theatre. Bulletin boards set up at the Centre carried information on children’s literature and creativity, to the benefit of participating staff and students of Auroville schools. The outcome of the workshop will be completed and published with the help of Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi and the Tamil Heritage Centre, Auroville.

Waste management workshop:

A one-year project was initiated under the guidance of Dr. Rajamanikkm of Pondicherry University, who is an expert in Solid Waste Management working closely with the Auroville Eco Service. The goals of the project were to identify and deliver outreach sessions to different target groups among housemaids, cottage industry employees and school children; and to increase the participation in the Auroville solid waste management facility towards a zero-waste target. Nearly 30 village workers from Auroville units participated in the first session. With some more support for the project we would like to hold six workshops with six follow-up sessions annually.
Best Youth Award:
This year we were happy to confer our Best Youth Award on Dr. Siva Mathiyazhagan - graduate of Pondicherry University, self-made and motivated social worker, ardent researcher, institution builder and rational community organiser with proven leadership. Siva is a native of Chinnamudai Ar Chavadi, and is bridging the local villages and Auroville by working on the pressing issues that touch social entrepreneurs, local to global.

Future direction
We aim to reach out to more workers of Auroville and their wards especially toward improving their communication skills. We also want to bring Aurovilians and workers together on issues of Health and Healing. We will continue strengthening the foundation for appreciation of the Tamil language, and recording the ancient wisdom of our native local people.

Conclusion
The various activities and events of our Centre contribute to increased quality of life for participants and to a growing human unity in the Auroville area. We celebrate the local culture and history as well as look to the future of expression, knowledge, and a changing society, offering children and adults tools and experiences that can help them on the way.

Isai Ambalam School

Introduction
Isai Ambalam is a school for children of preschool, primary and upper-primary levels. The mission of the school is to create a learning environment in which students and teachers reach their highest mental and spiritual consciousness possible, so as to live, learn, teach and function from there. The students at Isai Ambalam come mostly from rural areas and their learning levels have wide disparities for various reasons; this challenge has led us to adopt an “individual learning programme” approach.

Activities of the year
This year 114 students were enrolled at Isai Ambalam, including 32 in the preschool, 72 at the primary level and 10 in the middle level. Isai Ambalam has 9 full-time teachers and 1 part-time teacher, helped by occasional volunteers.

An 8-step strategy to achieve the Mission described above was newly formulated, and this year the we focused on implementing the first 5 steps:

1. Designing Individual Learning Programme for Each Learner.

Creche and Kindergarten Groups: Learning Programmes for these children contained activities for the 8 kinds of development at the preschool level. Among them, for the Cognitive development, Glenn Doman method or Word Flash Cards method was used. The other kinds of development were addressed through weekly or fortnightly thematic projects. A lot of Montessori activities were given for all the children.

Primary Classes (1st to 5th standard): Individual Learning Programmes were planned and written down for each of these students. We fixed a goal that all the students in the first two standards acquire all the learning competences intended for their level. An intense effort was made by the teachers to make the students fully aware of their learning programme and motivated to complete it. To help this happen, every week each student was given a copy of the learning programme for the
A learning culture of referring daily to this programme and working on it has been established. As a result all of them became aware of where they were in their learning, their weak points as well as their strong points. Both the students and teachers worked together in completing the programmes. The students started liking this learning programme process.

Upper primary classes (6th & 7th standards): The upper primary students were also happy and comfortable with this individual learning programme process. They were able to become aware of their growth. In these standards teachers and students together discussed and decided their weekly and monthly learning programme. This let the students take responsibility for their learning plan. Subjects included Tamil, English, Math, Science, and Social Science. Skills included problem-solving, communication, organisation and creative thinking skills.

2. Creating the Awareness of the Learning Program for the Learners so that They would Assume Ownership of their Learning and Take Active Interest in Carrying it out.

The teachers succeeded to a considerable extent in motivating the students from 3rd to 7th standards to complete their learning programme. During the third term 22 of these students wished to get weekend assignment of their choice, that is, for the items in the subjects which they chose for self-improvement. In the beginning of the following week the results were reviewed. After 4 weeks of these efforts these children learnt to document and track on their own this effort and review the result. Teachers are enthused by this development and encouraging it. As a result these students are able to take up the remedial activities for their learning difficulties and work on them.

3. Use of Effective Educational Approaches for the implementation of the Learning Programme of Each Learner.

Implementation of this third step could start only in January 2015. Teachers could succeed in using Active Learning Methodology (ALM), Thematic Projects and applying Regis’ English Sentence Writing Formula to meet the learning needs. Results of the research with this Formula are encouraging. As a result the teachers have started getting the needed experience in choosing the right educational approach and apply it.

4. Using Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation for evaluating the Learning Outcomes of Each Learner

Teachers recorded and tracked the application of Regis’ Formula for learning to write one’s own English sentences, which has enabled the teachers to record and track the learning outcomes also. Now it has become easier for the teachers and the students to pinpoint the specific difficulty faced in forming a English sentences and to take up a focussed and intense effort to work on that difficulty. It appears that the use of this Excel format can be suitably undertaken for the evaluation of the learning outcomes from all kinds of educational approaches applied for the students’ learning. Presently we are working on using the Excel to design appropriate formats for tracking the learning outcomes when we use Phonics Method for Reading, Word Flash Cards approach, TTT (Thalir Thiran Thittam of Aparajitha Foundation of Madurai) approach for acquiring Psychological Life Skills, etc.

5. Designing a Special Curriculum for the use of Computer and Internet to Facilitate and Accelerate the process of implementation.

Sanjeev Ranganathan heading Isai Ambalam Support Group has started some new initiatives in enabling the students to use the computers creatively, which will contribute to achieving this fifth step. This year the students learned geometry with
help via guided explorations with Geogebra, used Finch robot extensively, and set up a stall at the Udavi school with a computer programming challenge.

One example of using the computer to aid understanding in Math was when the 8th graders were working on squares and square roots. An activity in the book was guessing the square root of a number that was a perfect square of a two digit number. This required an algorithm that the children found a little abstract so we created a program to do what they were supposed to do. As they saw the program performing they understood what the algorithm was and changed the program to a game that they could enter their guess value and have it confirmed by the computer. They got quite good at it and demonstrated the same to the 6th graders who got it in their head that they needed to figure out what the 8th graders were up to learnt the same.

The same exercise was repeated for cube roots. We then reiterated the concepts by constructing cubes of numbers greater than 10 with Denise blocks. The work on technology was balanced with hands on work, e.g. work with algebra used a weighing balance and a pencil box and puzzles and games.

In January, three youth engineers from Aura Auro began volunteering at Isai Ambalam School, working with various aspects including Math, English and Puzzles. One of them focused on a few 5th grade children who were struggling with mental math, and guided them through a series of steps, initially using the abacus to help them see the patterns of decimal numbers. Then, as the children started seeing the patterns, they used the dominos game as a learning aid. For further practice the children created their own games on the computer that asked questions about single digit additions, and set out to ace their games.

Special events of the year:

- All the students watched the movie on Environment organized by Mauna at Town Hall.
- The preschool children went on a field trip to the Auroville Botanical Gardens.
- 1st and 2nd standard children went on a field trip to Kadapakkam beach.
- An Annual Performance was given based on the thematic projects of selected classes.
- We celebrated Deepam festival in our school. All the students learned the importance of why the lamp is lighted.
- We celebrated the Christmas festival in the school.
- 1st and 2nd standard students did project on Aadi festival. They went to the nearby village and collected information about the festival. They had a good interaction with village elders.
- 33 children from Poorna learning center, Bangalore visited our school and had an exchange programme with our students. The students spent half a day together and shared gifts with each other.
- All the students went to Bharat Nivas to visit an exhibition conducted by people of North Eastern States. Students gathered information and did a weeklong project on those states.

Volunteers:

- Gopa Goswani from America helped the students to communicate in English. She helped them in their reading.
- Simon from Sweden helped the middle class students to write English sentences on given concepts.
- Sara from Holland helped for 5th grade in maths.
- Regine from Austria helped the children to learn maths skill through computer.
- Azina and Samira from Germany helped the children in maths and Environment studies. They also taught songs to the primary children.
Outcomes
This year preschool and 2nd standard students’ parents participated in their children’s learning activities. Four parents of the preschool children learnt to do the Words Flash Cards programme and applied it at home for their children.

At the school we learned system administration on the Ubuntu platform. We soon encountered the issue of files being distributed across the 9 computers and looked at networking. This brought children an interesting concept of a ‘phone number of a computer’ to enable it to talk to another computer and send files across. We were then able to mount a central file location that could be accessed from all computers. We also worked with the children so they learnt basic organization of their files and could access it from the central location. This simple act has yielded profound benefits as children were in a position to work from any computer and assimilate their work class to class.

Twenty-five students of 4th to 7th standard used the computer to further their skills in Math. The students were happy to learn through the computer, and the interactive programs helped them understand concepts easily. The students also learned to find and collect information from the internet for Active Learning Methodology projects.

Isai Ambalam teachers availed of several workshops including those conducted by Mr. Regis of Madurai; Vanur BRC Resource Group; Ilaignarkal School; and Monica Sharma.

Of the ten oldest students, four completed their 8th syllabus and went to New Era Secondary School to join 9th standard.

Reflections
Relatively few students in the higher grades allowed us to do intensive work with a few elder children, and to form multi-grade classes where the elder children guided younger children.

The Stewardship for New Emergence workshops attended by our teachers had a very positive impact on the school. The benefits to the teachers were markedly visible in their work. Teamwork, taking up initiatives for oneself as well as the students, learning, free and fluent expression and communication by all became natural. The school learning and teaching atmosphere improved considerably.

Conclusion
The Individual Learning Programme helps the teachers to go further in the quality of their teaching and learning. It also helps the children to become self-motivated. The students are able to notice their weak and strong points, helping them overcome their weak points and strengthen their strong points. The framework we are adopting at the school, and our continual use of innovative teaching and learning methods, make us confident in our ability to help our students achieve their highest potential.

Kailash Youth Residency

Introduction
The purpose of this educational residence is to host youth from the age of 16 to 21, who are either in a school or work or in an apprenticeship program. The objective is for these youth to learn how to live independently from their parents’ home in a community life, learning how to take responsibility for themselves in all sectors of life. Kailash has 14 rooms that can host up to 16 people. There are adult caregivers who do not live in the building itself, so as to allow space for peer support, collaboration, self-responsibility and internal regulation. All common decisions and topics related to community life are discussed and brought to a weekly meeting.
Activities of the year
Since September 2001, Kailash has been hosting youth for time periods ranging from 1 to 7 years. It is a space to learn life, a space to grow, learn from the consequences of our own acts, a space that allows peer support and peer learning. The population addressed is primarily Auroville youth, with a provision to host non-Auroville youth who are here with a specific project within the Auroville set up. Typically the youth have chosen to attend an Auroville school independently, without their parents, who are then happy to find this structured space that can host their child.

This educational residency offers a space for young people as a transition to learn independence before flying out of the family home into further studies. It can also offer a space for those who have a difficult family situation.

There is a set of compulsory rules to be followed that structure the collective life within the building. These rules are not negotiable, but the community life and daily organization changes according to the group dynamic and elements within the group.

Within the building, on the ground floor, with an independent entrance, we also have a room that we have kept for start-up projects. The idea was for these projects to be educational and youth oriented, hosted for a year renewable once. We have been hosting what has come to be called Kailash Clinic for 6 years now. An exception was made for this project due to its importance for the community, serving the Aurovilians and their guests for health related matters. The clinic has grown substantially, and will soon be moving into the new Integral Health Center further up on the Crown Road.

Outcomes
This residency allows youngsters to make a choice to come and live in Auroville independently from a family move. They are allowed to stay provided they have a legal guardian in Auroville, and they fulfill the criteria to join Kailash. This year we had many more requests than available rooms; we have a waiting list and people come in after a protocol of admission. We normally have two places available for non-Auroville youth. Due to the fact that Future School is open to youngsters from outside, and their program is seen as a success to people outside, we have had more requests than usual.

Reflections
The need for other similar places to host various age groups within a growing Auroville population is quite obvious. There would need to be several different types of options to host different age groups depending on their needs linked to their age concerns.

Conclusion
Kailash is an ongoing activity and space that changes according to the group’s dynamics, yet provides a stable home for young people. It reflects and reveals the issues within Auroville at a given moment. Kailash has settled into the Auroville daily life, and integrated the collective psyche.

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Kalabhumi Music Studio

Introduction
Kalabhumi Music Studio has been open now for the last 15 years, and has functioned as an important space for the practice of music in Auroville. A focal point for rehearsal, teaching, and performing, the space is open and used all year round by bands, students and teachers to further both collective and individual skills.
Activities of the year

The studio is open 7 days a week, and is used by large numbers of groups and individuals. The building supports mainly amplified music, but is also used by other groups such as choirs, vocal workshops and other similar activities. This year in particular there were several big events in which the music studio operated as the centre for activities, including:

- Auroville Singing Festival (October – with more than 60 participants)
- Kalabhum Festival (February – 8 bands performed)
- Vocal Colours (April – a showcase for 10 singers from the community for an event in Bharat Nivas)
- Amando and Dhani (February – visiting artists from America collaborated with Auroville musicians to perform at the Visitor’s Centre)
- AV Sisters (January – a concert led by Shakti featuring numerous Auroville vocalists and artists)

Many Auroville music teachers use the space on a regular basis for their classes with children. A large variety of instruments are taught at the studio including piano, guitar, drums, tabla, saxophone, and singing. This year classes were also held in sound engineering and recording, led by Ruben.

The studio has also been a space to support up-and-coming artists. In April of this year, with help from established musicians, emerging singer Victoria conducted a video shoot of her recent work for use in her further studies.

The Kalabhum studio team is fully involved with other music projects elsewhere (including showcases outside of Auroville), through performances, organisation, coordination of visiting artists, and setup of concerts at other venues.

Conclusion

In general Kalabhum Music Studio continues to support many areas of music and performance in Auroville.

Kalabhum Open Art Studio

Introduction

The Open Studio project in Kalabhum offers a space for a range of art activities to take place. There are regular weekly courses with older students from Transition School and Future School as well as courses for adult students. All projects are led by Nele at the space which includes her art studio, a second attached studio and an outdoor covered area for activities. Equipment and materials are provided to participants.

Activities of the year (Nele)

The open studio project in Kalabhum has been running successfully for the past 7 years. The courses provide students of all ages with the opportunity to gain experience in art studies in a very well equipped professional artist’s studio. The ongoing classes include art techniques of color theory, composition, drawing, perspective, watercolor sketches, acrylic paint, and more. As the project expanded over the years and the number of participants grew, my studio space was extended to include a second workshop as well as an open working area. These expansions have made it possible to work on big projects such as theatre backdrops and installation work, in addition to the regular courses offered.

Situated in the cultural zone, the studio is accessible on foot or by cycle from several Auroville schools. It is easily reached by the students of both Future School, where my art class is offered as an elective subject, and Transition School, where art classes based at the studio form a part of their curriculum. The two oldest grades of Transition School
also come to the studio for bigger art projects such as yearly school plays. In addition to these classes with students, three afternoons a week are set aside for adult courses.

In this past school year I offered special projects for the 8th grade of Transition School as part of their arts and crafts program. We worked on airbrush technique and painting of murals. We discussed the need for proportion and size of murals, as they have to be visible from far, and explored color theory and the choice of paints for external walls. Murals were done by groups of two students each. It was a very rewarding experience.

With the Future School group we worked on the topics of portraits, color theory and applying different techniques such as charcoal drawing, chiaro scuro, watercolors and acrylic painting. A lot of importance was placed on exploring composition and the technique of perspective to create space in a painting.

With the adult groups we mostly worked on composition and color. We looked at artists like the “Blaue Reiter” group and at the expressionist use of color that does not represent but expresses. We worked on perspective and the space in the painting created through proportion and color. There has been a lot of interest in this topic so we may continue deeper in this study.

I worked with some students on a light projection art project. We are studying a light projection animation program, which will enable us to participate with visual art in music and theater performances. This is ongoing and will be brought forward in the next year.

Outcomes

In the studio I provide classes that develop a range of art techniques as well as encouraging group discussions with the students that delve into understanding the need for a balance of intuition and mind. The courses offer students the possibility to reflect and experiment in a safe space. Assistance is given when needed but students are encouraged to explore freedom of expression and “break through” one’s boundaries, whether they be instilled by oneself or through external judgment.

The Open Studio offers projects that expand and deepen the existing curriculum of schools. For example a student’s poetry presentation might be combined with music and photography, or I might make a presentation on the art of the Renaissance era and its invention of perspective when the students are studying that period of history.

This year some artwork made at the studio by me and by other artists participating in the courses was part of the 2015 Auroville Chennai Festival. Some students/artists also participated in the show “red” at Bharat Nivas, Auroville. I am happy that throughout the courses we have been able to achieve such a high quality and intensity of work and have meaningful discussions on what art is and where we can go with it.

Reflections

Art is an important way of self-study and self-realisation. To be able to express oneself through art one has to find the balance between inner intuition and the organizing mind, finding a way of expression that touches an inner truth. In this way art studies are on the one hand an inner study to discover what one wishes to express, and on the other hand require knowledge of the techniques to be able to create the work. One needs to be aware and see both outside and inside...

Future direction

Recently more space has been made available to work on installation and nature artwork, such as inspired by the artist Andy Goldsworthy. This is part of a focus on awareness and sensitivity - to consciously see and recognize what is around us and enhance the beauty through small changes.

There is also more wall space available for murals. This was a very successful project
last year and I would like to continue with it further by placing emphasis on the interaction of the wall and its surrounding and using stencil work and different techniques of applying the color (spray, sponge, roller etc.). Some of the students have expressed the wish to work on walls around Auroville, so this could be explored as well.

I am currently in contact with artist from the region to do several public art projects together. These would try to raise awareness about our surroundings and draw out issues of pollution, waste management, etc.

In my personal work as an artist I am expanding into the field of light projection and digital media, a topic I started to include in the classes this year and which I intend to bring further this coming year. This could lead to potential collaboration with the performing arts sector of Auroville, for example by projecting the backdrop for theatre plays and creating light installations to accompany musical concerts.

**Conclusion**

This project shares the art studio atmosphere and shares experience and knowledge in the Auroville context. It offers space and guidance to explore the creation of art and the role of the artist.

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## Kindergarten

**Activities of the year - some glimpses:**

1. **Play of Painting**
   
   This year, for the annual Christmas exhibition for the parents, a 15 minute film on the Play of Painting was made and shown on a big screen borrowed from the Auroville Film Festival. It showed the children and adults who come to paint here. It was a peep into a class in session and the parents were delighted. They also appreciated our exhibit in the Play of Painting room which laid special emphasis on the concept of non-judgment.

   The Play of Painting Team additionally gave a presentation at the Teachers’ Center which emphasised the negative effects of giving either too much praise or too much criticism to a child, with alternative approaches to developing respectful relationships.

2. **Swimming lessons**
   
   This year we were successful in enabling 14 of the 15 children of the oldest group to become swimmers. We achieved this during the last three months of the school year. In February we were joined by two volunteers who wanted to teach swimming, so the children had 3 weekly sessions with them: one lasting about 45 minutes and the other two lasting half an hour.

   To enter the pool we follow a set procedure for the sake of safety. The kids undress, put on their swimsuits and line up outside the pool gate. Then they shower and sit down until everyone is ready. Then the children go to sit down on the edge of the pool and at a given count they slide into the water.

   The volunteers used a simple signal to get attention from the children in the water: “Streamline!” This meant every one must lift their arms above their heads, both palms touching, with straight arms. This immediately stopped all noise enabling everyone to listen to instructions.

   Another useful strategy they used was “Washing Machine”. This meant the teachers would stand in the water in front of the children who were sitting on the edge of the pool, and ask them to vigorously kick the water to try to splash them. This energy outlet was needed for them to subsequently be able to await their turn.
for the upcoming activity.

A third activity had the children swim one by one from one corner of the pool to the side, then to the middle, from there on to the far side and to the far corner. The bottom of the pool had imaginary boiling lava and at the stations you could cool your feet on imaginary ice in case you did not succeed to swim without touching the ground. The stations were demarcated with small rubber rings. The children loved this game.

A fourth game was: "What is the time mister shark?". In this game one child/shark was alone on one side of the pool and let the others approach to steal the large floating ring he was guarding. He counted out loud the time. If it was three o'clock the others had three counts before the shark would awake and come to catch them. They could take refuge in their house on the far end of the pool. If caught while attempting to steal the ring they would have to join the shark as catchers. One of the volunteers organised new materials such as rings that sink, balls in a sock-like netting that float, pillows filled with styrofoam and a large hoop which is hollow and partially filled with pebbles to make it sit upright on the bottom of the pool. This hoop was used for the children to dive through under water. The children enjoyed floating on their backs with the help of some of these various floaters.

After the volunteers left we took the children to La Piscine for about five sessions of 45 minutes. Eventually everyone was able to jump in at the deep end and manage to swim, except for one boy who still had not overcome his fear of water.

3. Building a house

Every year the oldest group gets to build a small hut (2m by 3m). The floor is plain earth, the walls are brick plastered together with mud, and the roof is of branches and keet (coconut palm leaves). The process of this construction demands a lot of cooperation and plenty of patient effort. Most of the children enjoy participating in this experience and it gives them a strong sense of achievement.

Step 1: The Foundation

In the first session we take about 8 children and we demarcate the foundation in a rectangular shape. The corners have to be at 90 degrees. Wetting the ground first we scrape out the rectangular outline. Into this we insert a line of bricks held together with mud.

Step 2: The Plaster

The mud used as plaster the children prepare by actually wading in a pile of red soil with water added to it. The sticky substance we create is used between the bricks to hold them together.

Step 3: The Walls

Once the foundation has been built the walls rise upon this base. We use a mason level to make sure we are making straight walls. The mud once prepared is carried in round trays and plastered on by hand or with a trowel. The children love using these tools because it makes them feel like real masons. We leave openings in the structure for the door and 3 windows.

Step 4: The Roof

The gardener makes a frame for us of 4 logs connected with beams, which is planted outside the corners of the house. Upon this he puts another frame for the roof. The children standing on stools put in cross beams on which we tie the keet leaves. We use jute rope and the children have to tie many knots to hold it all together. The keet is tied on starting from below and working upwards.

Step 5: Completion

Once the keet is in place we have to clean up the construction site and then we decorate the house with paper garlands and balloons and flowers. We invite
the other children group by group to visit and together we sing songs and eat sweets. The children feel they have achieved something and are happy.

Kuilapalayam Cultural Centre

Introduction

The team of Kuilyapalayam Cultural Centre comprises of several volunteer tutors serving an increasing number of young men, women and children from the surrounding villages of Auroville. The Centre grew from a need for young Tamil men and women, who work in and around Auroville, to have a place where they could spend their valuable leisure time meaningfully in order to develop and acquire additional skills apart from their work skills or their studies.

These days, many village children and youths spend a lot of time watching television programs in their homes, playing video and computer games or sometimes just go roaming around aimlessly outside. By providing alternative activities and safe environment, we intend to bring a change in their lives as we provide a wide range of interesting and skill-based programs. With these skills, we believe that they will be motivated in a positive way. The Centre opened on 2nd March 2003 and one of its objectives was to bring the rich arts of Tamil Nadu back to the villages and the world through its courses, programmes, activities and performances. These include: Tamil traditional and classical dances, Tamil folk music and folk dances, Silambam (weapon-based art programme), Karagattam (a form of classical dance), and Bharatha Natyam (Natya Yoga).

We also provide homework tuition, books and newspapers to read; a 'Health Class' to create awareness in children on how they should protect themselves, and make them aware of their rights. Plus English lessons 2 days a week, quiz programs at weekends, eating together once a week and, of course, sports – many inside games and outside games.

Activities of the year

Every year, more than 50 children and youths from nearby villages come and participate in the offerings of Kuilapalayam Cultural Centre. The programmes are taught in the free time of the participants, seven days a week, from 6pm – 8pm. Approximately 30 people attend every day. Students from different schools of our surroundings including Aikiyam School, Trust School, Aravindhar school and KPM Govt school are regular attendees, coming to get help and support in their studies. Through our facilitators, we are trying our best to give them guidance and academic help. We also organize outings, field trips to different places for learning about many different things.

These sessions are offered every Monday through Saturday from 6pm to 8pm. Three tutors - Vishnu, Iyappan and Nandhini - and one English teacher are facilitating these programmes. We also frequently get help from volunteers.

1. Evening Tuition

The evening tuition programme is our main activity. It is for a mixed age group of students, 7 to 13 years old. It is an interconnected activity bridging school and home, as we have the chance to update parents directly about their child’s progress. From our individual donations we also provide snacks three times a week. Many of our students felt so happy to have this evening assistance after school, for different reasons.

Feedback from a student on Evening Tuition

"First of all, we are thanking to our KCC, because this place is very nearby to our
living place. Secondly, we are offered snacks after our studies. And then, a very good tutoring, monitoring and caring by three of our tutors and co-ordinators in different groups by age level.”

Feedback from parents on Evening Tuition: “Some of us, we feel so happy to send our children to KCC, because we do not have enough time to help them in the evening to look after them due to many of our commitments in many other things and then we didn’t study at all”. “Our children are studying in English medium schools, and when they ask some doubts and questions, we aren’t able to answer them”. “These days, the level of the lessons, whatever if it is, we feel totally puzzled and we are always looking for some assistance. And for this, the KCC is doing a meaningful and useful job for us and our children.”

2. English Class

Our English classes grew from the needs of adults who come forward on their own initiative to learn or improve their English. This was facilitated by Selvaraj (Coordinator of KCC) with the help and assistance of a volunteer from Germany named Kaya. For every class we received approximately 8 to 10 students whose expectations were on different levels, but through this programme we got a chance to analyze and synthesize their needs and expectations. We assessed their levels through giving opportunities to talk about some interesting topics, or telling stories, interviews, etc. Then they were given tasks in different sessions, such as grammar exercises, storytelling, multiple-choice comprehension, finding answers through gestures, communicating with partners, and sessions of interviewing each other. After all types of efforts, they lost their shyness and gained self-confidence. Our volunteer Kaya, who came on her own and wished to contribute her support to this programme especially, was a great sustainable support for us. With the supervision of the coordinator and by planning lessons together, they could prepare the lessons to be motivating for the students. Her presence also helped the students learn to communicate and have conversations in English without fear when they meet English-speaking people.

Feedback from a student about English Class: “I was looking for English class nearby my village, but when I got the chance to learn English at our KCC, I felt so lucky by myself. Before attending this English lesson, I had no self-confidence to talk with the English people, but now I am so happy because I am brave enough to communicate with them and so this must be continued and many of them, like me, should be benefited through this English lesson in future.”

3. Awareness Through the Body

A volunteer from Germany named Clara offered Awareness Through the Body (ATB) sessions twice a week from 7pm to 8pm. This programme was a great opportunity for laughing, sharing, playing, jumping, puzzling, working together... After reading and studying, everyone was in need of relaxation and this was fulfilled through ATB.

4. Quiz programme

Every Saturday a quiz programme was organized in order to entertain the students and cultivate their knowledge of information. The students were appreciated through rewards and compensations. These types of programmes helped us a lot to strengthen community, creating a base for building connections between the teachers and students.

5. Field trips

Often our students were taken to different places to intimate their learning
experience on the spot. We went to Tanjore with our students and teachers to study the ancient culture of Tamilnadu and to learn about the history of Tanjore Temple, which was built 1000 years ago by the King of Raja Raja Cholan. When we came to know that the temple is still alive after three huge earthquakes, we were amazed at the infrastructures and how it was planned and built.

6. Night walks
   Sometimes we took students for full moon walks around Auroville, where they experienced the adventure of getting to know how places are at night time and what types of animals, birds, reptiles and other creatures live next to their existing environment.

7. Games (indoor and outdoor)
   Before the Evening Tuition begins, students typically have some outdoor games like Shuttlecock, Volleyball, Throw ball, Cricket, Skipping, Coco and Swinging with the supervision and the guidance of the tutors. After their studies, they have some indoor games like Chess, Carom, Snakes and Ladders, card games, Pallanguzhi, Dhayyam, etc. These let all the age groups mix and play together and have lots of fun learning about the rules and the procedures of the games.

8. Clean-ups
   In October, with the collaboration and cooperation of Kuilappalayam Cleanup Campaign, our Kuilappalayam Cultural Centre students were invited to join for a huge clean-up around our village. A second clean-up was organised in January, where our team contributed a huge performance in cleaning on the road side next to the village shops.

9. Creating Young Artists programme
   An art programme is conducted on a voluntary basis by an art teacher named Ramalingam, once a week on Saturdays. It is an ongoing programme which around 10 participants attend regularly. All participants are very motivated and involved with it.

10. My Dream My India
    In January a programme called “My Dream My India” was conducted by a visiting artist. Twenty of our students and volunteers participated in this event, which involved explaining what our India is specialized in and how our India is united even though it is diverse in many aspects. Participants described how they would like to see a change in the future development and growth of Mother Earth.

11. Eating Together
    Every Sunday from 7pm to 8pm we have a dinner together where everyone brings food to share. This has become a sustainable activity to create a platform for good understanding and sharing values among students, teachers, volunteers, and in the future with parents too.

Outcomes
The students in our programmes gained understanding and support for their studies; the tutors acted to relieve doubts and clarify the material. The tutors also understood the needs of the students’ requirements and so were able to hold up the hooks for reaching their targets.

English class was a major activity for our youths especially because, after a year, they have more confidence in speaking and writing. Through English class, the level of
English speaking and writing has increased and now they are able to face the field of applying their learning procedures practically. Seeing the success of improving their English knowledge was a great progress for us and for the students.

Kuilapalayam Cultural Centre directly helped all its the participants, but also indirectly helped to decreasing the worries and burdens of the parents. The Centre is a solution to how children and adults can find help in hard fields and subjects; it is also a way to hold to a daily commitment as a healthier alternative to some usual habits like drinking, coming late, neglecting children, etc.

With the additional activities, our students were given extra boosters which helped us increase the interest and the levels of the students. Always the students were attracted to the Centre by its activities, which motivate them to attend the programme regularly with no skipped days.

**Future direction**

We will continue to provide the best assistance and aids possible for strengthening the Evening Tuition activity for next year students. The three tutors will continue in their roles. We will carry over the English class programme next year, as an opportunity for interested students to learn English without fear. Our additional activities will be sustained, and will be strengthened by an expansion of the space with necessary buildings, for which we are still looking for funds.

**Conclusion**

Through facilitating and counseling in our English class and Tuition class, we have a strong faith that we can help students grow their inner potential and skills, letting them achieve their career and life goals. More than that, Kuilapalayam Cultural Centre has become a lively and well-appreciated space for building a healthy community.

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**Laboratory of Evolution**

**Introduction**

The Laboratory of Evolution (LOE) is a Documentation Centre about Evolution, which also conducts researches on Sri Aurobindo's and Mother's Integral Yoga and the practical aspects of its application. It runs a large specialized library open to the Auroville community and to its visitors from all over India and the world. The LOE team creates tools for sharing and teaching to groups and individuals. Our objective is to spread Sri Aurobindo's and Mother's work in a very simple way to people practicing any form of yoga, or even no conscious yoga at all, but becoming interested in a truer way of life.

**Activities of the year**

1. **Library**

The LOE Specialized Library, run by Kalyani and Olivier, is very much appreciated by researchers in many fields, including human sciences such as Sociology, Psychology, Philosophy and scientific discoveries in modern Biology, New Physics, and Healing. Our aim is to share with visitors the emerging correspondence between what is being discovered nowadays and what was foreseen by the great pioneers of Evolution, Sri Aurobindo and The Mother. For this, we keep all their works in all available languages and new books, CDs and DVDs related to Evolution in various fields. The library has a fair amount of books and reviews on subjects related to the evolutionary Yoga, including:
Consciousness in plants and animals

The oneness of all beings in the Quantum Field

Healing through consciousness

Yogic knowledge of the Chakras, centers of cosmic consciousness

The Koshas, subtle bodies and subtle worlds

The LOE Library has also a great range of books on past achievements of Humankind, in various countries at various times. Members of the library team are currently making compilations on some of these subjects and offering them as photocopied files.

2. Research

Namah conducted research on effects of deep relaxation on our development, and created a CD of recordings for Deep Relaxation. This will be a set of 3 CDs, one of which was completed this year:

Her academic research continued, which is based on Sri Aurobindo's work, interviews with Aurovilians, and analysis of the way we are developing ourselves in Auroville at the individual level. The collective dimension of Auroville appears during this research as well as the general situation in the world, and other research emerging from other places about the ways the world is changing and the transitional time for humanity. She completed ten interviews on Aurovilians’ lives and individual evolution, and two about the researches made on Mother’s Agenda and Sri Aurobindo’s Records on Yoga.

Bhaga and Namah together continued to meet weekly for their research on the current evolution of humanity, looked at contemporary documents, films, and made regular analysis of particularly meaningful aspects of their own inner development. Namah has also been continuing her participation in the research group CIRHU-Lila as representative of LOE.

Bhaga continued to share on her international blog, 'Lab of Evolution' (link below), the various results of her ongoing research about how the new evolutive step is manifesting itself – both within Auroville and the Aurovilians, including herself, and in many other places on the planet. At a few of these other places attempts are being made at conscious collective evolution in ways that very interestingly complement what is being done in Auroville.

3. Workshops

We conducted regular workshops on Yoga and Integral Yoga, Namah’s including practices of asanas, physical exercises, breathing techniques, concentration, active and passive meditation, and Bhaga focusing more on cell awareness – all linked with the different planes of our being. These workshops included developing awareness of the movements of the ego, and gaining an understanding of the progress and meaning of our life according to Sri Aurobindo’s and Mother’s vision. Put into practice, the activities of the workshops have an impact on one’s daily life, behaviour, habits and ways of thinking. Reflection, analysis and study are too part of our work in these workshops and retreats. People participating in them do so with different aims:

- To have a healthy and relaxing time for the body, mind and emotional system.
- To search deeper within oneself for how to change.
- To have an introduction to Sri Aurobindo and Mother’s Integral Yoga.
- To learn to teach yoga and another way of living.
- To get support, both during the retreat or workshop, and online.

In April, Bhaga gave a two-hour introduction about her research work on Cellular Consciousness to an existing Auroville group. By the end of that introduction everyone in the group wanted to try the workshop itself, so on the following meeting
days Bhaga conducted the workshop, with an excellent response from the dozen participants, and remarkable results for most of them. The introduction and first workshop session were filmed, which will allow us for the first time to make a DVD about this research work on Cellular Consciousness.

The LOE through Namah’s work periodically welcomed French groups (3 to 20 people) coming to Auroville, offering them presentations about Auroville and Integral Yoga.

Outcomes
Through Namah, this year we strengthened contact with researchers of France University. We made contact with people from all around the world who have had the opportunity to discover Auroville and Sri Aurobindo’s Integral Yoga through our workshops, especially yoga teachers. We connected too with some of Sri Aurobindo’s Indian devotees who were discovering Auroville.

Through Bhaga’s workshops on Cellular Consciousness, the level of collective acceptance seen this year in Auroville has marked the beginning of a wider societal acceptance of this topic of research. Some French visitors who had attended a previous such workshop by Bhaga are now envisaging an invitation for her to participate in an event in France that they are planning for later this year.

Reflections
Our librarians note that nowadays more and more people are keen to know about Near Death Experiences and to consider the approach of Death in a more conscious way. In that field we can see that an increasing number of people are having experiences of after-worlds and experimenting with the real causes of death.

For the topic of Cellular Consciousness Research to gain credibility in more scientific circles, it is essential to earn the respect, approval and permanent interest of people who during Bhaga’s workshops undergo experiences of the cellular work being done. These people can testify to the validity of the work and the efficacy of the teaching methods used. Individual testimonies are a good start, but the impact on society at large becomes stronger when a whole group as an existing entity expresses its support.

Last School

Introduction
A Secondary and Higher Secondary level school facility, Last School is unique in following the “Free Progress” approach by inviting the students to define their own program of development. This approach has a demonstrable structuring effect on students’ personalities and increases their autonomy, self-confidence and capacity of innovation. The school offers a curriculum designed to help each child develop integrally - their mental, vital, physical, psychic and spiritual aspects. The teachers assist the students in finding what they truly are and want to become, and how to build in themselves a rich multifaceted personality, through a great variety of learning activities.

Activities of the year
The program at Last School includes literature, art, social sciences, natural sciences, philosophy, mathematics, languages (including Sanskrit) and sports, but also extra-curricular activities, like dance, theater, trekking, and so on, so that all the parts of the being are awakened and developed. This year we had 27 full time students. In addition, courses were offered to young Aurovilians and adults in the subjects of Indian culture.
and Sri Aurobindo's philosophy. The Art Center was also used by some students from other Auroville schools and by adults.

The most momentous event of the year was our move to our new campus. The shifting, the work done for the renovation of the school furniture and the building of new ones was a great time of sharing and working together. The collective effort to create beauty was a nice starting point. We, students and teachers, have spent this year settling into the new space. There is still more to be done, as for example to making a beautiful garden. It will be another occasion for a collective work.

Besides the regular and intense work in the routine of the school time table, here are some the highlights of the year:

- The art workshops each semester when everyone, students and teachers, worked intensively together for close to five days, concluding with a presentation and display of the work.
- The trek to the Himalayas that was organized by Jean with some students participating.
- The educational trip to Nainital escorted by Aurevan.
- The shooting of Masha's and Bhavyo's movie where a whole group of students were involved.
- The trip to Goa with a group of fire jugglers.
- The fire juggling programme where many students performed solo.
- The intensive individual writing project worked on over a period of 8 weeks in the second and third semester.
- The play written by Dyuman and performed by a group of Last Schoolers.
- We have started again having an Assembly at the beginning of the day. A concentrated silence takes place, and the students seem to be used to it now.

Reflections

This was a year of opening and progress, but as if only a beginning, an initial condition to go further.

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**Life Education Centre**

**Introduction**

The aim of the Life Education Centre (LEC) is to provide access to value-oriented education and vocational training for young village women, and to improve their socio-economic conditions through capacity building and personal empowerment. LEC offers empowerment sessions, discussions and counselling, assisting students to gain skills and qualities that help for their future.

**Activities of the year**

Life Education Centre offers a 2-year programme that gives students training in functional skills like English and computers, vocational skills like tailoring, typing, and cooking, and social awareness and human interactive skills. Methods of the programme include group discussions, personal counseling, study tours, and culture-related open sessions. A total of 24 students attended LEC in 2014-2015, for periods ranging from a few months to the whole year.

This year LEC gave many workshops and trainings of importance for the physical, emotional and social well being of the local young village women. These included an 8-month art therapy programme, a 6-month programme on principles of Montessori for raising children, full day health related workshops, and monthly legal awareness programs. We added cooking sessions for 6 months on a bi-monthly basis, where we taught and learned the use of local vegetables cooked in the traditional south Indian
A project started earlier, documenting the life journeys of women at LEC, was completed. We also undertook 3 study tours, as part of the students’ cultural and social awareness program.

Below are detailed descriptions and outcomes of the various programmes of the year:

1. Tailoring: a 12 month program led by Indirani
   New students begin the program by learning handwork. This includes learning embroidery, sewing hooks and buttons, and making loops for hooks. After a three-month period, the students are assessed for their embroidery skills by asking them to make twenty-five embroidery stitches and ten creative designs on their own. When the students are able to use their hands with skill and have learned to do basic needle work, they are given additional training for handwork. This includes threadwork for shawls, and doing minor correction work for bags, tanks, shorts, and yoga mat bags by cleaning the left-over thread. When the students are ready, they are given a two to three day preparatory and introductory session on the tailoring machines. During this time, they learn to pedal the tailoring machine, change bobbin case and insert thread. They also learn preparatory stitches before actually beginning to sew. They gain a general idea about the parts of the tailoring machine and its maintenance and to distinguish between different types of fabric materials, especially cotton and polyester. The students are now ready to explore sewing on the tailoring machine. The students, most of them from the local villages wait for this stage and are excited to sew their own churidhars and blouses. As the first stage on the machine, the students bring samples of interest and get the material cut by the supervisor. They are then instructed on the placement of different pieces and given step-by-step instructions to stitch each part and finally put them together. When the students have gained some understanding, they go to the next stage, still needing help with cutting, but can do the stitching mostly themselves. As a next step, they learn to cut using samples. By March 2015, 6 students out of 24 who have attended LEC, have gained employment in various units within Auroville (5 of them in Tailoring).

2. Art therapy: an 8 month program led by Krupa
   Within these sessions, the young women attending LEC were offered opportunities for growth and insight through the visual arts. Given the complex and layered psychological histories of many of these women, the arts offer a nonverbal safe space for expressing and exploring a variety of emotions, including the common issue of low self-esteem. The group sessions were helpful in reflection and role modeling between the older and younger women, for meaningful social interaction and bonding through creativity.

   One project included the creation of recycled dolls representing an inner divinity series. Each woman was guided through meditation into drawing a self-portrait, a portrait of their favorite god or goddess, and then a combined image of the two. Linking the local culture and personal beliefs of each individual, this allowed each woman to connect the admired characteristics in these externalized figures to their own strengths. These drawings were translated into three-dimensional recycled dolls with altar boxes, resulting in a very detailed range of unique and original creations. Students who started attending the program: 7; those who completed the program: 10.

3. Education for Life, Discovering our human potential: a 6 month program led by Grace
   As part of the empowerment building tools and methodologies, we gave educational training to help students become aware of their innate qualities that can help them to teach and raise children more consciously. This course offered insights into early childhood education, how young children learn, and Montessori/Integral
education principles. The programme made the women better equipped to be teaching assistants and teachers, and/or to raise their own children with more awareness.

This program started as thrice weekly sessions, which finally became bi-weekly, spread across 6 months. Upon completion of the program participants made presentations to share their learning and knowledge. During their sharing, each expressed the joy and thrill of going through these 6 intensive months, of understanding core principles of human growth at childhood, of using geometry for shapes, phonetics, geography, the identification of flowers for the 12 qualities as represented by flowers of the Mother’s symbol, besides creating their own portfolios.

For all of them, the experience was an awakening of their awareness; to assimilate ideas and concepts which were new to them, and also in another language, was indeed a big challenge. While a few of them felt that they had ‘missed the bus’ when raising their own children in the period of 0-6 years, others felt that nothing was lost, and even now that their children are older, some basic principles are still relevant. *Course attended by 7 students, completed successfully by 5.*

4. Cooking with local vegetables: a 6 month program led by Buvanasundari

Our series titled ‘Locally grown vegetables’ was an immediate success as far as the women were concerned. The idea was to motivate people to use local vegetables, which are close to our environment – both for health reasons and as well as home budgets. These sessions attempted to do away with the bias and prejudices concerning cheap and local vegetables for village women; and for foreigners and guests, it allowed them the opportunity to taste, learn how to cook these vegetables which were completely alien to their cuisine. Most of the recipes that were demonstrated and taught over 6 months were new to all the participants, and every session was full of anecdotes and health tips based on the topic of the day. At the end of 6 months, 10 participants (all students of LEC), displayed their learning and understanding by preparing a full meal on 2 occasions – their repertoire spanned about 6-7 recipes per occasion and a total of 20 people each time could enjoy these meals. Going by the enthusiasm of the students and visiting guests and Aurovilians, there is enough interest to continue these sessions even over the summer period. From the experience gathered, the instructor is planning to bring out a cookbook – with recipes, anecdotes, health tips and other information, as a bilingual publication that is interesting for Tamil readers as well as English readers. A draft writing of this publication has started. *Regular participants over 6 months: 8-10 LEC Students, plus 3-6 visitors (Aurovilians, Guests, interns) for every session.*

5. Health and Healing: full day workshops led by Devi

The students of LEC, mostly from surrounding villages of Auroville, have little exposure to any music other than Tamil movie songs. Their perception of music is limited to what they watch on television and movie theaters. A series of sound and music workshops were conducted for the students to widen their perception of sounds around them. The series began with learning to be attentive to sounds around us that would help to become more sensitive. Exercises to be quiet to be able to listen and mimic sounds they hear were part of the beginning classes. The workshop then introduced the students to Tamil songs written by Tamil poet Bharathiar and the meaning of the poems discussed. The workshop also exposed the students to the harmonium used in traditional Indian music, and to music from other cultures. The students were receptive and appreciated the new things they learned and were surprised that they did not know such music exists in their culture. *Number of students: 10.*
6. Computer workshops on the use of internet: led by Devi

The aim of this series of workshops was to introduce the students to the basics of computers and internet through theoretical and experiential learning. The students were very enthusiastic in attending this series. They were eager to learn to send and receive emails and to browse the internet. The basics started with explanations about what is the internet, how to open a browser, websites and Google. The students practiced Googling about tailoring instructions, universities, courses, and of course secretly about movie stars and cinema. As a next step, email IDs were created for all the participants. They learned about working with Gmail in particular and practiced sending and receiving emails. They were also taught how to send attachments and other important features of the mail program. Number of students: 10.

7. Legal awareness sessions: 2 sessions led by Mrs. Ritha Vincent, anchored by Devi

LEC held a series of legal educative sessions to help bring awareness of women’s rights and laws related to women in India. This educative series offered women legal knowledge as a step towards their empowerment.

We started these sessions in response to the inability of many women who are running around from pillar to pole asking for help and not able to find anything useful. Many employers are aware of these situations with their women employees. A couple of employers printed the information about these sessions for their employees and asked them to attend the first session. A big thank you for these people for their concern about their workers! while the first session had a poor attendance (15 only), we directly approached a few units and talked to their women staff and the second session was attended by about 30 women. All the women who attended benefited immensely by asking questions related to their problems and getting knowledge about legal solutions.

A lot of efforts go into bringing a resource person like Mrs. Ritha who is a retired judge and currently a member of the Consumer Redressal Commission. She graciously offered these sessions as a service free of cost, for the welfare of the women around. She proved to be an empowering role model in her way of speaking and efforts to help uneducated women understand, and by giving anecdotes from her own life that the women could relate to.

We will continue to hold these sessions once a month. Number of attendees: 10 LEC Students and 10-20 women of the bioregion.

8. Documentation of the lives of young women: a project by Devi

Journeys is an attempt to share 12 life journeys from difficulties and challenges to dreams and aspirations, and in many cases, to successful actualization of those dreams after joining LEC. The recordings began in 2012 and were fully in Tamil, the mother tongue of the young women and the only language they are fluent in. Recordings continued in subsequent years, and this year the decision was made to publish the work. Lack of clarity and illiteracy even in their own mother tongue limited the verbal abilities of the young women. The unique meaning that was waiting to be expressed behind blanket terms to express reasons for happiness or cheerfulness, without talking about additional details, had to be uncovered through more talk and guidance. In addition to interpreting spoken words, there was much to be grasped from facial expressions and body language. Each recording was then brought out as a story in English, by assimilating the essence that formed the basis for a meaningful sequence in a written format, a process that involved almost reliving each student’s life, while empathizing with and understanding each journey more closely. Students who participated: 16, Students whose lives were part of the final document: 12.
9. Study-tours: Half day trips and full day trips led by Harini

An integral part of LEC’s awareness education is to expose students to different places and to allow them to experience different lifestyles, ambiances. Trips also allow them to assimilate new experiences. These tours are tied with chanting classes that the students have every morning as part of their daily prayer and meditation schedules. We try to include many former students of LEC during these tours.

The women enjoy visiting temples, and to make this meaningful they are prepared over the preceding 4-6 months by learning the important hymns and significance of a particular temple. They practice the hymns and verses – sometimes in Tamil or other times in Sanskrit. They become familiar with the mythology and stories, and then they are given the experience of visiting that particular temple.

The first half-day tour of this year was spent near Cuddalore, at Lord Siva’s very old temple Tirupadripuliyur and at Lord Vishnu’s temple Tiruvendippuram. The girls recited Sivapuranam (a hymn by Saivite saint Manickavasagar) in the first temple and Alwars pasurams (verses by Vaishnavite saints) in the second place. At both of these temples, we were fortunate to have expert guidance (one who grew up near the premises of the Siva temple, the other who dedicates his life to serving Lord Vishnu after his retirement as a school headmaster).

The second half-day trip was made to Mailam (abode of Lord Kartikeya), where the girls sang the Kanda Sashti kavacham (verses for protection), and to Tiruvakkarai (abode of Vakrakalaiaaman and Chandramouliswarar). During this trip, they stopped on the way back at the home of the parents-in-law of one the students, and enjoyed a brief hour in this village.

We took a full day trip to Tiruvanamalai to visit the Annamalai Siva temple and sing hymns to Siva. Later we visited the Sri Ramana Ashram and sang the Aksharamanamalai composed by Sri Ramana, taking a detour to visit a very ancient Vishnu shrine in Aaditiruvarangam where we listened to the enlightening talk of the priest and chanted Alwar Andal’s (a Vaishnavite woman saint) hymns. Finally we returned via the famous Vishnu temple town of Tirukoliyur, where the Lord (called Trivikrama) – stands in a pose where His one foot covers the earth fully, one foot covers the skies fully; He asks the king (who has gifted him three paces/feet of land), from where would he get his third foot of land? This is the depiction of the story of the third avatar of Vishnu, Vanam avatar.

For these trips, we were joined by most of our staff and a few of our old students; this time we also included the women staff of another Auroville unit. Total number of participants: 20-25 persons for each of the 3 trips. Total number students who learned chanting: all the students attending LEC.

10. Aviva and Yoga Nidra: weekly sessions led by Devi and Indirani

At LEC one full morning per week is dedicated to bodywork. The students do Aviva, a series of pelvic exercises. This is of particular interest as the movements are focused on the endocrine and reproductive systems in women. The students exercise to recorded music while following instructions from Indirani. At the end of the exercises, the students are given instructions for Yoga Nidra by Devi. This is a relaxation technique that allows the body and mind to go into deeper states of rest while giving opportunities for the subconscious thoughts and emotions to surface. Sometimes the Aviva sessions are replaced by Pranayama sessions (sessions for aligning body and mind with breath), also followed by Yoga Nidra.

Future direction

LEC has an overall problem of a shrinking student body (i.e. regular teenage girls), since school dropouts practically do not exist anymore, and even if one or two fail their
exams, they tend to retake them in the following 3-6 months and then join mainstream education. Who are still potential learners at LEC are young married women (settled with children/babies) – these wish to learn a skill with focus, and are good participants in other classes, but their turnover is also quick. Money pressures often force them to take up jobs, thus leaving LEC after a few months.

One of the main goals of all the various activities at LEC is to have a regular constant student body. This is a strong feeling from all the staff. The number of students is not as important at their continuity and regularity of commitment, especially in process-related longer programs like Art Therapy and educational training. Right now the model of LEC is such that it allows students to join at any time of the year. This disrupts the flow of classes for the rest of the regular attendees. From this year 2015 onwards, we would like students to commit for a 6-month program, during which each member of the teaching staff can complete their own module. The first 6-month period started in June 2015.

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**Lilaloka**

**Introduction**

The vision of Lilaloka (“the universe of Play”, in Sanskrit) is to be a Self-Learning Resource Centre for the Child. Lilaloka will offer various activities based on self-discovery and spontaneous self-learning through Play, which will allow the child to reveal himself as an individual and amongst others, without competition or judgement.

Lilaloka will be open to all children, schooled or not, having difficulties or not, beyond all categorizations and allowing mixes of ages. The team of Lilaloka wants to work in collaboration with schools and parents, considering each child as an evolving being. Lilaloka’s Phase I building is currently under construction and the primary activity this year has been of fund raising, communication, project management and construction. In addition, some of Lilaloka members have conducted activities with children under the Lilaloka umbrella at various locations in Auroville.

**Activities of the year**

1. Fundraising and Communications

   As Lilaloka is a project under construction, and our major activity has been that of fund raising, public relations, communication and administration. The activity consists of communicating about Lilaloka, creating communication tools, meeting people, organizing events, writing projects. We have developed our social media presence (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.) and enlarged our network to reach more people and other educational projects in a spirit of sharing of knowledge and researches regarding new ways of education in today’s world.

   Regular guided tours of Lilaloka Land and its first phase building, still under construction, were organized, as well as meetings with the Lilaloka core team for interested people including AVI members, parents and educators from India and abroad, and donors. We also had a fundraising event at Sri Ma in Auroville on 24 January, organised by Lilaloka team members assisted by Rosi & Henrico (parents of one of the children interested in joining Lilaloka once the building is ready).

   We have recently started to explore crowd funding options. Our leaflet (in English, French and Italian), our main document (in English and French) and our Lilaloka slideshows (in English and French) have been updated to include our new team members, the construction of the raw structure, new activities, updates about the needed budget etc. Links to download them have been added to the Auroville and
Lilaloka websites. The slideshows have also been uploaded to YouTube. Lilaloka posters and postcards (drawings by Emanuele Scanziani) continue to be displayed and sold in the Auroville Boutique at Visitor Centre. All proceeds goes towards Lilaloka project.

2. Lilaloka Phase I Construction

Lilaloka Phase I construction started in April 2014. This year our work toward manifesting the building consisted in securing required permissions, project management, and providing the necessary support and documents. We worked on and completed the finishing stage drawings for the ongoing construction with the help of White Ant Studio, our builder Anan and our architect Sigi. We had many meetings with all involved in the construction to discuss the building, how to get the water to come to our land, and collaboration with our neighbors.

3. Occupational Therapy and Supportive Learning Facilitation

Occupational Therapy involves one-on-one facilitation for a child using specific emerging areas of learning and development. The facilitation is based on clear assessments and observations of the therapist. This year Stacy of the Lilaloka team provided support to teachers on request from schools, by facilitating and screening in the classroom. This is done when there is an issue with a learner or family. Suggestions are then provided to the teacher. One-on-one sessions will only be able to take place once the Lilaloka constriction is complete. This year Occupational Therapy took place in four Auroville schools:

- Deepanam School: Made assessments of three children and provided advice to their teachers. Teacher training was requested as a long-term solution to address the needs of the teachers in relation to the children with different disabilities in the classroom.
- Nandanam Kindergarten: Assessed 2 children by request and provided teacher inputs in context. Parent support was requested and provided.
- The Learning Community: Gave individual therapeutic sessions weekly for one learner for one year. Participated in team meetings, and worked on an Individualized Education Programme with key people.
- Aikiyam School: Continued with supervision and programme design for the Aikiyam supportive learning programme, for the 7th year running. Stacy also gave two presentations about multisensorial play and its importance in the early years: one in Chennai, and one in the SAIER building for 5 senior educators and an architect.

4. Nature's Theatre (see report p. 139)

5. Recreational horse-riding for differently-abled children

The horse is an image of strength, vitality and dreams. Interacting with horses enables a child to widen his possibilities and to develop new forms of communication and socialization. Marianne worked with two children with behavioral problems and learning difficulties. They did a lot of work on the ground together with the horse, helping the children learn to concentrate as they have another being under their care. Marianne was also very lucky to find Margaux who is a fresh and a young psychomotor therapist and a rider full of enthusiasm to help her.

Outcomes

This year we were able to raise Rs 8,91,638 from 16 main donors, which was utilized for certain construction expenses (road consolidation, electrical installation, water meter, panel to signal the construction) and for the running costs of Lilaloka. Outreach
and communication efforts resulted in:

- AVI Germany published an article in their 2015 Newsletter about the Lilaloka project.
- Auroville Radio interviewed Lilaloka team members and published two articles on the Auroville Radio website.
- A Lilaloka group page was created on Facebook and a Twitter account opened, to allow followers, supporters and donors to be updated about Lilaloka activities and progress.
- A new Lilaloka website was designed and went live in February 2015. The website allows new visitors as well as our existing friends to learn about the Lilaloka project, our concept, activities, team, location, listen to audio program, watch our videos, download our documents, contribute to the project and keep abreast of Lilaloka news.
- Several articles were published in English and French in the Auroville “News and Notes” and Auronet as well, first to appeal for funds and then to keep the Auroville community informed about Lilaloka’s activities and progress.

The construction of the main Lilaloka building started in April 2014 and we were able to prepare the site, lay the foundation and erect all the walls. However, construction was halted in December 2014 due to lack of funds. We completed the full set of architectural plans and drawings for the finishing stage. With the collaboration of our neighbors, L’Avenir, Water Service and SAIIER, we were able to secure a connection to water piped from the big tank.

Over the last two years, Rajan has been creating a plant nursery at his house in preparation for the magical garden of Lilaloka. The plants were recently transported to the Lilaloka site to start to prepare some sections of the garden. And with the help of Joël, a professional Geobiologist from France, the energy lines going through the building were rebalanced and this should provide a harmonious energy for the Centre.

Stacy received parent feedback in relation to the need of individualized supportive education: “Over the last few years it has become evident that in order to maximize my child’s academic progress, he requires personalized, individual facilitation…. Outside of the academic classroom he is having several one-to-one sessions covering a range of areas which are helping him with various fields of his development, as well as giving him the opportunity to form deeper and trusting connections with other adults with whom he can share about his processes and feelings. I feel grateful for the input of each of these facilitators in my child’s process and feel that this has been a year of progress, which has fostered a better understanding of how to go about catering to the specific needs of this individual. I see the opportunities offered by Lilaloka to be potentially very enriching in this process of providing the child with individualized, specialized sessions that nurture specific needs, in an intimate and loving environment.”

The children who Marianne worked with through the horse-riding programme achieved quite some progress. The one who had some speaking problems started to say some words, and the other who had trouble with concentration became able to do a sequence of exercises without a problem. Both of the children grew to be more at ease with their bodies.

**Reflections**

We are exploring new avenues for fundraising within Auroville through SAIIER and the Resource Mobilization team, as well as within the Indian corporate sector for socially uplifting projects. The area of fundraising is strenuous and time consuming for the team, and we feel a need for a professional fundraiser perhaps through SAVI in the future.

The Lilaloka phase 1 building, currently under construction, will provide an accessible infrastructure for children with different abilities to be able to learn alongside
other children. Meeting with Rosi and Enrico who have a son with different abilities made us think even more about the accessibility of Lilaloka as well as the need for providing therapeutic and educational activities for children with different abilities.

So far, accounts and administrative tasks have been managed by team members, and we are now in search of an experienced administrator who can supervise accounting, coordinate with SAIER, do some secretary and communication work, etc. This will allow the project holders to focus better on the project in itself and the activities with children.

**Future direction**

Our fundraising goals for next year are to:

- Fundraise 70 lakh rupees in order to complete the Phase I building. Find a fundraiser and resource people for fundraising.
- Find an experienced administrator who can supervise accounting, coordinate with SAIER, do some secretary and communication work, etc.
- Apply to SAIER for funding under the Five Year Plan.

Our construction goal for next year is to finish the 1st phase of Lilaloka. This includes the construction of the main building (500 m2, accessible to differently-abled people) which gathers several activities and a small kitchen for welcoming people and meetings. It also includes the realization of the magical garden.

We hope to resume one-on-one Occupational Therapy sessions in an appropriately equipped room in the completed Lilaloka Phase I building. The Teachers’ Center has coordinated a series of sessions on supportive learning and special needs over the past year. Recently a suggestion emerged to create a teacher training programme for Auroville teachers. Stacy along with other trainers will be looking into this in the coming year.

**Conclusion**

A good website and social networking are very important for fundraising and sharing of knowledge. Our new website at [http://lilaloka.org](http://lilaloka.org) introduces the project in depth, allows visitors to download all our documents in different languages (booklets, leaflets, newsletters, videos, sound creations with children etc.), and keeps our well-wishers and donors informed about our progress, and links to our Facebook and Twitter pages. It has received a good response and our Facebook friends have increased steadily over the past year, enhancing our ability to communicate our goals and appeal for funds. It has also connected Lilaloka with several educational projects going on in the same spirit in many countries, with the AVI members, and also many parents and educators.

As the construction of Lilaloka building is currently halted due to lack of funds, we took the opportunity to guide interested people through Lilaloka Land, especially families who will be beneficiaries of the project and who feel enthusiastic about this new approach. It was very enriching to listen to their comments and needs as families who wish to offer a different experience of education to their children. To share with them about the concept of Play and Joy, natural and child centered learning, free choice and progress, mixed aged groups, non-judgmental and non-directive activities, and to answer their many questions and explore with them the options was very interesting. This direct contact with open minded parents and educators from Auroville and abroad, and with AVI members from different countries, emphasizes the urgent necessity of this project and of the true needs it aspires to fulfill in today’s world.
Mitra Youth Hostel

Introduction

Mitra Youth Hostel was created in 2006 to provide accommodation facilities for students who wish to stay in Auroville to fulfill their educational needs. It is a two-storey building located centrally in Auroville, behind Town Hall. It offers single rooms, double rooms, common spaces, and a kitchen that provides breakfast and dinner.

Activities of the year

This year Mitra hosted guests from: India (136 guests), the United States (37), France (12), Sweden (11), Germany (5), Brazil (3), South Korea (2), China (2), Belgium (2), Italy (1), Australia (1), Spain (2), Sri Lanka (1), Russia (1), Japan (1), Morocco (1), Austria (1), Syria (1), Denmark (1), Switzerland (1), and Uganda (1).

Guests included those participating as interns, trainees and volunteers with: Aranya, Auroville Bakery, Auroville Botanical Gardens, Auroville Consulting, Auroville Design Consultants, Auroville Papers, Auroville Radio, Auroville Theatre Group, Auroville Village Action Group, Bamboo Centre, Blue Light, Buddha Garden, Castelino Marchese, Creation architecture studio, Centre for Scientific Research, Dental Centre, Dustudio builder, Earth Institute, Earth & Us, Eco Pro, frisbee tournament, Gundolf (architecture), Imago, Inscape, Kenji (carpentry), L'Avenir d'Auroville, Life Education Center, Light Fish, Metamorphosis, Miracle, Naturellement, Outreach Media, Poonam (architecture), Red Earth Riding School, Sacred Groves, Sankalpa Art Journeys, Shama (architecture), Supriya (pottery), Svaram, Tapasya Design Studio, Unltd Tamil Nadu, Upasana, WasteLess, Wellpaper, White Ant Studio, and Windarra Farm.

This year at the hostel wall units were provided in all the rooms as were racks for drying clothes in the balconies. A concrete shed was constructed outside the conference hall, which also provides seating facilities for students along the garden. A mural was installed by Nausheen of Mandala Pottery. The covered parking shed outside Mitra was reduced to stop students from parking bikes inside, and now the place is used by the students to play badminton. Activities such as salsa dancing, yoga, and reading club were conducted during this year.

Nandanam Kindergarten

Introduction

At Nandanam Kindergarten we begin with the understanding that “the first principle of true teaching is that nothing can be taught”, and that “the teacher is not an instructor or a task master but a helper and a guide”. We frequently organize project-based learning, finding it an holistic and very effective educational method. Project-based learning starts with topics that children are interested in, and then widens the learning horizon each time. On the other hand we feel strongly that children should have the freedom to grow at their own pace and in their own way. We therefore try to balance these two approaches.

We also try to balance group activities, where children learn to coordinate with their friends and develop social qualities, with individual activities, where children have the freedom to do things in their own way.

At Nandanam Kindergarten children are grouped by age: Jalam class (age 2+), Prithvi class (age 3+), Vayu class (age 4+), and Agni class (age 5+).
1. Jalam class, age 2+

Each of these youngest students was entering kindergarten for the first time. Our emphasis was therefore on gaining the child’s trust and building an environment where he or she could feel at home after shifting to a new and alien environment. Facilitators tried to form one-to-one relationships with each child, creating activities and games according to the child’s individual preference. This group was unusual in that it included two girls and ten boys.

In the beginning of the year, individual games and activities took precedence over group ones. These gradually shifted to group based activities towards the end of the year. Social skills, motor skills, and sensory development were continuing themes throughout the year. Children were encouraged to: serve themselves at the dining-table, eat without help, use the toilet independently, take care of their own clothes, take care of their bags and shoes, handle school materials with respect, and ask for help from facilitators when required. In this way children learned to be more independent.

Children took advantage of various corners set up in Nandanam such as sand-pit, puzzles and games, dolls, painting, books, and musical instruments, which allow the kids to explore and connect with their interests. A ‘Practical-Life’ corner based on Montessori activities encouraged the practice of discipline in concentrating on an activity, and the habit of clearing up after using materials.

Through playground and indoor activities, the children’s motor skills were constantly exercised. Towards the end of school year a trampoline was introduced, which is always a great help developing the kids’ gross motor skills, as well as a source of entertainment and sport. Outdoor walks to the Matrimandir and to the field outside the school provided points of interest for the children as well as exposure to Nature. Children were also taken to the pool frequently.

Regular painting and collage activities nourished their creative urge. Children were also taken for ‘Play of painting’ regularly. Children explored spatial structures by playing with assorted shapes of wooden blocks.

This year the group was dominated by boys, so we put special concentration on physical activities. Children played games with bats and balls, and tricycles were used liberally. These activities helped to hold the children’s attention and to motivate and channel excess energy. Outings were organized to Bharat Nivas, Baraka, the Botanical Gardens, Solar Kitchen, Evergreen, Matrimandir and Certitude.

Some examples of our activities with the children are:

- Familiarization of colours was done through asking all children to wear a specific colour on a given day, by using only one colour to paint and draw with, and by introducing everyday items of a particular colour.
- Familiarization of numbers was encouraged through songs, stories, and parts of the body.
- Shapes were introduced through playing with wood blocks, collage, drawing, using their body parts, and through crafts.
- Sensory activities sensitized taste, smell and touch.
- The concept of ‘myself’ and ‘my family’ was initiated during circle time.

An extension of the crèche playground was initiated and manifested with help of the parents. This year there were so many boys that the playground area felt really small for the expression of their physical energies, and the need to address the situation became a priority. The parents felt the need and immediately put energies together to fundraise. Together we rasied funds joyfully and successfully and created a beautiful and spacious playground for the crèche children. This experience strengthened the bond between parents and teachers, creating a feeling that ‘yes we are together in supporting the children’s growth and learning’.
2. Prithvi class, age 3+

Last school year (2013 – 14) the teachers had regular classes and workshops with a trainer in the Montessori system of education. So when we were planning this school year, we felt inspired to integrate some of its elements into the class, though we did not want to embrace the Montessori system in its entirety.

The Montessori system includes arranging the physical environment into different activity corners. Since our group of kids this year was especially large (16 students), and very young (2+ years old), we felt that this arrangement would help us work with children in smaller groups as well as give them the possibility to choose and move according to their needs and interests. During the holidays we created many games and activities ourselves and then arranged them as different activity corners in the classroom:

- Craft corner: here every day we would propose a variety of activities each child was invited to participate by turn, in small groups. All manner of basic material was also available for children to create their own craft works as and when they wanted.
- Area for individual activity: here children could take up activities related to sensory development, concepts like colors, shapes, and numbers, or puzzles and games and play individually in a quiet concentrated atmosphere.
- Small group activities: here children could play board games and memory games, and build things in small groups - learning to collaborate, take turns, and socialize.
- Sandpit: here sand toys and small plastic animals were made available with the help of which children could create their own world in sand and water - digging, piling, pouring, floating etc. - and develop fine and gross motor skills both individually and collectively.
- Reading Corner: here children could pick up books of their choice and go through them either alone, with friends or with a teacher.

The three class teachers observed and gave support to the children in these areas as and when required. The children had ample time and space to work individually or in small groups following a natural flow.

We also kept a fixed daily routine in which all the children participated together (circle time, story time and time for physical activities) as well as weekly activities with the full class (Awareness Through the Body, Write Dance, Play of Painting, block room, children's corner, singing classes, outings and swimming).

In parallel, but only from the second term, we also took up projects including colors, numbers and shapes. Through the variety of activities and games proposed, children learned these concepts well.

3. Vayu class, age 4+

The two major projects of the year were Gardening and Insects, described in detail below. Over the course of the whole year we consciously worked on the children’s large motor skills to prepare them for writing. In the last term we worked on the Five Senses to explore their body and heighten their sensory awareness. We had other regular activities like the Write Dance, Awareness Though Body, Swimming, Play of Painting, and an activity corner called ‘Children's House’ where they could explore some learning material available from both Waldorf and Montessori systems of education.

Gardening project:

When Last year’s Vayu Group prepared a garden, the present Vayu group children would often go to help water the plants, weed the garden and observe with fascination as the vegetables grew. We took up gardening with this year’s group at
the children's request. Gardening was good for their physical growth, nourished their curiosity and was a field for exploring shapes, numbers, and colors. Many games and craft activities were also linked to the garden. By sensing and doing things with their bodies, and observing nature around the school and community gardens, the children became more conscious and felt more connected to their natural environment.

We were so enthusiastic about gardening this year that we started in the second week of the school. The children began to plough their own piece of land very actively and chose a geometric form for their garden. As they brought compost they noticed many earthworms crawling out of it. Deeply impressed, some stopped working with the compost, while others, curious, asked us many questions like “how can they live in the compost?” and “why are there?” We told them not to be afraid and explained the importance of these worms for our lives and for the topsoil. When the plot was ready the children chose seeds of vegetables and flowers for planting, according to the colors of flowers and the type of vegetable they wished to grow. This was also a counting exercise. There was heavy rain that week, right after we planted, so not all the seeds grew.

Yet with great joy and much patience, children counted the number of days each of the plants took to grow. To their surprise, just after the rain, many velvet bugs emerged from the ground. Children loved playing with them and spent most of their time observing how they moved and how soft and special they felt. They would put them all over their body. It was a wonderful to see how they loved this particular bug and we immediately knew that it would be good for them to get familiarized with insects around them. We decided to make this our next project. Our garden continued to grow - beautiful and strong. We had many cucumbers, beans, ladies fingers and tomatoes. Some sunflowers managed to grow despite the heavy rain. Other seeds did not sprout at all. The plants continued to grow through the year and the children took good care of their garden.

Insects project:

In the second term we chose Insects as our main project. It was the time when nature was in full bloom. Many flowers, caterpillars, beetles and bugs could be found. In an area of the the classroom we created a beautiful landscape with insects, and when the children came back from their holidays they were very happy. They noticed all the insects, talked about them a lot and were immediately taken by the project.

We created a nature table in the class with a terrarium, few bug boxes, and magnifying glasses. The children loved this setup, and just like little biologists, they became busy collecting insects. As they watched they shared lot of information between them. It was a wonderful atmosphere. They very much enjoyed discovering different bugs! Every day they collected dead bugs and live bugs and showed them to each other, and together learned their names, and watched them with the magnifying glasses then left them on the nature table for all to see.

Every day we read to them books on different types of insects and butterflies. The life cycle of a butterfly was their favorite topic. During the snack break they would go to the playground looking for caterpillars and bring them to their terrarium. Carefully they would feed a caterpillar with the same kind of leaves as the plant it was found on, until the caterpillar was ready to make its cocoon. The children waited and watched every day (a little more than week) for the butterfly to come out of the cocoon. It was a wonderful discovery to see that the bigger caterpillars took longer to become butterflies than the smaller ones. For each cocoon the children counted the days it took for the butterfly to come out. The moment they saw a butterfly coming out, they would wait for the butterfly to dry its wings. Then carefully one child would pick it up by its legs and bring it to the circle so that each one had a turn.
to admire its beauty, taking their own time, then carefully pass it to their friends one by one. We the teachers were amazed to see their patience and witness the cooperation. At the end of sharing the children would go outside and released the butterfly, saying goodbye. (It was told to them that these butterflies needed to eat.) It was a wonderful experience that also challenged their patience as they followed the whole process. The process was really magic to them. Some children even brought caterpillars home with them, to follow the process with their families.

During the Insects project we did craft in relation to the caterpillar’s life cycle. We had prepared different colors of caterpillar costumes for the children, and butterfly wings for them, and made flower masks to become a garden where the butterflies could look for food. We made all the things available to the children so they could enact the life cycle of a butterfly. At the end we wrote a short story about the life cycle of a caterpillar and the children presented this in the form of a play to their parents. On the whole the children had a wonderful experience and a lot of fun.

4. Agni class, age 5+

Litter-free project:
In the present world scenario it is crucial that the young generation is conscious and acts responsibly in taking care of the environment. With this aim in mind, we began the litter-free project by displaying some collage work on the board using waste material, and related it to the alphabet so that children could get exposure to the letters at the same time. After observing the display, children started bringing waste material from home to make their own creative crafts. We asked the children questions to see whether they had any understanding of the need for recycling waste and the process involved.

Later we cleaned our school campus and segregated the waste. Seeing the interest of the children we also invited resource persons Ribhu and Chandra from Eco Service. With their help we gave detailed information about the waste cycle. This was done through games, stories, role plays, discussion, flash cards, charts, videos, arts and crafts, painting and clay work.

Children actually went to the Eco Service with the waste collected at school. There they saw how the waste was organized and processed. They noticed the different qualities of paper, plastic, cloth material, metal, etc. and learned the impacts each type have on the environment.

Finally the children together set up a model of the recycling process at school.

Dasa Avatar project:
Children often see cartoons depicting Indian mythology but rarely do these cartoons convey the deeper values behind the myths. So we thought of reading the children the stories of the Dasa Avatar – the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu. Starting from the third month of school, we read them the story of one avatar every week.

The children were very interested and often took up the roles of the avatars as they played. So we enacted one Avatar – Matsaya, the Fish, together as a class. Seeing their sustained interest and enthusiasm, we decided to take up some of the other Avatars too and planned for a play. Each child selected a character that they wanted to be, and created dialogues, with the help of teachers when needed. The children themselves made the props and ornaments for the play. Teachers found a song in Tamil that briefly narrated the story of all the Avatars. Again with the help of the teachers a dance was composed in which all the children took part. This project resulted in the play and dance “Dasa Avatar” that the children presented to their parents, friends and other schools.

As part of this project the children also made drawings of the stories, and wrote a
short sentences depicting the scenes they had drawn. Later these were put together and a book was created. Finally the children were given a copy of the book to take home.

My Body project:

At the beginning of the year the children were not eating the salads served at lunch, wasting food, and often refusing to taste some of the items. Seeing this, the teachers started to encourage better food habits. We arranged for the children to prepare some simple food in class - fruit salad and salad. We also had an activity where the children tasted different kinds of vegetables and fruits according to sounds of the alphabet.

Later we took the children to the Solar Kitchen, where their school lunches come from. There the children saw the whole process of cooking and came to know how much effort is put in preparing food. Children asked many questions to the staff there – “where do the vegetables come from?”, “how many vegetables are needed?”, “how many people are working?”, “how long do they work?” etc.

We also showed them books of the human body where they could see pictures of internal organs and follow the whole digestive process. Detailed explanations were given of how food helps them grow. Children measured each other’s height and the different parts of their body - arms, legs, ears, nose, eyes, etc. Children were given a notebook where they made a drawing of the body parts they had measured and wrote down the measurements.

Outcomes

Jalam class:

Over the year the children learned to take better care of their personal needs. They developed social skills and fine and gross motor skills. Their creativity, imagination and curiosity were stimulated and they developed a greater sense of order and harmony through their activities.

Prithvi class:

We observed that in the beginning of the year children needed practice with gross motor skills and were mostly at the sandpit digging, piling, collecting things from nature, and creating their own games there. Around the second term they slowly started taking interest in other activities and spent more time exploring the corners. In the last term the children could really choose consciously from the variety of activities offered, being aware of each of them, and learned to play more independently.

It was slowly that we helped them become conscious of framework of the class, and helped them follow the routine of the day smoothly. Having ample space to explore freely within a fixed routine, and working individually, in spontaneous small groups, and with the whole class, children found a nice balance between flowing with their needs and choices and being disciplined and aware of the group dynamics.

Children also improved their fine and gross motor skills, enhanced their sensory awareness, improved their language, comprehension and reasoning. Their social skills improved. While learning to make their own choices and develop independence, they also became more disciplined, responsible and caring about things.

Vayu class:

The children (four girls and ten boys) and the two class teachers, as well as a volunteer who was with us for two months, benefited directly by all of the learning that took place.

We learned to observe Nature closely and discovered its rhythms and explored some
of its mysteries. The children developed their fine motor skills, gross motor skills and sensory development. They developed physical endurance. They developed patience and learned to respect the natural rhythm of life. They learned to share and collaborate with each other. They learned the concepts of colors, shapes, and numbers and they took the first steps towards pre-writing skills - recognizing letters and being introduced to phonetics.

Agni class:
From the three projects (Litter-free, Dasa Avatar, My Body) and the other regular activities, children improved their fine and gross motor skills, enhanced their sensory awareness, improved their food habits and learnt to be more careful and responsible about waste. They improved their spoken English and developed a greater capacity to comprehend complex thoughts. They acquired basic reading and writing skills. They learned more about numbers and measurements. They learnt to socialize and cooperate better. They developed a deeper and richer personality.

The three facilitating teachers deepened their understanding of the children, and improved their skills as facilitators.

Reflections

Jalam class:
Every year is a new experience for the teachers and an occasion for greater understanding of how to better support the children in their personal growth. This year the proportion of boys and girls was extremely imbalanced, due to which group dynamics was severely affected. Over years we have seen that when the gender in a class is fairly balanced, boys and girls contribute well to the integral growth of each other through their general temperaments, interests and energies. And when there is good mix of different nationalities, it opens them to different cultural experiences and helps them to accept and respect each other - a first important step towards human unity. Next year we would really like bring this awareness to the parents so that we may be able to work together with them and the other two kindergartens of Auroville to create a more balanced group in each kindergarten. It is important to do so right at the beginning, since more or less the same group stays together for the four years of kindergarten.

Prithvi class:
This was the first time we tried offering such ample space for the children’s free flow of activity. We observed that it helped us to follow the children more individually and support them in their specific needs. It allowed them to be more in harmony with themselves and therefore more settled.

One observation we have is that children in general are very distracted and have difficulty focusing and listening to instruction. We feel that this is largely due to over-stimulus through television, computers, video games and the like. We would like to focus a bit more on how to better provide an atmosphere where the children’s concentration is naturally enhanced and where they develop better their listening skills. To do this we will share our concerns with the parents, try to provide a more serene atmosphere at school, and guide to the children clearly and consistently with gentleness and understanding.

Vayu class:
It was pleasure and easier to work with the group once knowing their real interests. It was wonderful experience to see the children always wanting to know more, with lot of curiosity. We achieved our goals and objectives and created a lot of scope for
learning. The team has been very sensitive towards each child and catered to each child’s need by being flexible with time, which made our learning together more fun.

Agni class:

For the teachers it was really a great experience being with the children, supporting them in their learning process and simultaneously growing together. Working with them we observed that we need to be patient and observant in understanding their needs and in helping them in their learning process.

We had more Tamil speaking kids this year, but their English knowledge was abundant and they could grasp everything easily. They were eager to learn and were very energetic. The unique talent of each child was expressed through the projects. They had a lot of creative ideas which even made us reflect. We feel we achieved our goals and objectives.

Future direction

Prithvi class:

We are happy with the way the class was designed this year and would like to follow a similar plan next year. We will improve upon it by providing a richer environment to explore, both in terms of material and activities.

Vayu class:

The goal for next year is to know the children in the first place. We will work on the different concepts, introduce phonetics and focus on the children’s physical development. If they are interested we will organize an Insects project like this year, or we will come up with projects of their interest.

Agni class:

In the future we mean to design projects in a more integrated way, so as to include all subjects within them. Our documentation of the different completed projects will remain as a resource to build upon.

We will continue to focus on each child individually in order to meet their needs. We will explore and apply multiple teaching methods in order to make the learning process easier and more effective.

Conclusion

At Nanadanam we ensured collective as well as one to one interaction with parents, creating a strong collaborative learning environment. Parents were updated regarding their child’s progress in school and we sought their feedback, enabling parents and facilitators to work together in parallel toward the child’s overall development. From our experience of the previous year, an event to bring all parents together was organized – a potluck lunch. This was an excellent way to provide a platform for parents to get to know each other better. The parents will need to support each other over the next several years, as the group of children continues together from Kindergarten to primary and higher secondary schools.

Though we have found a general approach at Nandanam that we are happy with, and repeat the activities that are successful, every project, every situation and every child is handled in a unique and individual way based on the real situation of the moment. This learning is neverending and can always be enhanced and shared with all.
New Creation Sports

Introduction
New Creation Sports, the sports program for Aikiyam School, takes place every school day from 4-5pm with 100 children from the surrounding villages attending. There we conduct all the major sports activities such as basketball, volleyball, running, swimming, and athletics.

Activities of the year
As well as the regular participation by Aikiyam students, New Creation Sports is also host to a range of extracurricular sports, including those for adults. These include evening, morning, and weekend activities in basketball, volleyball, swimming, badminton, and gymnastics.

This year we also hosted several all-day women’s and children's sports festivals, which saw the participation of several hundred women and children from the bioregion. Many volunteers guided participants during those great days of activities, competitions and enjoyments.

Outcomes
The offerings of New Creation Sports allow many people to practice sports in Auroville on a regular basis. The sportsground has helped to integrate the various social backgrounds inherent to Auroville, and to bring people together in a relaxing and free atmosphere.

Reflections
The main great progress and innovation has been our swimming program; children from the surrounding villages are able to swim, even the girls, which is rare in India.

Future direction
We would like to teach 'life saving' at the swimming pool to Aikiyam students, enabling them to know how to save lives and help others. We also plan to extend competitions with other Auroville schools.

Oli School

Introduction
In Auroville, the local Indian community cohabits together with the international community. However, the social and cultural gap persists, especially between Indian villagers and Aurovilians. Constant efforts are made to avoid this gap that goes against the values advocated by Auroville. The team at Oli School believe that the way to make a change is through education, starting at the earliest years of life.

Around the world, and more among the poor, the so-called alternative schools such as Montessori or Steiner-Waldorf schools, are reserved for social elite that can meet the high costs of education of their children. Today it is still very rare that schools for the children of poor villages, such as those surrounding Auroville, adopt such pedagogies although their efficiency has been proven in all social and cultural contexts.

Oli School was born to fill this gap. Our objective is to offer to underprivileged populations, at the fringe of Indian society, the possibility of human and social empowerment. In fact, we believe that children have the natural capacity to build relationships and cooperate, and carry the values of peace and joy of life that can unfold in a caring school environment. And we believe that, as asserted by Sri Aurobindo and
the Mother, but also by other educators like Maria Montessori, education is the best way to raise consciousness. From the point of view of an educational choice, we can say Oli School tries to combine the experience and vision of two major currents: “free progress” and the Montessori pedagogy.

Activities of the year
During the year 2014 to 2015 Oli School went through a period of transition. Now we work in a renewed structure and educational view. Oli School started in 2010 and since July 2013 has been functioning with a crèche and kindergarten (kids 1.6 to 6 years). In July 2014 the school moved from New Creation community to the Last School campus in Aspiration. At present Oli School serves 100 kids aged 2 to 6 years. Six Aurovilians make up an active support group of the school, and there is one main financial donor. There are eleven teachers working and being continually trained at the school, two ammas, and one Newcomer who is the art teacher.

Through these years of work we came up with an Oli school curriculum. We try to respect the alternation of intellectual, practical, physical and sensory activities, according to the Montessori principles and in agreement with the integral education approach. Our classrooms are set up to answer the needs of the kids and teachers.

During the past years, our kids took part in the Nirmiti project and visited the Matrimandir. We received very positive feedback from the Matrimandir team and would like to continue with this activity twice a month. The Nirmiti project of the Auroville Botanical Gardens is based on the principles of land-art, which seek to create with objects that are found in nature. It takes place in an environment of calm that helps quiet the mind, where the kids have an opportunity to make different creations, from simple drawings with a few leaves to an installation built over several days. All the creations are ephemeral; what is most important is to emphasize the energy of the creation and not its result. This is how we educate the children to be, by creating a space where they can express themselves and produce something without having to worry about the results.

Outcomes
The kids who leave the school at the age of 6 years old are ready to start any type of education on an elementary level.

We strive to create an educative community through our work. It is important to us to relate with the families of the children who attend Oli School. We see education as concerning the entire community (children, parents, staff). This means, for example, that children are welcomed in an environment that takes into account the situation of poverty of their families (the school provides at least two meals), that parents are regularly informed (by school/parents meetings) of the pedagogy practiced by the school, and that teachers are trained in an empowering approach.

A lot of attention is given to the professional quality of the teachers and assistants. At the school, with the exception of the director, the teaching staff consists mainly of women from nearby Tamil villages who have, in principle, not received any teaching or specialized training. The aim of the school is to provide a safe and harmonious environment where all including the teachers can “be” and empower themselves. The school therefore undertakes training of the teachers as soon as they are hired. This training is provided mostly by Ana Garcia, who is trained in the Montessori pedagogy.

We also set up workshops for the teachers in subjects such as Holonenergy, arts and crafts, English language, blocks, Play of Painting, swimming, free dance, introduction to integral education, and storytelling to provide additional educational tools and to improve the quality of their presence with the children.
Future direction

Besides the children's education and training for teachers, other courses are planned in the future for families, in accordance with the declared objective of the establishment of an educational community. We are also building a new playground to support development of the children's gross motor skills, and working on an extension of the classroom buildings.

Conclusion

At Oli School we try to offer a clean, harmonious and safe environment that covers the basic needs of a child between 2 to 6 years old. Our classrooms and projects aim to help our students be creative and spontaneous, develop awareness for the surroundings and the natural environment, and know a place of silence where they can contact with their inner peace.

ONE ASIA project

Introduction

ONE ASIA is a project dedicated to Human Unity that started in Auroville in 2010. Our aim is to present Asia's cultural richness and profound spirituality to the world in order to create a new cultural milieu.

Activities of the year

1. We held ONE ASIA 2014 in Taipei, which was our third large, collective cultural exchange program and the first one outside of India.
2. We continued building our studio/office “Swastika”, the ONE ASIA studio in Swayam community.
3. Through the platform of Swastika we took up organizing collaborative design projects with NGOs in Asia. Work started with an NGO in Gujarat and one in Kyoto, Japan.
4. We worked on ongoing sustainable architecture/landscape/interior design projects in Yunnan, China. We also received offers to work on projects in Auroville, Rajasthan and Gujarat.
5. At the Auroville Festival in Chennai, Jyoti was invited to give a presentation at the closing event, along with eminent speakers Dr. Karan Singh, Sir Mark Tully, and Dr. Vishakha Desai.

Outcomes

The event ONE ASIA 2014 in Taipei received many students and members of the public who participated in performing arts workshops during the event. The art exhibitions and Asian tea ceremonies were well received by the art connoisseurs in Taiwan.

Reflections

This was a year with a lot of work toward manifesting the large event in Taiwan. Because of the political situation in Taiwan, we had difficulty receiving funds from other government institutions. ONE ASIA is becoming largely recognized as an organizer for international cultural exchange events.

Future direction

We are planning for ONE ASIA 2016 which will held in Kyoto. In 2015 we will spend time promoting the event and start collecting funds for it. At the same time we will
work on some social projects, helping to deepen our existing ties with ONE ASIA’s individual and collective supporters all over the world.

**Conclusion**

In our view it is important to create connections between Auroville and the outside world. Cultural and artistic exchange is important and useful for mutual understanding at many levels. Through our cultural programs we are creating “small Auroville” as a platform to work for Human Unity, and find the experience very useful and effective in learning this essence. ONE ASIA is becoming a platform of mutual learning and progress dedicated to Unity in Diversity. We hope this work will be reflected in Auroville’s inner and outer development, especially in the International Zone.

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**Pitanga Cultural Centre**

**Introduction**

“Perfection is the true aim of all culture, the spiritual and psychic, the mental, the vital - and it must be the aim of our physical culture also. If our seeking is for a total perfection of the being, the physical part of it cannot be left aside; for the body is the material basis, the body is the instrument which we have to use.” - Sri Aurobindo

Pitanga Cultural Centre stands to support the growth of fullest potential, well being and consciousness through offering physical and cultural activities for children and adults in Auroville. It dedicates its service to the development and enhancement of physical education and cultural activities in the light of Mother and Sri Aurobindo's Yoga. Pitanga is a service by the community for the community with occasional help from visiting teachers, therapists and artists.

**Activities of the year**

The centre, located in the community of Samasti, has seven rooms on two floors and aims to provide an atmosphere of beauty hosting a lively program of physical education and cultural activities, six days a week, for community members and registered guests of Auroville. Our teachers and therapists are mainly Aurovilians and Newcomers who offer their service to the community. We also have a number of returning guest teachers and therapists.

This year the centre had up to 650 visits per week from adults and children for 58 classes and 68 treatment sessions. The service is completely free for community members and priority of space is given to Auroville teachers and therapists. 2014-2015 was a busy year for programming in which we tried to increase the variety of activities offered to the community. Notable new additions to our class schedule this year were Chi Qong, Kendo martial arts, and Kickboxing as well as an increase in the variety of yoga classes taught.

In 2014-2015 our weekly program consisted of the following: (figures taken in February 2015)

- Yoga classes of different styles and levels: 40 classes per week
- Dance classes 3 classes per week
- Martial Arts 8 classes per week
- Other exercise 3 classes per week
- Trainings and practice groups (Shiatsu and Holoenergetics) 2 per week
- Music classes and rehearsals 2 per week

Our health care activities included 68 weekly appointments offered for a variety of
treatments including Acupuncture, Physiotherapy, Cranial Sacral Therapy, Inner Body Exploration, Energy work, Thai Yoga Massage, Oil Massage, Hypnotherapy, Shiatsu and Somatic Movement Therapy, all facilitated by Aurovilians. There is also a regular and lively homeopath service.

Pitanga also hosted the following, non regular activities over the year:

- Art Exhibitions: 7 exhibitions
- Performances & concerts: 11 programs
- Workshops: 36 workshops
- Community presentations and films: 8 programs

We also acquired a big screen and projector through a grant from Stichting De Zaaier; this helped us greatly enhance our educational possibilities. We could show film footage that supports class activities, such as films on BKS Iyengar’s personal yoga practice. We held a number of evenings to enhance education in relation to music, showing concert and music films. The projector has also been a useful tool for community members to share their learnings, such as when Marc and Matilde shared their family’s journey to Central and South America to learn about coffee and cacao.

Pitanga team:

We placed special emphasis this year on creating an enabling environment for capacity development in our team. Five of our team members took part in the Stewardship for New Emergence training, which helped us develop skillsets for systems design as well as cohesion and alignment among us. We also arranged for our workers to have a one day session with Stewardship practitioner coaches. We have found this training to be of huge benefit to us.

Tatiana and Angela enhanced their yoga training with a course with Geeta Iyengar in Pune, partly funded by Stichting De Zaaier. This workshop was quite poignant as it occurred shortly after the passing of BKS Iyengar, and thousands of teachers were in attendance from all corners of the world. This created a rich field of learning that Angela and Tatiana were able to bring into their classes on return in Auroville.

We arranged intensive English classes three days a week for our workers during the summer months. This was greatly appreciated by them, and our service will be enhanced when they can communicate more freely with the service users.

Outreach:

We also made a concerted effort to reach out to people who do not usually come to Pitanga or who, we felt, could especially benefit from our activities. These included people holding stressful positions in working groups and people who were unwell. We emailed working groups directly this year at various times, to offer them appointments to try some of our relaxing activities.

Pitanga has partnered with the Edayanchavadi Healing Centre which offers body, mind, spirit programs to the local villagers. The two centres have shared resources on complimentary activities such as for the visiting teachers and therapists over the past year.

Place:

We have been redesigning some of the infrastructure of Pitanga to make the service more efficient and convenient to users, such as new parking facilities and sheds, and new shelving that will help us to stock more yoga and other equipment.

After many years of dedicated practice, the Auroville Aikido moved from Pitanga to their new facility. We wish them well and welcome Kendo and Kickboxing as replacement martial arts.
Reflections

We are very happy with the increase in the number of regular Aurovilian and Newcomer teachers and therapists who have joined our team. Pitanga is a natural base for Newcomers to Auroville to integrate, share their skills and work in an environment that is very community oriented.

This year we have also been reflecting on how our activities can better inform growth of consciousness, well being, personal potential, and change in Auroville’s society. To that end we enrolled partners such as Auroville Consulting, who helped us become aware of our energy and water use and implement corrective measures in our operation patterns and choice of appliances.

Future direction

Our goal for next year is to listen carefully to the Pitanga users and team and to design the service so that it has the greatest impact it can as an instrument supporting the growth in consciousness of Auroville and its population. This we will do by carefully programming activities and partnering with others in the community, or visiting, who can build content. For example we would like to start on the theme of food and its impact on us, connecting our local farms and food experts with our regular practitioners, and showing films of the leading theories on nutrition and food practices.

We would also like to co-create with other Aurovilians in similar themes using Pitanga's regular daily audience of serious practitioners and the venue facilities.

We will continue to support our teachers, therapists, staff and workers in developing their capacity by offering suitable training programs and other opportunities. We have found that there are great benefits to be harvested when we build capacity in our team for skill enhancement, alignment and cohesion.

SAIIER Transport Service

Introduction

The main purpose of the SAIIER Transport is to transport Auroville school children to their schools and back home, to bring children to sports and back home, to bring lunch to schools from the Solar Kitchen, to allow field trips for schools, and to meet any other transport need arising in relation to the schools.

Activities of the year

The SAIIER Transport service endeavors to create and maintain common Transport facilities in Auroville. Mostly it is doing school trips. The service recently enlarged its scope of operation and now also offers collective transport to Aurovilians, making trips to Pondicherry.

Presently the service has 11 vehicles: 4 buses, 2 vans, 1 Jeep, 1 food van (to transport food from Solar Kitchen) and 1 bike. The Transport Service runs from two buildings, an office cum caretaker’s building and a workshop building. In total there are 13 sheds including a new shed for vans, the Jeep and the food van.

In addition to our services for the schools and students, we also offer services to some of the senior citizens of Auroville who work in different places in the community. We pick them up from their homes and drop them back home. We also send vehicles to carry people to Nature Camp in Kavunji every year.
Reflections
Both the collective transport (Pondicherry trip) and services offered to senior citizens are of great help to residents who do not have own vehicles, unable to cycle very far, and/or prefer to use common transport facilities.

Savitri Bhavan

Introduction
The central purpose of Savitri Bhavan is to help foster the values on which a true and lasting human unity can be founded, by making available to students and seekers in Auroville and worldwide all possible materials, facilities and assistance that would aid a deeper and more widespread understanding of the vision and teachings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. The activities of the Bhavan are aimed at Aurovilians (children, youth and adults), and interested members of the general public. Savitri Bhavan is open to the general public from 9-5 daily except Sundays throughout the year, and additionally hosts musical offerings, film-shows and special presentations.

Savitri Bhavan is maintained by a team of 17 Aurovilians, 6 employees, and a fluctuating number of volunteers from Auroville and outside according to need and availability. The knowledge shared and the materials produced at Savitri Bhavan are intended to benefit humanity as a whole, and Auroville, through its residents and educational centres and activities, in particular. They are offered freely, and everyone is welcome to benefit from them as they feel appropriate.

Activities of the year
The work of Savitri Bhavan is carried on in 4 main areas: Outreach Activities, which include 10 regular weekly classes and courses as well as special events such as exhibitions, musical offerings, workshops and orientation sessions; the collection, creation and arrangement of Learning Materials in 5 collections, each of which has its own purpose (see report p. 78); Publications of journals, books and booklets as well as DVDs (see report p. 80); and Research Projects aiming to provide new materials for use in the other 3 areas (see report p. 82).

Savitri Bhavan holds ten regular weekly courses throughout the year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>No. of sessions</th>
<th>Timings</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Savitri Study Circle</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>10:30-12pm Sundays</td>
<td>30-60</td>
<td>Systematic group study of the text of Sri Aurobindo’s Savitri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integral Yoga in Savitri</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>5-6pm Mondays</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Study of Sri Aurobindo’s yoga as shown in the text of Savitri; led by Dr. Ananda Reddy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoga and the Evolution of Man</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>3-4 pm Mon., Tues., Fri.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Study of yoga practice as a tool for individual and collective development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OM Choir</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>5.45–7.15pm Tues.</td>
<td>60-100</td>
<td>Group chanting of Om, guided by Narad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savitri Study in Tamil a) for adults at Savitri Bhavan b) at Arul Vazhi School</td>
<td>44 52</td>
<td>a) 5-6pm Tues. b) 4.30-5.30pm Sat.</td>
<td>a) 10 b) 20</td>
<td>Group study in Tamil of the text of Sri Aurobindo’s Savitri in Tamil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recorded talks of the Mother (In French, from the Agenda)</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>4-5pm Tues., Fri., Sat.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Listening to recordings of The Mother’s Agenda with Gangalakshmi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reading *The Life Divine* 48 5.30-6.30pm Wednesdays 25  Group reading and study of *The Life Divine*

The English of *Savitri* 41 4-5pm Thursdays 20  Study of the vocabulary, sentence-structure and imagery of Sri Aurobindo’s poem

*Satsang* 36 5-6.30pm Saturdays 5  Gathering for spiritual sharing

Other programmes organised by Savitri Bhavan this year included:

Visits of Auroville School Groups: 2
1. On February 4, 2015 Chitra brought 20 children from Deepanam school, and Shraddhavan answered their questions about Savitri Bhavan
2. On February 17, 2015 Lisbeth brought 18 children from Transition School, and Loretta gave them a talk about Sri Aurobindo and the Mother

Monthly Full Moon gatherings: 12, with an average participation of 10

Exhibitions: 6
2. *Meditations on Savitri: Books Two and Three* in the Picture Gallery, June to October 2014
4. *Glimpses of The Mother* in the upstairs corridor and then the Hall, Feb. to Nov. 2014;

Large numbers of visitors saw these exhibitions at Savitri Bhavan; 1500 people are estimated to have visited the one at the Ashram.

Film Shows: 37 with an average participation of 15

Musical Offerings: 3
1. December 18, 2014 – ‘Gregorian *Savitri*’: a passage from *Savitri* sung in Gregorian chant style by professional musicians from Australia, Dr. Kim Cunio and Heather Lee (audience of about 100 people)
2. January 31, 2014 – Ney recital by Tugay Basar on traditional Turkish flute (audience of about 50 people)
3. March 15, 2015 – Ladislav Brozman, solo violin performance (audience of about 50 people)

Special Events and Presentations: 6
1. ‘*Remembering Professor Arabinda Basu*’ with a film on his life and work, and a special lecture by Dr. Aster Patel; July 20, 2014 (audience of about 60 people).
2. Preview of a film in preparation on Sri Aurobindo’s Integral Yoga created by Manoj P. and others; November 20, 2014 (audience of about 30).
3. ‘Living with Savitri’: The 5th Dr. M.V. Nadkarni Memorial Lecture, given by Dr. Premananda Kumar, with Book Release of The English of Savitri by Shraddhavan; February 19, 2015 (audience of about 120 people).

4. Talk on Vedastad Institute of Integral Yoga in the Netherlands, by Mrs. Atie Heuver; March 6, 2015 (audience of about 10 people).

5. Two presentations by Franz F. on The Eternity Game created by Medhananda and Yvonne Artaud; (March 6 and 20, 2015) attended by about 20 people on each occasion.

Workshops:
1. Savitri Study Camp on Book Three, The Book of the Divine Mother (August 6-12, 2014; 25 participants, 12 from Auroville and Pondicherry, 13 from other parts of India who were accommodated in the Savitri Hostel). The daily programme consisted of two guided study sessions each morning, with time for individual study in the afternoons using the resources of Savitri Bhavan, and a film programme each evening.

2. Spandan, Intensive Introductory Sanskrit Workshop led by Dr. Sampadananda Mishra of the Foundation for Indian Culture in Pondicherry (October 20-25, 2014 with 24 participants from Auroville).

3. Special programme for a group of Integral Yoga instructors from the Netherlands which, besides many other activities in Auroville and Pondicherry mentored by Ashesh Joshi, included 9 one-hour intensive study sessions on Book Seven of Savitri, The Book of Yoga, led by Shraddhavan and extending throughout the month of January 2015.

4. In the course of the year, Ashesh Joshi led 52 half-day workshops introducing the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

Other classes and events: 10
1. April to June 2014: Ancient voice exercises for singing OM led by Kayananda.
2. October 4, 2014 onwards: weekly Basic English Course by Buvanasundari for Tamil Aurovilians.
3. November 6, 2014 onwards Sanskrit Mantras chanting twice a week in the Hall.
4. November 17, 2014 – The Mother’s Chair was placed in the Hall for silent concentration.
8. March 12, 2015 – Inaugural concentration for the Auroville Retreat group was held in the Amphitheatre of Savitri Bhavan. For this occasion a special 30-minute recording of music and messages from the Mother about Auroville was compiled with the assistance of Ruben Berlanga.

Orientation Sessions: 8
1. May 9, 2014 by Ashesh Joshi for a group of seekers from China.
3. October 8, 2014 by Ashesh Joshi for a group of seekers from China.
4. November 13, 2014 by Shraddhavan for a group of students and faculty from Gothenberg University, Sweden.
6. February 5, 2015 by Helmut for architecture students from Manipal.
7. February 11, 2015 by Ashesh Joshi for a group from Germany.
8. March 21, 2015, by by Manoj Pavitran for a group of young Indian entrepreneurs.
Other programmes hosted at Savitri Bhavan this year included:

- 5 nos. ‘Welcome’ programmes for Newcomers organised by the Entry Service on April 9, August 27, October 14, December 17, 2014 and February 11, 2015.
- 7 nos. 3-day early morning Pranayama workshops of one hour each led by JV Avadhanalu in July, August, November, September and October 2014 and 2 in January 2015.

The University of Human Unity offered the following advanced seminars from January 22 to March 15, 2015:

1. The Vedic Gayatri Mantra in the context of the original Yoga of the ancient Rishis: Vedic philology and philosophy (8 nos. 1-hour sessions presented by Nishta Muller)
2. The Philosophy of Consciousness: Hegel and Sri Aurobindo: (8 nos. 1-hour sessions presented by Rod Hemsell)
3. Music – Self-Expression: music theory (7 nos. 2-hour sessions presented by Ladislav Brozman)
4. Savitri Reading (15 nos. 2.5 hour sessions presented by Rod Hemsell)

Visits of Student Groups: 13 (824 students in all)

A) Architecture Students
1. July 18, 2014 – Govt. Polytechnic, Pondicherry – 55 students
2. August 22, 2014 – MAM School of Architecture, Trichy – 75 Students
3. October 8, 2014 – Aayojan School of Architecture, Jaipur – 139 students
4. November 17, 2014 – School of Architecture, Kottayam – 34 students
5. December 20, 2014 – IIT Karagpur – 40 students
6. December 17, 2014 – Design Institute of Kottayam – 20 students
8. January 12, 2015 – From Vadodara – 60 students
11. February 9, 2015 – IIT Roorkee – 18 students
12. February 5, 2015 – From Manipal – 6 students

B) Other Students
1. August 23, 2014 – 65 students from Indira Gandhi Women’s College, Tindivanam.
2. October 8, 2014 – 20 students from Sri Aurobindo School, Hyderabad.

Each year we aim to include activities in all the four languages of Auroville: Tamil, French, Sanskrit and English.

Tamil:
This year, in addition to the regular weekly classes on Savitri led by Bhuvanasundari and Sudarshen at Savitri Bhavan and in Arul Vazhi school, a research project in Tamil was conducted by our team-member Dhanalakshmi, who focussed on translating into Tamil a collection of talks by the Mother to Huta, entitled Mother, You said So ... . These fascinating talks were noted down from memory by Huta in the course of her 18-year collaboration with the Mother, and her notes were corrected by the Mother herself for publication. It is hoped that this new resource for Tamil seekers can be published in the course of 2015-16.
Sanskrit:
At the request of interested Aurovilians, Dr. Sampadananda Mishra of the Foundation for Indian Culture in Pondicherry was invited to conduct an intensive workshop in Sanskrit for beginners. The workshop was held from 20-25th Oct. 2014 and attended by 24 enthusiastic Aurovilians, Newcomers and Volunteers. After the workshop was over, several of them decided to continue a regular programme of Sanskrit chanting from 7-8 am on two mornings per week at Savitri Bhavan. The interest generated by this workshop was such that it is hoped that in 2015 Dr. Mishra will give another one, targeting Aurovilians who would be interested to share what they have been learning in Auroville and Outreach schools.

French:
The House of Mother’s Agenda, housed at Savitri Bhavan since 2006, holds regular programmes for listening to the Mother’s recorded Agenda talks three times a week, and Gangalakshmi is always willing to meet Francophone visitors and Aurovilians to share her understanding to the teachings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. In 2014-15, French newcomer Beatrice Baldacchino initiated a research project into the Mother’s Entretiens, her twice-weekly talks in French to the teenagers of the Ashram school from 1951 to 1959, in many of which she shared guidance on ‘La Science de Vivre’ or ‘How to Live’: on sleep and dreams, eating, studies, sports, relationships with friends and family, attitude to progress, and so on. In this way she could widen her own knowledge of the Mother’s teachings while preparing a compilation that could later be offered as a bi-lingual publication, and as a course to young people here in Auroville.

English:
Most of the activities of Savitri Bhavan are held in English. One of them is the weekly ‘English of Savitri’ course, which aims to assist people who are interested in approaching Sri Aurobindo’s revelatory epic poem Savitri – a legend and a symbol, but would like assistance in understanding his complex and suggestive poetic language. Transcripts of these classes have been serialised in issues of the journal Invocation: Study Notes on Savitri for several years now and have been appreciated by readers around the world. This year saw the release of the fully revised and edited transcripts of the sessions covering all the five cantos of Book One of the poem, The Book of Beginnings, in the form of a 526-page hard cover book and as an e-publication.

Other highlights of the year included:

▲ Sharing Sweet Memories of Professor Arabinda Basu
On July 20, 2014 a gathering was held at Savitri Bhavan in memory of well-loved and respected Aurobindonian scholar, Professor Arabinda Basu (1918 to 2012), in the presence of his assistant Mousumi Mukherjee and his son Robert as well as about 50 others. Dr. Aster Patel gave a talk entitled Sri Aurobindo ... the Transition of our Times. For the occasion a small film about Arindam-da, as he was known to many in the Ashram and around the world, was prepared with photographs and film clips from the Savitri Bhavan archives.

The recording of Arindam-da’s talk on ‘The Pursuit of the Unknowable’ came to light in the course of research for the film about him, just in time to become part of the materials shared with participants of the Immersion Camp on The Book of the Divine Mother which was held from August 6 to 12, 2014. There were 25 participants in all, 12 from Auroville and Pondicherry, the others from further afield. Two group study sessions led by Shraddhavan were held each morning; in
the afternoons, the participants were able to individually explore study materials that had been prepared for them, and special films were shown in the evenings.

**Book Seven, The Book of Yoga**

Another workshop, on Book Seven of *Savitri*, was held for 12 instructors from an Integral Yoga centre in the Netherlands from January 6 to 27, 2015. It consisted of 9 sessions led by Shraddhavan. The first session gave an overview of Books One to Six of the poem, then each of the cantos of Book Seven was explored in turn in a series of seven sessions. The concluding session gave a summary of Books Eight to Twelve. All the sessions were recorded, and supplementary study materials were provided to the participants.

**5th Dr. M.V. Nadkarni Memorial Lecture**

This year’s lecture was given on February 19, 2015 by noted scholar Dr. Prema Nandakumar, who as a young woman was the first person to write a doctoral thesis on Sri Aurobindo’s epic. Her book *A Study of Savitri* has been reprinted several times since the Mother arranged for its first publication in 1961. Her fascinating talk was entitled *Living with Savitri* and the text was published in the latest issue of *Invocation*.

**Collaboration with Havyavahana Trust: two books and an exhibition**

Huta D. Hindocha joined the Ashram as a very young woman in 1954 and was trained in painting and drawing by the Mother from 1956 onwards. In 1961 the Mother asked Huta to take up the project of illustrating selected passages from Sri Aurobindo’s *Savitri* in the form of oil paintings. The series of 472 paintings entitled *Meditations on Savitri* was created by the Mother and Huta together from 1961 to 1966, and exhibited in the Ashram in February 1967. A later series of paintings, illustrating the Mother’s comments on the poem, entitled *About Savitri*, was created from 1969 to 1971. In 2001 all these paintings, along with others by Huta and a mass of related materials, were entrusted to Savitri Bhavan. Since then the team has been collaborating with Huta and the Havyavahana Trust which was created by her to publish the treasures she received from the Mother. During Huta’s lifetime she took all major initiatives in this work and we only had to follow her directions. After her passing in 2011, Savitri Bhavan team members have been assisting the Trustees in various ways connected with the collection. In February 2015 this work reached a culmination with the appearance of two handsome publications, produced with the assistance of Savitri Bhavan team members. *Meditations on Savitri: Book One, The Book of Beginnings* contains magnificent reproductions of all the 127 paintings illustrating the first book of the poem. *About Savitri Part One* is a long-awaited reprint of the Mother’s comments on Canto One of the poem, *The Symbol Dawn*, illustrated by 32 paintings by Huta. Both these publications appeared in time to be displayed as part of the first exhibition of Huta’s paintings held in the Ashram since February 1967. For this the Savitri Bhavan team prepared the display of 132 *Meditations on Savitri* paintings illustrating Books Four to Eight of the poem, as well as a few sketches of the Mother, her handwritten messages, and other related materials, which were shown in the Ashram Exhibition Hall from February 17-24, 2015.

**Reflections**

The financial year of 2014-15 saw a remarkable expansion in all areas of activity at Savitri Bhavan, which is reflected in the individual reports. This was gratifying and encouraging, but put strain on the team.
Future direction

It is hoped that the impetus and progress of the current year can be maintained and built upon, without undue strain on the team-members. For this additional human resources are being sought, such as skilled personnel to maintain and expand the collections of learning materials. In particular the Trustees of the Havyyavahana Trust are relying on the continued and expanded collaboration of the Savitri Bhavan team in making the work done by Huta under the Mother’s guidance and inspiration more widely available to the general public in the form of books and films.

Conclusion

The growth and achievements of Savitri Bhavan, which are widely recognized and appreciated in Auroville and elsewhere, are due we feel, first and mainly to the Sanction and Blessings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother for the aims of the project, and secondly to the sincerity and dedication of the team which has grown up here over the last 16 years. We hope that this may be an inspiration and model for other centres in Auroville and elsewhere.

Savitri Bhavan - Learning Materials

Introduction

In support of the general aims of Savitri Bhavan, 5 collections of Learning Materials are maintained, each with their particular aims and objectives, as follows:

2. Digital Library of documents, audio and video recordings for individual computer access.
3. Savitri Bhavan Archive of research papers, photographs, audio and video recordings, with a loan / copy section for the use of individual researchers or groups.
5. The House of Mother’s Agenda, housing copies of the Mother’s Agenda in many languages, as well as the original recordings of the Mother’s talks, and catering especially for French speakers and activities in French.

These collections are being maintained and new materials are constantly being created or collected to support on-going Outreach Activities, Research Projects and Publications.

Activities of the year

1. Reading Room:
   The growing collection of books and non-book materials is under the guidance of the Management Team for selection, acquisition and cataloguing; daily attendance from 9-5 Monday to Friday is provided by Aurovillian Prema Sagar. In addition to a Reference Section of Savitri-related materials (editions, reference works, translations, studies, artworks inspired by the poem, etc.) the collection includes the Complete Works of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, materials on their lives, vision and teachings, authoritative works by Aurobindonian writers, materials on Auroville, hard copies of research outputs created by members of the Savitri Bhavan team and other Aurovilians, reference books such as dictionaries, and a large number of journals relating to these main subject areas. While the majority of the books and journals are in English, there are special sections of Tamil and Sanskrit books and journals, in addition to an exhaustive collection of all known translations of Savitri into Indian and other languages.
2. Digital Library:
The Digital Library of documents, audio and video recordings for individual computer access is housed in a separate room of the same building. It is open from 9-5 Monday to Friday, with attendance by local volunteer Anitha in the mornings and Aurovilian Anjali in the afternoons. These young women also take responsibility for converting audio-visual files to suitable formats for use in the collection, and other related tasks. The Digital Library is accessed mainly by guests and visitors wishing to learn more about the aims and ideals of Auroville and the vision, teachings and work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

3. Savitri Bhavan Archive:
The Savitri Bhavan Archive of research papers, photographs, audio and video recordings, with a loan / copy section for the use of individual researchers or groups. This collection is maintained in the Research section of the Main Building, mainly by Aurovilian Margrit Mala, supported by Management Team member G. Dhanalakshmi. This is a valuable resource for the preparation of materials for use in Outreach Activities by Staff Members, but is also drawn upon by Aurovilians and members of the general interested public for specific purposes.

4. The Huta D. Hindocha Collection of Savitri paintings and related materials:
This priceless collection of original paintings created by Huta under the direct guidance of the Mother from 1956 to 1972 was entrusted to the care of Savitri Bhavan in 2001. It is housed in special premises in the Main Building, and consists not only of about 1000 oil paintings, but also original letters, sketches and recordings by the Mother and a large amount of related documentation. The collection is used to prepare regular exhibitions of the Meditations on Savitri paintings and texts in the specially designed and designated Picture Gallery which forms part of the Main Building. Here they are viewed by large numbers of visitors, as individuals or in groups. The resources are also used for preparing publications.

5. The House of Mother’s Agenda (see report p.31)

Reflections
While all these collections have been maintained and expanded in the course of the current year, all of them are limited by the human resources currently available. The Reading Room would benefit from a skilled Librarian to maintain the Catalogue in such a way that it could be made available on the internet to all interested searchers. The Bibliography list is maintained up to date, but could not be published for several years, because of lack of a person to prepare the material for publication. The Huta D. Hindocha collection would require the attention of a professional curator to make all its invaluable contents more widely available. We are fortunate that towards the end of the year Maggie Point, a newcomer from France, started giving valuable part-time assistance in maintaining and ordering some of these materials. More of the contents of these collections could be made available on the Savitri Bhavan website, with the support, advice and assistance of a skilled and sympathetic assistant. Nevertheless steady maintenance and expansion of all the collections has continued throughout the year, and it is hoped that their outputs will attract the personnel required to enrich them even further.

Conclusion
The outputs of all these collections benefit students, researchers and interested members of the general public from around the world. Reference queries from students and researchers from India and many other countries are received and responded to by
Researchers sometimes come to stay in Auroville with the specific intention of exploring and utilizing these resources for their studies; in return we request them to deposit soft copies of their work with Savitri Bhavan once they have reached completion.

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**Savitri Bhavan - Publications**

During the financial year of 2014-15 the Savitri Bhavan team produced 5 different publications, all of which have been published and released:

1. **Invocation : Study Notes on Savitri**

   *Invocation* is Savitri Bhavan’s regular journal which has been appearing since November 1998. Its readership consists of students and lovers of *Savitri*, mainly from India, but also from 45 other countries around the world. Issue no. 40 (April 2014) contained 48 pages of black and white text and a few photos, with the standard cover of a special blue art-paper printed in gold and black. Issue no. 41 (November 2014) was similar, but contained 60 pages. 1000 copies of each issue were printed, at a total cost of Rs. 93,125 which was covered, as in the past, by a GOI grant.

2. **Prarthana**

   *Prarthana* is a similar publication in Tamil, aimed particularly at members of Sri Aurobindo Centres in Tamil Nadu. The physical appearance is similar to that of the *Invocation* Issues. Nos. 22 (August 2014) and 23 (February 2015) had 60 pages each. 850 copies of each issue were printed, at a total cost of Rs. 71,904, which was covered, as it has been in the past, by a GOI grant.

   The regular production process for both these journals consists first of collecting and compiling suitable materials, which are then sent in digital form to the Auroville unit Prisma for paging and DTP. After proofing and correction, announcements and photos with captions are added to make up the standard format, currently 60 pages for each issue. This takes at least two months, but we aim to start preparation immediately after the previous issue has appeared. Once the DTP work has been finalised, the matter has to be delivered to the Press at least one month before the date when the issue is required for posting. With four issues per year (two in English and two in Tamil), a regular rhythm is maintained throughout the year. The English journal is edited by Shraddhavan, the Tamil one by Dhanalakshmi. The journals are distributed by mailing list and request; current and back issues are also available from the Information desk of Savitri Bhavan. Current and back copies can also be downloaded in pdf format from [www.savitribhavan.org](http://www.savitribhavan.org).

3. **The Traveller and the Worlds**

   *The Traveller and the Worlds* is a 42-page booklet published in July 2014 containing the full text of the 4th Dr. M.V. Nadkarni lecture held at Savitri Bhavan in August 2013, along with a DVD of the event. The lecture gave an overview of the Yoga of King Aswapati as described in Books One, Two and Three of Sri Aurobindo’s epic. The cover of the booklet carries a photo of the event printed in four colours on stiff art card, with plastic pocket glued to the back inside cover to hold DVD. 200 copies were produced at a total cost of Rs. 19,700, which was covered from Savitri Bhavan available resources. The preparation process for this booklet was relatively simple, since the finalised version of the text was already available in digital form, as well as the DVD of the event made by Manohar. DTP work did not take long – most time was spent on the cover, which required a special design as well as the insertion of a
pocket in the inside back cover to hold the DVD. Copies are available from the Information desk of Savitri Bhavan.

4. The English of Savitri: The Book of the Beginnings
   This is a hardbound book of 526 pages containing edited transcripts of classes on the poetic language of Savitri held at Savitri Bhavan in 2009-10 and covering all the 5 cantos of the first Book of Sri Aurobindo's epic. Preparing this book was a much longer process, which began with transcriptions being made from recordings of the weekly classes on which the text was based. These were edited over several years, during which some of them appeared as instalments in Invocation issues. These articles met with a great deal of appreciation, and were even translated into Gujarati by an independent translator and published by him in a series of volumes. The success of the Gujarati volumes inspired the decision, in early 2014, to collect all the sessions covering the whole of Book One of Savitri for publication in book form in English. A work of extensive revision and standardisation was then begun. This accelerated in September 2014, when a donor offered to finance the publication on condition that it was released by February 21, 2015. For such a large book, requiring hard binding, the Press asked for all the matter to be provided to them by December 1, 2014. The month of November was to be spent on DTP, so the final text editing had to be completed in just two months. It was a great satisfaction that the book was ready for release on February 19, 2015. Production of this book cost Rs. 1,57,055 for 400 copies, which was fully covered by foreign donations. The book The English of Savitri is currently available for sale at the Information desk of Savitri Bhavan and the Ashram Trustees have granted permission for it to be distributed by SABDA. It is also available in e-book format from the Auroville unit Auro E-books, www.auro-ebooks.com.

The aim of all the above titles is to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of Sri Aurobindo's Savitri amongst interested people around the world.

5. Glimpses of the Mother
   Glimpses of the Mother is a booklet presentation of an exhibition giving an overview of the Mother's life and work in short texts, photographs and facsimiles, which was prepared at Savitri Bhavan in early 2014 to celebrate the Centenary of the Mother's first arrival in Pondicherry and meeting with Sri Aurobindo on March 29, 1914. The exhibition met with so much appreciation that it was decided to make it more widely available in booklet form and as a power-point presentation on the Savitri Bhavan website. The booklet, consisting of 56 pages of black and white text and photos printed on stiff art-card, with a coloured cover of the same art card, was published in December 2014. 300 copies were printed at a total cost of Rs.19,029, covered by Savitri Bhavan available resources. In this case the production process consisted of converting exhibition panels which had been prepared in 60x40cm format for display (as a research project in 2013-14) into the pages of a booklet in landscape format. Again DTP was done with Prisma, this time over a period of several weeks before a fully satisfactory layout was achieved. When the booklet had been printed and released in December 2014, a further conversion into power-point format was undertaken for posting on the website. Many of these booklets were distributed as complementary copies to staff, volunteers, donors and visitors around the Christmas and New Year period; a few remaining copies are now available against a contribution at the Savitri Bhavan Information Desk. The PowerPoint version of Glimpses of the Mother, which is similar to the booklet, can be viewed at www.savitribhavan.org.
Savitri Bhavan - Research Projects

Introduction

Each year, members of the Savitri Bhavan team take up a few research projects which could contribute to the other activities, whether in the form of Learning Materials, Study Aids or Publications, or as resources for Outreach Activities.

Activities of the year

In the year 2014-15, 9 main research projects were pursued at Savitri Bhavan:

1. The life and work of noted Aurobindonian scholar Professor Arabinda Basu (1918 to 2012)
   Main researcher: Tatiana Tasheva
   Professor Basu, familiarly known as ‘Arindam-da’ had been a close friend of Savitri Bhavan since 1994, when he was one of the first guest lecturers invited to speak to the newly-founded Savitri Study-Circle which began its activities in November 1994. This project was taken up at the request of his personal assistant, Ms. Mousumi Mukherji, and his only surviving close relative, Dr. Robert Lloyd, who wished to hold a memorial function at Savitri Bhavan on the second anniversary of Professor Basu’s passing. It was decided to prepare a film on his life and work, to be shown at the function, at which Dr. Aster Patel was also invited to give a short philosophical lecture to commemorate his work.

   Biographical materials and photographs were supplied by Mousumi, and a script was prepared for the film. The 20-minute film itself was prepared by Savitri Bhavan team-member Tatiana Tasheva, who supplemented the available materials by an internet search. Research for the film also brought to notice audio and video recordings of various valuable lectures given by Arindam-da at Savitri Bhavan from 1998 onwards (earlier talks had not been recorded) and one of these was found to have been so far unpublished.

   The film was shown at the memorial function held on July 20, 2014, when Aster-ji gave a tribute to Arindam-da and then an outline of some her own recent research. As a result, there was a request from AVI USA that the film could be shared with Arindam-da’s many friends and admirers there, where he was for many years one of the most trusted and best-loved exponents of Sri Aurobindo’s teachings, but unfortunately this request was refused by Robert and Mousumi. An article on Arindam-da was prepared for publication in Invocation no. 41 (November 2014). The text of his previously unpublished talk at Savitri Bhavan on ‘The Pursuit of the Un unknowable’ was published in the same issue, where it fitted well with the second main research project of the year, since it related to the theme of the first Canto of Book Three of Savitri.

   Main researcher: Shraddhavan
   This textual study was taken up as preparation for a residential immersion camp focussing on this Book, and developed further some research undertaken in 2013 for the 4th Dr. M.V. Nadkarni lecture, which led to unexpected insights into certain passages in Canto Three. It also made use of edited transcripts of 24 sessions of the English of Savitri classes held from December 2012 to June 2013

   Apart from the workshop itself, which took place from 6-12 August 2014 and is described in the report on Outreach Activities, the major output of this research was a book-length study of the text, which is envisaged for publication in 2015-16 if funding can be found.
3. In-depth study of Book Seven of Savitri, The Book of Yoga
Main researcher: Shraddhavan

This study was undertaken as preparation for a 9-session workshop with a group of 13 Integral Yoga students from the Netherlands who were to visit Auroville in January 2015. Amongst other topics of study during their stay, they had requested Shraddhavan to provide an overview of the Book of Yoga.

The detailed textual study undertaken in earlier workshops could not be followed in this one, which allowed only 7 sessions of one hour each for the overview of all the 7 cantos of the Book, in addition to an introductory and a concluding session intended to place Book Seven in its context in the poem as a whole; nevertheless the preparatory research had to include a detailed study of the whole Book, and preparation of annotated versions of the text of the cantos for the use of the students.

The outputs of this research were the workshop itself, which took place in January 2015 and is described in the Outreach Activities report, and these annotated texts, which together with edited transcripts of the corresponding English of Savitri classes in 2015, are intended to provide the basis for a book-length study of Book Seven of Savitri for publication in 2016 or 2017 if possible.

Main Researcher: Shraddhavan

The 50th anniversary of the launching of the Auroville project on August 14 1964 seemed an appropriate moment to initiate a thorough overview and review of what has been attempted here towards realising a new society, guided by the profound insights and guidelines provided by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. The aim of such a review would be to assist Aurovilians, official bodies, and other interested people to grasp the scope of what has been attempted in Auroville, what has been achieved, and what needs to be pursued in future in order to fulfil the aims and ideals given to us by the Mother. This would be a vast project, requiring the input of many people, but it was decided to make a start by preparing a proposal to be shared with potential collaborators, as well as an outline of the eventual report including a list of essential topics to be covered.

This work was undertaken in June 2014 when an outline scheme for the project was prepared, along with an identification of topics of Social Sciences Research each of which would need to be covered by a section of the final report. This was distributed to potential collaborators in July 2014 and a first partner for the work was identified. This completed the first phase of the research. It is hoped that the recently reactivated Social Sciences Research Board of the Auroville Foundation will support and participate in continuing the project.

5. La Science de Vivre: an exploration of the Mother's talks in French to teenagers of the Ashram 1951-59
Main researcher: Beatrice Baldacchino

Beatrice came to Auroville as a prospective newcomer about a year ago, and offered her services as a part-time volunteer at Savitri Bhavan. When she was asked about her special interests, she shared that she would love to teach French to children and young people, using the Mother’s words. We suggested that she could take up a research project that we have had in mind for a long time, to collect examples of the practical advice given by the Mother to the teenagers of the Ashram in her Playground talks of 1951 to 1959 about ‘How to Live’ – on sleep and dreams, eating, studies, sports, relationships with friends and family, attitude to progress, and so on. In this way she could widen her own knowledge of the Mother’s teachings while preparing a course of study that could later be offered to young people here in Auroville. Beatrice enthusiastically accepted this suggestion, and made a first start on
the work; but as often happens in the early stages of the Newcomer process, she soon found herself caught up in the practicalities of organising her new life in Auroville, and found that, in addition to her position as a regular volunteer at the Matrimandir; she was not able to devote much time to the necessary programme of research and study. However as her life became more settled, over the last four months she has embarked on a systematic routine of reading the published talks and noting the references of relevant passages. It is hoped that these will help her – or a successor – to compile a selection from the Mother’s recorded talks, both in French in English, which could be of great help to young people in Auroville and elsewhere in coming years.

6. Tamil Translation of Talks by the Mother
Main Researcher, G. Dhanalakshmi
  *Mother, You Said So ...* is a collection of talks given by the Mother to Huta during the 18 years of their work together. Huta noted down what she remembered of the talks and typed out her notes, which were then corrected by the Mother with a view to publication under the title given by the Mother. This collection was the last book published by Huta in her lifetime. It was felt that as there is a huge on-going demand for the Tamil translation of White Roses (letters from the Mother to Huta) and other authentic materials from the Mother in Tamil translation, that it would be worthwhile to translate these talks also. It is hoped that the book will be published by Havyavahana Trust in the coming 12 months.

The above 6 research projects were new ones taken up during 2014-15. Three others were longer term projects, continued from previous years and likely to continue well into the future, all of which are producing constant useful outputs. They are:

7. The Savitri Study Circle
  This on-going research project does not have a ‘Main Researcher’ but is a group study activity involving a core group of regular participants around whom others come and go for shorter periods, many of them repeatedly on regular visits to Auroville year after year. The Study Circle was initiated on November 24, 1994 and has continued meeting ever since. It is the core activity of Savitri Bhavan, from which all the other aspects have developed, and it continues to attract increasing interest from Savitri-readers around the world. The activity consists of detailed group study of the text of Sri Aurobindo’s revelatory epic poem *Savitri: a legend and a symbol*, with the aim of deepening understanding and appreciation of the poetic language of Sri Aurobindo’s masterpiece, as well as of its message, which the Mother has referred to as ‘the supreme revelation of Sri Aurobindo’s vision’. The group has met without fail from 10.30 to 12 noon every Sunday morning since an initial gathering on November 24, 1994. A new reading of the poem, starting again from the beginning, was taken up at the beginning of May 2012. Each new cycle of study seems to lead us to a new level of understanding of the complex and illuminating text.

  About 3 to 4 pages are given close study in each session. In 2014-15, 52 sessions were held, covering the last five cantos of Book Two of the poem, followed by the whole of Book Three and Book Four; and most of Book Five. In the last session of March 2015, reading of the closing 2 sections of the last canto of Book Five remained to be taken up on April 5th. A full cycle of reading the poem seems to take about 5 years, so we expect the current cycle to come to an end in early 2017. At that time a decision will need to be taken about whether to continue in the same way, or whether to make a change in our approach to this group study. In the course of the current cycle about 25 Aurovilians, and at least an equal number of occasional participants, have deepened their understanding of Sri Aurobindo’s vision and become more
confident in understanding the language and imagery of the poem, so that they could grasp some of its deep meanings independently.

Audio recordings are made of all the sessions, and these are being distributed on request to interested people elsewhere. Some of our regular participants are happy to keep up with the sessions through these recordings when they are unable to be present in person. According to the availability of competent volunteers, digital transcripts of these recordings are also prepared, with the idea of possible future publication.

8. Towards a Bibliography of Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri*
Main researcher: Shraddhavan, with the assistance of Prema Segar

This is an on-going project of the Savitri Reference Collection in the Reading Room, which aims to maintain up-to-date bibliographical information about books, journal articles, theses and art-works relating to Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri*. During 2014-15 47 new titles were added, and the bibliographical record was kept up to date, but unfortunately because of lack of skilled professional manpower it has not been possible to prepare the listings for publication in booklet form and on the website as intended.

9. The Spiritual significances of flowers
Main researcher: G. Dhanalakshmi

From the very inception of the Savitri Bhavan project, efforts were made to establish a garden full of flowering plants to which the Mother had given spiritual significances. Over the last 4 years, this garden has been developed as an educational environment with the aim of sharing the spiritual riches which can be gained from communion with plants and flowers. The various different plants are identified with labels showing the spiritual names given by the Mother as well as their common names in Tamil and English. Groups from Auroville and Outreach Schools, as well as passing visitors, are happy to explore the garden. From June 2014 onwards, a monthly ‘Flower of the Month’ article with photographs and documentation has been posted on the Savitri Bhavan website, [www.savitribhavan.org](http://www.savitribhavan.org).

Conclusion

Each of these projects has contributed to the overall aims of Savitri Bhavan, which is to widen awareness of the lives, work and vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, and to deepen understanding of their teachings. Some will be pursued further in the coming year. Especially it is hoped that the Bibliographical publication, long overdue, can be brought out in the coming year.

Savitri Hostel

Introduction

The Savitri Hostel was created with personal donations and opened in September 2012 as a place where simple temporary living accommodation can be provided as a counterpart for services offered at Savitri Bhavan. At the discretion of the Management, accommodation is provided to registered volunteers, newcomers or intending newcomers who are giving voluntary service at Savitri Bhavan or in other Auroville services, or to guests of Savitri Bhavan such as invited speakers or researchers. The Hostel consists of 9 rooms providing space for totally 12 occupants at a time. Occupants are expected to be self-supporting during their stay, and to make the normal contribution to the Auroville Central Fund.
Activities of the year
This year, boarding and lodging facilities were provided to 7 registered volunteers, 3 researchers, 2 guest lecturers, and 7 Newcomers who offered their services at Savitri Bhavan as well as in other Auroville Services.

Accommodation was also provided to the participants in two Study Camps:
1. In July 2014, Savitri Hostel hosted 13 participants of a 7-day camp focussing on Book Three of Savitri.
2. In January 2015, Savitri Hostel hosted 12 trainee instructors from an Integral Yoga centre in the Netherlands. They were accommodated for 3 weeks, during which time they were mentored in a wide variety of activities by Ashesh Joshi, while Shraddhavan provided 9 one-hour sessions exploring Book Seven of Savitri, The Book of Yoga. For this group, all meals were provided at the Hostel.

Daily refreshments were provided to the staff of Savitri Bhavan on every working day of the year, as well as to the participants in 2 week-long Study Camps and 87 half-day workshops.

Reflections
For its second year, the Hostel proved its worth and fulfilled its mission. Our aim is to go on growing in service.

Scholarship and Educational Fund

Introduction
The Scholarship and Educational Fund (SEF) was founded in 2008. Through now it has been serving mainly the following of its statutory aims:
- To fund-raise and operate as a fund for education of Auroville youth inside and outside of Auroville.
- To help in creating equality of opportunities for Auroville youth.
- To work towards finding optimal educational options in consideration of the needs and potential of the individual.

The team has not had the human resources to help in creating educational and training opportunities inside and outside of Auroville, although individual members are involved in educational institutions and activities in Auroville.

Activities of the year
Students applying for financial support from the SEF are asked to provide information on their educational background and their study plans, and on their personal and their parents' financial background. In case of students depending on their parents' financial support, both parents are expected to work within Auroville.

Financial support is given by way of a loan that is expected to be paid back from five years after completion of studies onwards. It is understood that, in case the student subsequently returns to Auroville and contributes to Auroville's development, this will be regarded as repayment in kind.

Applications and all other subjects are discussed in team meetings. The SEF team consists of Auralice and Lucas as executives and of the following support group members: Chali, Davaselvy, Jean-Michel, Martina, Palani, and Suryagandhi. This year eight meetings were conducted. Decisions on financial support were made unanimously.

In October 2014, for the fifth time, Mrs. Pippa Mukherjee, an experienced career counselor, was hosted in Auroville to interact with students of Future School and students of NESS.

In 2014-15 donations from Aurovilians and Auroville units have helped the SEF in
meeting the financial needs. Besides a major contribution from Auroville’s Budget Coordination Committee, the SEF received a substantial contribution from the Foundation for World Education.

Due to insufficient funds, in most instances financial support was provided only in amounts much below the requested sums, and applicants and their families were left to find their own means of additional support. All services extended by the team are done so free of costs to the SEF, while minor material expenses are covered through individual support or by the commercial units of the team.

**Outcomes**

This year 28 Auroville students received funds from the SEF for Diploma, Bachelor and Master degree studies; 3 students received support via student-specific donations; 2 Aurovilian adults received support towards further studies; 9 students of Future School were given support for undergoing British exams, exams which will allow them to go into higher studies.


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**The Learning Community**

**Introduction**

The aim of The Learning Community (TLC) is to create a space where children and adults by living and working together can grow more conscious of their inner and outer being. We would like to establish a methodology whereby the community of Auroville becomes a real environment to awaken a joy for life-long learning. We see Auroville as a place where children and adults have access to a great variety of different environments, each having a specific gift to share. We see the community of Auroville as a school in itself and by the exposure to these different environments, children will naturally engage in a process of learning, develop faculties, and will be able to create their own conditions for growth and happiness. We would like to make a very concrete step towards experiencing Auroville as a learning field and open the doors of the classrooms into the wider community, using Auroville’s richness and conscious research as our main learning resource.

**Activities of the year**

TLC offers its programme to children of 7 to 13 years old whose parents are Aurovilians and Newcomers. This year we worked with 32 children and their families.

Our programme this year incorporated different approaches, including somewhat “structured” learning, as well as the opportunities to be outdoors and learn through unstructured environments that TLC is known for. These opportunities included field trips and time spent in several of Auroville’s forest communities.

1. English, Mathematics, and Project work

These subjects were offered to the 6-11 year old children in a mixed age classroom of 27 students. The environment was prepared to allow for the children’s need of natural movement, through their going to retrieve and put back materials from different parts of the space, and taking their snack break at their own time of
preference.

We provided low tables, mats on the floor, individual space, and group spaces, to see to the different needs and preferences of the children. The environment and way of working also encouraged social interactions between the children spontaneously through and around their work. They could work together and help each other, developing collaborative skills.

Each child worked according to his or her individual level and tempo. An individual work plan was prepared for each child weekly. New areas were introduced to the children individually or in small groups. The Project for this year, “this history of the universe”, entailed the whole group following the common topic in different ways according to their interests and capacities.

A main theme for the year was social relations and respect for each other. We worked on how to share a space for learning, by not disturbing each other, and by moving around the space and asking for help in a way that does not interrupt classmates’ concentration.

Developing the ability to concentrate and developing perseverance have also been key focuses. Didactic materials for mathematics, English and Project were developed through the Teachers’ Center. These materials gave the children the opportunity for more concrete experience in developing their understanding of different concepts.

Caring for the shared environment is another area that the children worked with. This included putting things back in their place in an orderly way, so that the next person who needs something can find it right away, and in good condition. The children had responsibilities like cleaning a shelf, sweeping the floor, or preparing for the lunch. The aim of these activities was for them to feel that the space is theirs and they need to care for it together.

2. Field trips
   a) Varanashi Farms, Karnataka, March 2015

   TLC students went on a field trip to Varanshi Farms in Karnataka. They went in two different groups: first a group of 9 bigger children (all girls) and 4 adults, and then four days later a group of 8 younger children and 5 adults. We had chosen a challenging journey route which included 5 different means of transport over more than 26 hours. We felt that travelling by many means of mostly public transport would engage the children with their surroundings, offering a real opportunity to step out of their comfort zones. They enjoyed the adventure, and the questions of “when will we get there” soon faded away, as they became engrossed in each other, their environment, and local people they interacted with.

   At Varanashi Farms the children themselves chose the more rudimentary and picturesque huts as their sleeping quarters, leaving the purpose-built dormitory for the younger children who joined a few days later. The heart of our camp was an ever-burning fire and the log benches surrounding it. Here we cooked tea, sang songs, and carved various objects first from wood, and then from bamboo. Each of the 8- and 9-year-old girls had brought their own pocket knives, and learnt how to put them to good use. Later they explored other crafts: knitting, macrame and doll making.

   While at our base, the swimming lakes with the flying fox and rope swing were a big attraction, and for some children these offered quite a challenge. They all managed to overcome their initial fears, and even the 6-year olds became comfortable swimming for long stretches. On most days we went on outings in the surrounding area, climbing hills, crossing rivers. One of the main products of the farm is organic cocoa, and the children learned about the whole process from cocoa plant to chocolate bar, in our visit to a nearby chocolate factory.

   For the older children this trip was a very strong bonding experience. They
learned to rely on each other, far away from home and parents, and developed a very caring group dynamic. For the smaller ones, most of whom came with one parent, it was their first introduction to “TLC trips”, and they learnt much from the example of the bigger ones. They all experienced that they can overcome a bit of discomfort, and appreciate unfamiliar food, and they learned to trust the adults present.

b) Point Calimere and Rameshwaram, Tamil Nadu, March 2015

After a seminar about ocean life, a group of fascinated children expressed a wish to explore the subject more in depth. So with the help of experienced and knowledgeable Aurovilians, we began a project with seven of the older children titled “Marine Exploration”. The project included individual research into a chosen marine animal, beach cleanups, and a visit to the Ashram school aquarium. The project led to the decision to take a group of children on a trip to Point Calimere and Rameshwaram.

The group of 14 children and 6 adults departed from the Solar Kitchen at dawn. The first stop was Point Calimere where the group visited the wildlife sanctuary. The next morning brought a boat ride to the salt marshes and then the continued journey to Rameshwaram. The week spent there focused on the exploration of different beaches, a study of the different ecosystems of the shore and sea life, and a glimpse into various fishing techniques and their impacts on the environment, among other learning experiences!

3. Projects

a) Leonardo da Vinci project

A group of 8 children, aged 9-13, did activities inspired by Leonardo da Vinci over the course of two terms. The study of Leonardo lends itself to an interdisciplinary investigation, as the subject himself was a productive polymath. For this age group a purely academic approach to a subject is not appropriate, so the approach was experiential, employing the children’s different faculties. We explored broadly 4 areas: Leonardo’s paintings, his study of perspective, proportion and geometry, and anatomy. Such a wide range of subjects not only engaged the children in many different ways, but also demonstrated the interconnectedness of fields of study, and showed them that our divisions of disciplines into maths, music, art, etc. are fairly recent and artificial.

In the context of Leonardo’s paintings, we came to understand his novel techniques and styles, as well as the status of the ‘most famous painting in the world’, the Mona Lisa. We created our own versions of the Mona Lisa, adding to the thousands of versions inspired by it. We made our own paints, giving us a flavour of the procedures used during Leonardo’s time, and used these in a study of drapery.

The children explored proportion and geometry by becoming Vitruvian Men themselves. We measured, calculated and investigated the divine proportions and touched on the mathematical concepts of the Fibonacci sequence and Phi. We constructed a dodecahedron after Leonardo’s illustrations of three-dimensional geometrical figures.

Some of Leonardo’s innovations in the depiction of perspective in drawing were reconstructed by the children. They experienced drawing shapes with a vanishing point and atmospheric perspective (in which the colours towards the horizon tend to become less saturated and distinct than in the foreground). The children also made and used “perspectographs” to sketch scenes of our school campus.

Another subject that Leonardo engaged with was human anatomy. This
engagement itself brought together various currents: artistic perspective, proportion, painting, a humanist concern for the human being, and the beginnings of a scientific approach. Leonardo’s experiments with human anatomy, especially his understanding of the human aortic valve and his fascination of the movement of fluids, inspired us to explore the vortices of water and air in class. The students enjoyed these experiments and presented them to the younger children at break time.

We situated Leonardo in his time and place through study of history, in which the children gained an understanding of some of the main currents of Renaissance Italy. We read Giants of Science – Leonardo da Vinci, and collated a timeline of Leonardo’s life in context.

We ended the Leonardo da Vinci project by celebrating Leonardo’s 563rd birthday on April 15th, with a feast as close as possible to one that Leonardo might have had: a vegetarian Minestrone cooked over an open fire on our campus. The children presented a choreographed song that they had rehearsed with the help of the drama teacher.

We did not have time to engage with the machines Leonardo invented, and some of the children voiced a desire to do so, so we may take this up in the coming year. Leonardo da Vinci proved to be a rich source of study, and an interesting entry point into a historical period.

b) Forest Treasure project (see report p. 123)

c) Solitude Farm project (see report p. 150)

d) Baking English

The Baking English programme, which began three years ago, uses baking as a medium through which to develop English language skills. This year 11 children from the older and middle groups participated in the classes. The classes also include photography, as each baking process is photo-documented by one of the children. Towards the end of the year, the children work on their ‘Baking English Recipe Books’, which include all the recipes and photos of the year, as well as samples of their writing that were inspired by the classes. This year we focused on two genres, poetry and short stories, and the children produced many fine examples inspired by the content of the classes. It has become tradition that we end the year with the children making up their own recipes and baking them with minimal adult input. The delicacies created by the older children this year were testimony that they are becoming master bakers after 3 years of participation in this project!

Outcomes

With an ever-increasing student body and the need for more facilitation and input from adults in the community, we managed to get by on a very limited budget this year and provided the students with a rich, diverse and nourishing learning environment. We provided very individualized schedules for each child, to suit and accommodate for individual needs and tendencies. We believe that our TLC activities have been broad enough to address many aspects of the child’s being. We have managed to tap into the richness of our community and receive input from talented, inspiring individuals.

This past year embraced a significant change for The Learning Community as we begun construction of a new building on our campus, now in its final stages. This structure will offer additional spaces for class facilitation as well as storeroom and office space. Much energy was invested to create a space in keeping with our outlook and approach to education. This involved various members of the adult team, as well as the
children's input in creating the structure's mud walls. We also began construction of a composting toilet block on the campus, with the help of a generous donor in the US. The children of TLC were fully involved in the process of choosing a composting toilet system over and above the regular "soak pit" system, after looking at the pros and cons of both systems. The choice of composting toilets was made unanimously by the student body.

Reflections

We continue to put primary focus on the individual and integral development of the child, by individualizing the children's schedules wherever possible while still maintaining a 'base curriculum' of English, Math and Project work. By introducing the Montessori-based system for these subjects this year, we were able to provide children the opportunity to work at their own pace, in a non-competitive environment.

By continuing to tap into the richness of our community, we were able to offer the children a wide variety of learning opportunities which are often considered "extra-curricular" in other schools. In this way we blurred the boundaries between "during school" and "after school", and emphasized that learning takes place everywhere and at all times. Through our field trips we blurred the boundaries of parental responsibility, as the young children learned that they could rely on others, that families can be extended, and that trust is an integral part of learning.

Towards the end of the school year we held the 'TLC feedback fair" which was based on a round of e-mail feedback received from all parents, following a list of questions sent to them. The fair opened up the space for deep sharing and discussions around several of the core issues of the TLC concept, like the integral, individual development of the child, how do we learn, how do we interact with each other, etc. Parents were requested to propose practical, implementable ideas (with the necessity of ownership of these ideas) for how the core values of TLC can come to life in our daily work. We can recommend this model of written feedback as one which leads to practical ideas for implementation.

Future direction

We aim to continue to deepen our approach to collaborative learning, so that every member of The Learning Community feels enriched and a part of the learning process. We hope to establish collective learning circles, with children and adults learning alongside each other. In TLC we want to be a community that learns together through personal/individual as well as shared processes, involving children with children, adults with children, and adults with adults in a joyful and caring way.

For the coming year we aim to enable the older children to reflect deeply on their needs and interests, and together with their parents create individualized learning schedules that reflect and nurture these needs and interests. In this way each subject is consciously chosen by the child, giving him or her the responsibility of participating fully and gaining the maximum from the learning process.

We aim to increase the frequency of our field trips, as we firmly believe that learning takes place very deeply in these situations and the children's eco-literacy increases significantly when they are exposed to unfamiliar terrains and routines.

In addition, we are currently working on the beginnings of the 'TLC Base Camp Kitchen', construction of which will be partially funded by a foreign donation. We will begin construction this summer and hope that after sourcing some additional funding, the kitchen will be fully functional in the early part of next school year. The kitchen is planned as an educational project, where adults and children of TLC will be involved in preparing food for The Learning Community. We will create a wood-fire oven, a local 'chula', and a biogas stove for preparations. Ingredients will be sourced from local farms to ensure the use of local, seasonal fruits and vegetables in our recipes.
**Transition School**

**Introduction**

Transition School is a primary and middle school for children of Aurovilians. Inspired by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, the aim of Transition School is to help children develop integrally and naturally to their full potential. Through the years, the Transition team has worked to develop methods and programs to help us attain our aim. We strive for an atmosphere of protected freedom and harmony, where children from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds can grow together. The program that we offer cultivates human values, encouraging Auroville children to become responsible individuals dedicated to human unity and the creation of a better world. We are always trying to develop and improve our curriculum and teaching methods. Each subject is viewed as a tool for self-discovery, as well as an instrument to aid the child in learning to express himself or herself, and to grow in knowledge.

**Activities of the year**

This year at Transition School we had 35 full-time teachers and 155 children; they come from 20 countries and various states of India. Such cultural diversity creates a dynamic, creative teaching and learning experience with ample opportunity to appreciate and understand cultural differences. It also stimulates challenging opportunities for our research in integral education, an educational approach that includes the vital, physical, mental, spiritual and psychic growth of each individual.

At Transition School there are eight classes with a maximum of 20 children in each class. English is the language of instruction, while the program includes classes for learning Tamil and French. Subjects include reading, writing, maths, sciences, computers, environmental and social sciences, arts, music, and Awareness Through the Body. Cooperative learning, individual work, class projects and outings engage different learning styles. There is a commitment to developing the whole child. In the past few years we have shifted to a more flexible learning program; we have seen that this is also good practice for the children in learning to make choices.

Highlights of this year include a Nutrition and Health project; a Tree Stones project; activities inspired by our value of the year, Respect (see report p. 155); and field trips and outings (see report p. 127). Other shared projects included presentations, theater, and mixed-age activities, which we find very enriching for the school.

1. Nutrition and Health project

This year we had several projects that touched all the teachers and students at the school in some way. One of these was a Nutrition and Health project. The older children studied topics relating to nutrition and health, made healthy menus, looked at their own eating habits and even did science experiments to learn about proteins, carbohydrates, fats and vitamins. The younger children learned through their experiences of gardening and yoga. Through these activities, the children became more aware of the healthy choices they can make in their daily lives. Some highlights were:

- The second grade students learned about plants and grew some vegetables for the school. Each child had a seed to plant in his or her own pot, and the class made a collective garden behind their classroom. They planted ladies finger, corn, bitter gourd, beans, pumpkin and some green gram. Every day the children watered and took care of their garden. When the vegetables were ready to be eaten, the class cooked some beans and pumpkin to share with the whole school during lunch time. The teachers and other students were amazed that this food came from the school garden. They also learned about the different parts of a plant, and some plant songs which they shared with everyone at the Open House.
The third grade students went to Pitanga Cultural Centre to participate in a yoga class. Gala, a hatha yoga instructor, gave a brief introduction to yoga asanas and discussed how practicing yoga helps one stay healthy. Every student had a mat and participated in the class. The asanas involved stretching, turning, and twisting which helped children become more aware of their bodies. Most children had some difficulty as this form of exercise and concentration was new to them. Gala also introduced some pranayama exercises that helped heat and cool our bodies and wake up our brains.

The third and fourth grade students visited Solitude Farm where they met Krishna, steward of the farm. Here is a report from the third grade: Our class explored healthy foods through our cycle trip to Solitude Farm. Some of the activities were: a brief introduction to the farm by Krishna, a tour of the farm, picking some fruits and banana flowers, brushing teeth with a neem stick, washing hands with natural homemade soap, drinking a healthy herbal tea, sorting banana flowers, removing the stamens, chopping onions, making batter for vadai using the banana flowers, helping cook vadai, and finally eating a delicious healthy meal complemented with the banana flower vadai. Through this experience the children learned more about Permaculture, mulching, the beneficial role of earthworms and bacteria and fungi in the soil, crop rotation, crop productivity cycles, local grains like ragi and their connections to festivals, and the importance of buying and eating locally grown food.

And from the fourth grade: The students were eager to learn about how plants grow and about what plants grow here in our climate. We were grandly taken care of by Krishna, who explained about Permaculture. This became one of the concepts that we brought back with us to the classroom and talked some more about. Another thing was the kinds of crops being grown there. Krishna explained that the farmers encourage people to eat locally grown food, but that the use of some plants, and preparation of some foods, have been largely forgotten. He gave the example of the banana flower. He encouraged the children to go and ask their parents or grandparents if they knew how to cook banana flower. He promised he would give a banana flower to whomever came back. Later we learned that one of the boys went back to Solitude Farm with his mother to collect a banana flower.

The seventh grade students had a special project: every day after lunch, they weighed the food waste thrown away by the students and teachers. The amount of food thrown out each day was then noted on the dining hall blackboard for all to see. This activity was carried out so that all of us, students and teachers alike, would become more aware of how much food we wasted, and each do our bit to reduce this waste by taking only as much food as we would eat.

Although this Health and Nutrition project was only two weeks long, it had an impact on the children and on the school as a whole. It led to information and ideas being shared and appreciated. We will do something similar in the next school year.

2. Tree Stones Project

This year, as part of their science program, the sixth grade class did a research project on trees in the Transition School campus. The first step was a visit to the Auroville Botanical Gardens, where we learned about the nursery and the different species that grow there. Santo of the Botanical Gardens afterward visited the school and helped us identify twenty different species of trees on campus. Since a similar project had been undertaken ten years ago, resulting in a book that documented the trees, this time we focused on the less common trees.

Each student chose a tree to learn about. Using the internet and various books, including some Auroville publications, each made a page about the tree they were studying. This page included the botanical name, common name, Tamil name and
Mother’s name for the tree’s flower. Then the students found out the suitable climate, natural uses, human uses and interesting facts about their tree. This was accompanied by hand-drawn pencil drawings of the tree and its parts: its leaf, flower and seed. Photographs were taken of each child with his or her tree, and haikus were written by the students. We displayed the photos in the school, and asked the other students to find these trees on the campus. The pages were compiled together to create a book, which is now kept in the school library as a tree guide for all students to use.

As a second part of the project, the class visited Joss at Pitchandikulam Forest where we saw the incredible reforestation and tree labeling project that has been undertaken there. We were inspired by the exquisitely painted granite stones that are used to label the different species and provide information about the forest. We decided to start our own tree stones project at Transition School. Pitchandikulam provided the stones, and the back of the classroom was transformed into a painting workshop. Each student painted a tree stone for his or her tree. The children took turns, painting the tree’s name and their designs on the stones. These took from one month to six weeks to complete, progress being made slowly while normal classes took place. The children all managed to do this while keep up with the other work happening in the classroom. The atmosphere was very concentrated and focused. The children were proud of their work, and they felt that they were contributing something permanent to their school, to be enjoyed by current and future students for years to come.

3. Arts and Crafts

Arts and Crafts classes for students of grades 1-4 introduced basic elements of line, shape, color, drawing, sculpture, and basic art techniques. Students of grades 5-8 experimented with a variety of drawing techniques, painting and sculpture. As well as doing guided projects the students were given the freedom to express themselves in creating works of art using their own ideas. As part of their art curriculum the students learned about significant works of art from various cultures, times and places through slide shows and documentaries. They learned to compare styles of art and developed their own personal preferences in art.

This year we facilitated the creation of an Art Garden at the school. Our goal with this project was to take art outside and to induce the theme of respect: for others, for our environment, for materials and for ourselves. We used the Art Garden as an opportunity to teach the kids how to up-cycle or to take items that would be waste and turn them into art.

Outcomes

The range of outputs from this year, across the school, is wide and varied. It includes: individual student portfolios; open house presentations: Biomes of Earth, The Renaissance in Europe, The Story of India, Science projects; music and poetry presentations; theatre presentations and props; student-created books; drawings and other artwork; essays; reports by teachers and students; posters, nutrition charts and graphs; powerpoint presentations; photographs; materials from teachers’ study days, including portfolios and assessments.

In addition to activities with the classes, the teachers work together to solve problems and to work for progress in the school. At the end of each school year we have a Transition School year assessment, in addition to a day for teachers’ self assessments.

Reflections

Every year 20 little six-year-old children enter the school, most of them to stay in Transition for eight years. During these eight years the children change dramatically in
many ways: socially, emotionally, biologically, and cognitively. It is an important time for their development as they begin to form their sense of who they are: What do they like? What are they good in? What do other people think and feel? Many questions arise. Children acquire their sense of self and self-esteem slowly as they mature into adolescents. Identities are developed over time and may change from time to time and place to place. This process continues and children are faced with many questions and struggles; sometimes they do not feel good about themselves or their behaviors in a situation and need guidance and support. As they get older, they want and need to become more independent. Some years ago our program was for children aged 6-12. We have observed that even though 12-14 year old children have a strong drive for autonomy, they need and want the support and guidance that is found in the family and in school. Offering this support is a very important part of our work: talking with the children, listening to them and encouraging them to express themselves, through words, art, music, and however they can.

In Transition School all school decisions are made by the teachers as a team. The teachers have been active as a team in the planning and execution of the buildings, in raising funds, in the development of the program and in the setting of the goals of the school. Each development has been the result of a group decision that aims to support learning, harmoniously with the environment, and fulfilling the needs of Auroville. As the team has grown, we felt the need to form a support group to help guide the administration and decision making. This has been useful for the running of the school.

**Future direction**

One of our challenges continues to be finding, training and keeping committed teachers who understand the aims of integral education. Our teacher training program is developing and has helped in the integration of some new teachers. We will need to find more in order to keep up with the growth of the population of children in Auroville. Our long-term goals and intentions are:

1. We need to continue to work on our program. We have been able to improve the mathematics level in the school through a focus, now we need to work on other areas of study.
2. We plan to have more opportunities for teachers to study together. We will plan teachers’ study sessions to review the Portfolio, Classroom Management skills and other topics that people would like to work on.
3. We will continue to develop individualized learning methods for Integral Education. We would like to include more opportunities for children to learn to make choices.
4. We need to further develop and research alternative and participatory forms of evaluation that reflect our child-centered, integral program. The portfolio and other forms of assessment are improving.

**Conclusion**

Education and progress are central to the Auroville society. Here there are many activities and areas of research and innovative work, and this offers many opportunities to extend learning beyond the walls of the classroom. These types of experiences are memorable and help children make sense of the world around them. Auroville is a living organism with many knowledgeable people happy to share their expertise, and we take advantage of these resources as much as possible. The teacher team at Transition is dedicated to the continuing development of integral education in a rapidly growing Auroville.
Unity Pavilion and Hall of Peace

Introduction
The Unity Pavilion organizes and supports activities and events related to Human Unity, Unity in Diversity and Peace. It actively supports the development of the International Zone.

Activities of the year
The main fields of activity at the Unity Pavilion are:
- Cultural events, mainly in connection with the various Pavilion Groups
- Exhibitions on art, culture, information
- Workshops and seminars
- Presentations
- Ad hoc presentations on Auroville in general and Auroville architecture specifically, for visiting groups of students and others.
- Meetings, including most of the Auroville community’s General Meetings and Residents Assembly meetings. We also host other smaller groups, some on a regular basis, others as requested.
- The Unity Pavilion Office, used by Unity Pavilion management, Savi, Koodam, the International Zone Group, Auroville International (AVI), and Peace Research. It also houses books and materials for several National Pavilion groups.
- The Hall of Peace, used for a weekly Peace meditation and gatherings for Peace called for during situations of crisis in the world. This year a first workshop was held on “Peace and Forgiveness without Condoning”, in which 30 Rwandan students participated together with 35 Aurovilians. The Hall of Peace is also used by by Koodam for some of their mediation work.
- Community celebrations, like the program for the new Working Committee and Auroville Council as well as the Christmas Celebration. These are much appreciated. For the 2014 Christmas celebration we had a great increase in participants – a very full house of happy people of all ages and nationalities who had lots of fun together.

Outcomes
The aim is to give strength and support to activities that promote peace, human unity and unity in diversity for the Auroville community especially, but also in relation to all those we come in contact with. The atmosphere is friendly and inviting, with a great sense of integrity in how the facilities are used. The response from the community is very positive, and with three years since the inauguration of the Multipurpose Hall, it is a well established and functioning hub in the Auroville Community, focused on serving the ideals of Auroville as a collective emergence.

Reflections
The progress is very steady. What has been remarkable this year is the up-scaling of the size of events. For the Stewardship for New Emergence workshops in January, February and March and for the Auroville Retreat we had around 200 participants. For the Emergence workshops almost 50% of the participants were Tamil speakers and simultaneous translation was provided. The Emergence workshops had participants from Auroville and the bio-region as well as a number of government officials. This is a very encouraging development.

Future direction
One main goal is to develop a program for peace activities and and link activities with the other Peace Tables in the world. This peace work would relate to the internal
Auroville community, to the family of Sri Aurobindo and Mother around the world, and in interaction with the world at large. We also aim to keep developing all the present activities.

Other goals for the next year are of material and infrastructural kind. There is an urgent need to build a utility facility, as there are presently only two toilets in the building. There is no space provided for laundry and proper storage for garden tools, furniture for workshops etc. Secondly we need to put in place an electronic system for simultaneous translation. Good communication across language borders is very crucial in working towards unity in diversity. Auroville has large language groups without good English skills such as Tamil, Russian, French, Italian, Spanish, Korean and Chinese; the language issue needs to be addressed as it creates problems of accessibility and participation.

**Conclusion**

We have learned that the base and the focus of activities has to be on the ideals and values of Auroville. For integrity all activities and events have to be aligned with this. We strive to be welcoming and open to the community, with inclusiveness, consciously widening our field of participation and consciously working to assure equality of participation.

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**Youth Camp**

**Introduction**

Youth Camp in Fraternity community offers simple rooms and dormitories for people who have genuine interest in learning about Auroville’s ideals and who are interested in taking part in activities within Auroville. Youth Camp has generally accommodated guests, students and interns from backgrounds such as architecture, agricultural, environmental studies, and ecological interests, as well as sports groups and groups on educational field trips. The guests’ duration of stay varies, some coming for short visits and some staying up to 3-6 months. Youth Camp is a good accommodation option for young people and adults visiting Auroville.

**Activities of the year**

Three styles of accommodation are available at Youth Camp: single bedroom with shared bathroom, shared bedroom with attached bathroom, and women’s and men’s dormitories. The kitchen offers breakfast and dinner on request, and visitors can make use of the recreation room, internet facilities and outdoor hut.

We have three volunteers, in high school and going to college, who help receive visiting guests and organize activities. Youth Camp also regularly supports the sports and cultural events happening at the neighbouring New Creation playground, by organizing tea, juice and food for participants.

In the last year, Youth Camp was visited by many student groups and youth interested in exploring Auroville. Guests included:

- a large group from Switzerland;
- a group of street children, organized by charitable trust from Bombay (we also helped with organizing their activities within Auroville for a week);
- architecture students from Bombay;
- three batches of students from Hindustan college in Chennai;
- young adults from all over the world.

The peak season when Youth Camp is busy is from December to February, but there is a constant influx of guests during other months as well.
We are undergoing a painting and other general building repair work on the rooms, toilets and office spaces. We would like to tile the boys and girl’s common toilets as the guests have expressed that this should be done. Toilets are also shared with those in the sports ground, so it is essential that the facilities are functioning for the benefit of all. We would also like to do some renovation on the dining area roof as it is damaged from cyclone Thane and was never properly fixed. The outdoor sitting area on the roof, in between the 6 rooms on the first floor, needs to be remodelled as it was also damaged by the cyclone. Part of the parking area roof will also be repaired. The common hut has to be entirely re-done. All rooms, bathrooms, the dining area, furniture, doors, windows, pathways, cracks are receiving attention and repair work, and the mosquito proofing is being ensured.

Outcomes
The students and visiting guests have benefited from the accommodation and information and guidance to connecting to Auroville. The young people volunteering at the Youth Camp office also benefit greatly through the experience of such a part-time job, where they learn to interact and work for an Auroville guest accommodation. This is an excellent opportunity for visiting youth and Auroville youth to interact.

Future direction
Youth Camp hopes to host as many guests next year as this year, with an increasing number spread out annually. We would like to have a regular weekly movie night, related to Auroville, followed by time for questions and answers and discussion. We also hope to continue to encourage the exchange between outside youth with our youth from the area, so that they can explore, discover and work for Auroville together. We also hope to organize more activities, linking to events in Auroville, by providing visiting student groups with the relevant information regarding their group’s areas of interest.

Conclusion
It is great to have affordable accommodation for visiting youth, and generally for those who visit Auroville with great aspiration and energy, but may not have the funds to afford our more expensive guest houses. Youth Camp attracts this vibrant energy and has developed as a youth hub, which is an important aspect of our community that we should nurture and encourage in different locations in Auroville as well.
SAIIER projects

In addition to its sub-units, SAIIER supports a number of independent projects each year. These are proposed by members of the Auroville community via written application. These projects can be events, educational programmes, research projects, publications, or other activities to be completed within a fixed period of time. A project chosen to be supported receives funds from a Government of India grant through SAIIER. The project holder is expected to keep and submit accounts and to submit a report of the project at the end of the financial year.

Photos:
Aranya Adventure Zone  Effective curricular integration of technology
Natural Horsemanship program  Auroville Singing Festival
Aurohamsadhwani Art Centre  Aurollympics
A Musical Adventure

Introduction
This project is to create and produce a musical with a cast of around 70 Aurovilians, mixing children and adults, and a backstage crew of 20, thus involving 90 Aurovilians in a creative process together. The entire production is original, thus everything from the story, music, costumes, sets are to be produced by the Auroville team.

Description of project
A Musical Adventure (which grew into Millidacious) was planned as a two-year project. Since the beginning of 2015 we have been working on the script, composing the songs, developing ideas for the sets and costumes, auditioning the children and teaching the cast to dance.

We now have 53 children and 20 adults in the cast, and a production team of 25 all engaged in preparing the musical.

Reflections
The energy is very positive and we are well on the way to the production, although there is still a lot of work to do. Our goal is to finish the work preparing the musical in order to perform it in September.

Aikido workshop

Introduction
Every year the Auroville Budokan (formerly Auroville Aikikai) organises a three-week workshop around the visit of our Aikido Master, André Palméri, 6th Dan.

Description of project
The theme of the workshop this year was "Return to basics". Aikido is based on a series of about 10 basic principles that need to be well understood in order to make any meaningful progress. Aikido is not, like for example karate or judo, taught using kata, a preset series of movements. However the Master André Palméri developed a way to work in slow motion, decomposing each aspects or bases of the Art. This way of working is extremely precise but difficult as it calls for extreme attention to details.

This year the Master extended his teaching by one more week than usual, as he was very keen to ensure a continuous progress of all the teachers and students until his return in 2016. During the 4 weeks of the workshop, he gave 4 classes a week. In addition to that, his wife Alexandra Bac, 4th Dan, taught 3 Senior classes. She also gave the most advanced students and the teachers 9 additional and very meaningful classes.

We received a television crew of Door Darshan that filmed one session of training during the workshop thereby exposing Aikido to the nation via a half-hour national broadcast.

Outcomes
One Teacher and one student received the Black Belt this year (Shodan) and almost all regular students who went through the examination at the end of the workshop received a grade above the one they had achieved last year. This is very encouraging as it shows that the imparted teaching and methods for imparting knowledge have been well assimilated.
Reflections
The Master has asked all Teachers to communicate to each other their difficulties, questions and doubts in order to sincerely look at what needs to be improved by all of us. This requires a lot of sincerity in order not to be blinded by our egos. This is very important, as Aikido is a way to progress spiritually in the line of the teaching of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother.

Future direction
With the opening of our own school (Dojo) in July 2015, we expect - due to vastly improved timings - to offer the teaching of Aikido to a much larger number of students. However it is in the quality of teaching more than in the number of students that one will be able to judge the progress that will be made. It is therefore very important to carry on with having yearly workshops under Master Palméri who is the best judge of our progress if we want to guarantee a standard quality of teaching.

We are very keen to bring Aikido to selected youths from our neighboring villages. This is now only a project but we are seriously reflecting on ways to share this knowledge to a larger audience.

Aranya Adventure Zone

Introduction
The aim of this project was to create an “adventure zone” using the natural terrain of Aranya forest. A rope bridge over the canyon and a zipline from the top to the bottom of the canyon were planned and constructed. The objective is to use these tools as part of the already existing experiential learning program at Aranya, where children spend time exploring the forest and canyons. The newly created adventure zone will aid with enhancing the outdoors experience.

Description of project
The rope bridge and zip line constructions at the Aranya canyons were completed in the end of March 2015. In April and May we held an inauguration with the group who came for the Farm and Forest Walk organised by the Auroville Green Group. Around 25 people enjoyed the walk over the rope bridge.

Children, teachers and parents of The Learning Community visited and enjoyed the experience of the rope bridge. Students from Pondicherry schools participating in a nature camp at Aranya also enjoyed the thrill and challenge of the rope bridge. Auroville children enjoyed using the zipline during the summer holidays.

Outcomes
The challenge and thrill of the adventure zone inspire the children to revisit Aranya, thereby spending more time in the outdoors and connecting with nature.

Conclusion
The findings from the few groups that visited show that these kinds of elements work as great tools to excite young and old alike to spend time outdoors and in these days of mind boggling entertainment, the adventure zone is necessary to prompt kids to spend timeoutdoors. Research is being done toward introducing more such elements of nature play that connect kids with nature.
Arts and Crafts at Deepanam School

Introduction
There is nothing more satisfying and fulfilling for children than to be able to express themselves openly and without judgment. The ability to be creative, to create something expressing personal feelings and experiences, can reflect and nurture children’s emotional health. Creativity fosters mental growth as well by providing opportunities for trying out new ideas, and new ways of thinking and problem-solving. At Deepanam School we provide a creative environment as a complement to the integral education system at the school. Through creative arts we aspire to develop aesthetic sense in our students and give them a platform where they are able to express themselves freely.

Description of project
At present the children at Deepanam are divided into three groups based on age:

△ Light: age group 7 to 9 years
△ Peace: age group 10 to 11
△ Faith: age group 12 to 14
△ Welcome group: to integrate new children

The children have clay, painting, craft and theatre classes in their weekly schedule. The boys of Faith group participated in woodworking this year.

1. Clay:
Clay brings joy and peace to the hearts of children. Working with the medium of clay has therapeutic effects and is a way to connect to Mother Earth. Working with clay improves hand-eye coordination and fine motor skills. Children aged 7 to 12 participated in the activity.

2. Painting:
In painting classes the Light group was given an opportunity to play with and explore colors and color relationships, mixing paints and using tints and tones. The Peace group was introduced to blending colors with pencil and watercolor, and worked on outlined sketches. The Faith group worked on blending with watercolors, exploring the effects of light in a painting. The older children also worked with oil paints.

3. Crafts:
Activities in craft class are designed according to age groups, and projects are suggested to children according to their skills. For the younger children activities includes cutting, pasting, coloring and bead work. For the older children activities included knitting, crochet, embroidery, macramé and papier-mâché. Recycled art is also encouraged in craft class.

4. Theatre:
This year theatre was given major importance in the Faith group. Two hours weekly were devoted to theatre, with the aim of performing for parents and community. This year we had visiting teacher Francesca who worked with the group through games, improvisation techniques, and preparation for the play “The White Elephant”. Children were involved in all aspects of the production including stage design and props.
Outcomes
Arts and crafts at Deepanam helped the children develop an appreciation of beauty and perfection in their own work and in the work of others. The creative projects gave the children a sense of fulfillment and achievement on completion of the work.

An exhibition of the children’s paintings, clay work and craft work was displayed in Pitanga for the Auroville community. Sharing their work with others this way gave the children a sense of achievement and self-confidence in their ability to be creative.

Reflections
Creative activities are outlets of expression that can help teachers learn more about what a child may be thinking or feeling. Creative activities help acknowledge and celebrate children’s uniqueness and diversity, and offer excellent opportunities to personalize teaching in order to focus on each child.

Conclusion
Arts and crafts has been the strong point of Deepanam School. It is an integral part of the school curriculum. Creative activities have helped our students develop patience and concentration, and given opportunities for freedom of expression. They play an important part in the children’s learning process, and contribute to the growth of balanced individuals.

Attending Goa International Film Festival

Introduction
Aurofilm aims at fostering education, research and personal progress through the medium of cinema. Cinema in its completeness as an art form is a valuable tool to work on human nature. Our endeavour is offer regular film screenings and special events at the Sri Aurobindo Auditorium in Auroville for the benefit of all.

In order to do so, research into meaningful and artistic cinema requires from the Aurofilm team contact and exposure to the world of film production and distribution. The well organized international film festivals of India provide the perfect milieu for this and it is therefore our primary objective in attending one of these events every year.

Activities of the year
The Aurofilm team attended eight days of the International Film Festival of India, an annual event that promotes the best of cinema, fosters the meeting of the huge film production family and organizes a market for film distribution. It is an eleven-day event that is now permanently set up in Panaji, the capital of Goa.

This year the Festival was held from 20 to 30 November 2014. Restored Classics were brought to the public (Francois Truffaut's L’Enfant Sauvage and Charlie Chaplin’s A Woman of Paris). Documentaries and short films were screened before the long feature films or in special programs, and in the “Indian Panorama” section. Some master classes were conducted by noted film personalities and technicians from around the world. There were forums, discussion panels, press conferences and an exhibition by the National Film Archive of India (NFAI) of film posters marking the 100 Years of Indian Cinema. NFAI also brought a selection of films representing these 100 years of Indian Cinema. These were well attended activities of the program.

With our accreditation as Delegates, we could go every day early morning to the festival premises, having made decisions beforehand on the films and events to attend. We attended many films, a press conference with women filmmakers from India, Iran and France, and a forum on women film directors. In between all the scheduled
activities was time for making contacts with producers, technicians, screen-writers, film students, and so on.

**Outcomes**

For the Aurofilm team, to go and attend this film festival is a good opportunity to keep track of what happens in the area of film production from India and the world. On a practical level, to make and/or keep contacts with the DFF and other organizations and individuals during the festival are important to introduce Auroville and ourselves, and to request the film prints or permission for our own Indian Panorama (see report p. 142) and other weekly film screenings for the community. The Auroville community ultimately benefits in being exposed to quality Indian and world cinema through the screenings we organize all along the year –whenever these films will be available– and sometimes we may invite some of these resource people here. The various films we choose to watch during the festival are also for reference for our film making and research work at the Auroville film institute.

Also, through our presence and outreaching effort, Auroville is known as a place where culture and art is a major component and research and promotion of quality cinema is an important aspect. All in all, with such an exhaustive program, we really make good use of the place and time to gather contacts and material for our work all along the year.

**Reflections**

Along the years we have been able to be present at this kind of festivals, we have learned to better use the time, the venues and the programs. Very importantly, we also got confidence into addressing the people we would need to get acquainted with for bringing their films or their knowledge in Auroville.

**Future direction**

Next year we would like to repeat this activity as we can see the results that are reached in terms of programming and communicating about Cinema, as well as exchanges with film directors and technicians, exchanges that can only enrich our film making work here.

**Conclusion**

International film festivals are huge events, and it would take Auroville many years of growth to be able to replicate such happenings. However, our Panorama of Contemporary Indian Cinema is of a reduced scale and there are many things we see, learn and use for our own events here – in terms of publicity, communication, security, invitation of guests, organization of talks, master classes and workshops.

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**Aurolympics**

**Introduction**

The Dehashakti Sports physical education program has developed over the years to offer students activities for all-round development of the body, mind and vital. One of these activities is the Aurolympics, a program of organised competitions for individuals and teams. The Aurolympics give each student the opportunity and motivation to strive for his or her best.

**Description of project**

The Dehashakti year-long program is divided into four phases and together this
builds up the school year. The first two phases emphasize individual development, and competitions are in areas of athletics and fitness. The next two phases emphasize team sports and games. Aurolympics competitions are held twice a year.

Outcomes
The Aurolympics are used as means to achieve several objectives:
- Develop team spirit
- Give every student equal opportunity to actively participate, regardless of capacity and skill
- Help in the development of social conduct, group loyalty, feeling of self-worth, and sportsmanship
- Let students experience winning, leading, and losing
- Let students learn strategies, rules, and insights through participation at various levels of competition
- Promote the attitude of doing one’s best
- Motivate the average and weaker participants to improve their abilities
- Challenge the more talented participants to strive to greater heights

Team sports and individual sports help sharpen various capacities beyond just the physical. At Dehashakti we have observed that physical education enhances the powers of mind, memory, and emotional health. Physical exercise improves the mood and makes students more alert and better able to succeed in academics.

Reflections
The Aurolympics are interesting times at Dehashakti as they bring forward the best as well as the worst in children. We have a real task to be able to provide students the guidance and support to face victory as well as defeat with courage. To notice the changes in children as competitions get tougher, or when in a team there are differences in attitudes and self-confidence is low, are challenges for the teachers and learning experiences for all. With time we have developed various methods of dealing and encouraging students to overcome these obstacles. One way is to encourage, acknowledge and reward students who keep sincerely trying to do their best under all circumstances. Mentors for each team are another approach to help and support positive sportsmanship.

Conclusion
The aim of physical education is to “progress”, and competitions are a means to accelerate progress. Sports can also be one of the best means to bring about unity and mutual respect among youngsters, if organized correctly and held in the right essence.

Auroville Film Festival Educational Outreach Program

Introduction
The Auroville Film Festival’s educational outreach program explored the nature of the relationship between the material and spiritual goals of Auroville and the children brought up in and around Auroville. More specifically we investigated the following questions: Can we enable the children to express their deep aspirations and reflect their spiritual environment using the creative medium of filmmaking? How do children brought up in Auroville envision the world and how do they interact with the world? How can images reflect the development of children in Auroville? How do children brought up in Auroville reflect on the themes of Environmental Problems and Causes, Equality and Justice, Strength and Diversity, Money, Food, and so on?
Description of project
Throughout the year we taught filmmaking in Auroville schools through short workshops, weekly classes and yearly courses. Three teachers taught the genres of fiction, documentary, stop-motion and experimental film to 120 students. Students of Last School, Future School, Transition School, Udhayam After School, and The Learning Community participated. 20 films were made by the students in total, involving over 600 teaching hours.

Highlights of the program this year included:

- 20 students from Transition School Skyped with filmmaking students in Uppsala, Sweden, to discuss themes and compare notes on their individual stop-motion animation films under our partnership with OnePeopleProductions.
- As part of our ongoing educational program, we co-hosted the CMS Vatavaran Film Festival here in Auroville and held special screenings for children, moderated by Kundavi. Attendees included 110 students from Aikiyam School, 59 students from Udavi School, 28 students from TLC, 50 students from NESS, 30 students from Last School, and 12 students from Deepanam School.
- As part of our ongoing educational program, we invited a film festival on Visual Art (presented by Lalit Kala Akademi, Chennai) and held special morning screenings that were open for schools to send students.

We found that small and focused classes with 2 students, readily available equipment, and a two-year commitment from the students enabled them to reflect on their aspirations and to express these through video. Students who attended regular weekly classes for at least one year could make films that reflected on community life, and make fiction films that re-envisioned their world. And even quite young children, through regular classes over the course of one term, could express their creativity and have an enjoyable experience working together through the making of stop-motion animation films.

Outcomes
The films made in our workshops and classes will be screened at the upcoming Auroville Film Festival (Oct 2-7, 2015). These films will be watched by all the school students as well as the community of Auroville at large. In the past they have engendered discussion amongst the students. The films deeply enhance the creative flow and the confidence of the children.

The program contributed to the growth of artistic expression in Auroville, and inspired students to become interested in documenting activities in Auroville. It also encouraged the students to explore and research the theme of human unity through filmmaking.

Reflections
Good structuring of themes and contents by teachers can help children to reflect on themes concerning environment, equality, justice, and so on. To create scripts on these themes presents a challenge which we have found that children of all ages can meet successfully.

Future direction
We will continue our push to have filmmaking incorporated in the syllabus of all the schools in Auroville.

Conclusion
It is very important that filmmaking continues being taught in schools in Auroville. This program enables schools to access teachers, syllabi, and equipment at no cost. With persistence, the program should be availed of by all students/schools, and all

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children of Auroville should have the opportunity to learn the language of images and visual storytelling.

Auroville orientation workshop and one-day education trip

Introduction
Two activities were offered: an Orientation to Auroville workshop for Tamil Aurovilian and Newcomer women, and an educational trip to Thanjavur.

Description of project

1. Orientation to Auroville workshop
Aurovilian and Newcomer women attended the Orientation to Auroville workshop on Saturdays once monthly. The classes were conducted in Tamil language only; all participants were very capable of understanding and remembering the classes thanks to the use of their mother tongue.

The workshop sessions started with a short concentration. Then the group went through the different kinds of books of The Mother, Sri Aurobindo and on Auroville. Our teacher Ramalingam told us many small stories of The Mother when she was at the Ashram. Then we went for some time through peoples’ experiences after studying The Mother’s works. Most of the ladies were interested to go through the book ‘White Roses’. We also read ‘The Mother’ by Sri Aurobindo, ‘Prison Tales’; and ‘Light on the Path’. At the end of the class we shared our experiences.

The participants acquired a working knowledge of the lives and teachings of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother, including the aims and meaning of Auroville. This love will transfer into a better appreciation and identification with their being, learning and working in Auroville.

2. Educational trip to Thanjavur
Twenty Auroville children and six ladies went on a trip to Thanjavore. On the morning of the trip some of the children were surprised to see the bus driving to various communities to collect their friends. As it was an early morning wake-up their parents prepared food for them, breakfast and lunch. The kids were singing and dancing in the bus.

We visited Thanjavur’s Brihadeswara Temple. The temple was full of remarkable architecture and stone work on the big pillars. The temple itself is very large and heavy and was carved out of a single stone.

We also visited the Museum, located in the Thanjavur Palace complex. It has mixed collections of manuscripts, weapons, tools, musical instruments and clothing that were used by the Royal Family of Thanjavur. The children asked questions to the staff who looking after the museum. Under each sculpture we found the written explanation and the year of making.

The kids enjoyed the tour, and some still mention it and ask us to arrange one every year. The excursion trip acquainted them with the grandeur and beauty of our rich South Indian culture.

Future direction
We will continue offering both of these activities. We will continue our exploration of Mother and Sri Aurobindo which will provide us a deeper understanding of our life and work here. The next trip we plan will be to Trichy, especially the majestic Rock Fort.
Conclusion
These activities incited enthusiasm in the children and women and took them on a living journey in the heart of Tamil Nadu culture.

Auroville Seythi Madal

Introduction
Auroville Seythi Madal is a monthly Tamil newsletter of 8-10 pages that has been published continually for the last 18 years. Article subjects include Tamil culture, history, words of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, bilingual language programmes, literary letters, and biographies on great personalities. Creative writing, research articles, a children’s corner, book reviews, and Auroville regional special positive news are other features. The newsletter is well received by a wide circle of readers and readership is increasing every year.

Description of project
The publication is organised and edited by Meenakshi and staff of Ilaignarkal Education Centre. Regular contributors include Dr. C. R. L. Narasimhan of Coimbatore, Prof. C. Arunan of Pondicherry, Ms. N. Janaki of Auroville, Sri. Krishnamurthy of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, and local children, youth and women.

The process of producing each newsletter includes discussing, writing, editing, translating wherever needed, and identifying or creating suitable photography and illustrations. One issue is printed per month, for 12 issues annually, plus some special issues.

We have created readers’ forums in collaboration with the Auroville outreach schools.

Outcomes
We circulate the newsletter to many friends of Auroville, libraries, literary associations and research centers - serving those in the fields of organic farming, herbal plantation, natural handicrafts, social welfare, childcare, life education, Tamil literature, culture and yoga. We distribute printed copies to a large circle of friends all over Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry and the Auroville region. Approximately 6000 readers are benefitted through the circulation of 400 copies through various institutions and libraries.

We receive nearly 50 Tamil and English magazines of high value in exchange, and authors send their books for review.

Selected editorials from the first 12 years were compiled into a book, Semman Madalkal (Red Earth Letters), by the Editor. This has received the Best Book award in 2015 by the Government of Tamil Nadu, Directorate of Tamil Development and Information. Semman Madalkal has been taken up as a study material in the Masters degree program at Tanjore Tamil University.

Reflections
Our publication has high standards in the fields of Tamil language, journalism, information and mass communication. Tamil language learners need such materials published by us.

Conclusion
Auroville Seythi Madal bridges Auroville and the Tamil world at all levels.
Auroville Singing Festival

Introduction
The aim of the Auroville Singing Festival is to get people to sing together like the community we want to make and live.

Description of project
The Auroville Singing Festival was organized through Community Cultural Colors. It involved preparations by the organizing team and the participants, leading up to the event itself held in the Sri Aurobindo Auditorium on October 10th and 11th, 2014.

The programme included:
- Family concert: all type of families singing together (relatives, units, groups, schools)
- Exchange concert: free exchange between countries
- Sing-along: audience participation by singing together
- Children’s choir

Outcomes
The Auroville Singing Festival benefited all the participants who sang and supported, and gave the wider community an enjoyable event to share together. Singing together gave a feeling of unity and life in the community.

Reflections
Compared with last year, more various contents were produced like the children’s choir and exchange concert. More young people participated.

Future direction
Going forward the Singing Festival can be broadened to encompass supporting activities such as songwriting workshops, voice training, and stronger promotion for and toward youth participation.

Awareness Through the Body explorations with adults

Introduction
Awareness Through the Body (ATB) was developed in Auroville as a curriculum of exercises for raising awareness of perceptions and abilities. It offers ways to discover the existing connections between mind, emotions and the physical body and to integrate these different parts into a more harmonious whole, organised around the inmost centre. ATB has been practiced in Auroville schools for many years. The following report is from the perspective of Rosa.

Description of project
I continued the regular offerings of individual ATB sessions for adults, as well as for some children and teenagers who asked for it this year. The weekly group sessions continued with the regular adult group. Later I offered some sessions for parents and children.

In April, I offered a space for “listening through the body, and letting go” to a group of 16 Aurovilians and Newcomers. For 21 continuous days we met regularly and worked in couples, to help to release old automatic holdings, to practice the witness attitude, to develop the art of listening without judgments or expectations, to relax and let go.
Outcomes

Feedback from individual ATB sessions:

- "There was an intense and significant 'dream/experience' on Wed or Thursday night after Saturday’s kidney work, and a clearer, lighter space was very obvious upon waking in the morning. As if the load of Fear was gone from the body. I am very pleased with the results of my sessions with you."

Feedback from group ATB sessions:

- "Doing the ATB sessions has allowed me to become aware of a lot of my automatics and that awareness has allowed me to work towards breaking some of them. This has helped tremendously to make a change in my life. Also, it had brought an amazing amount of peace to me. I have gratitude for your teachings."
- "Mostly it was a kind of joy to experience this kind of learning together and the quality of care in the group and that a few times, we were successfully able as a group to undertake a challenging task gave me great hope for Auroville."
- "I think you have helped me a lot to practice the inner awareness... all this exercises made me be much more aware of this inner movements which we don’t have "time" to notice in the daily life. And more than that I could find the place -in the body- where the conscience is and feel it moving. It is hard to explain but I think it helped me to increase my awareness and connection with something more deep inside. There is a long way to go though."
- "...your classes have showed me several times that there is more about myself and about the world than what I usually experience, and I want to explore this more. Therefore I’m very grateful for the time that you offer to us to let us experience this."
- "I really like is that you don’t ask us to talk and share how was the experience. Like that I feel I don’t worry to understand everything in the mental level and allow myself to explore other levels of understanding. This is bringing me something and also helping me to be more honest with myself. Just observe and let it be as it is. no need to translate it into words. Great!"

Feedback from the 21 day Awareness Experiment:

- "It is when I am inside myself with this deep listening, observing without expectations, and allowing what is there to be... I have a glimpse of who am I... and all the rest seems so unreal..."
- "Today at Solar Kitchen noontime: I noticed my nervous gestures and tense mind; called for calm and then observed a quietening come to mental and physical. Then, Remembered to listen for the Silence behind all and about 2 seconds later there was a moment when I heard the sounds, but was aware of the Silence! I Heard / Felt it. Then someone interacted with me. I remembered afterwards to Listen, but did not hear again the Silence. I am very happy to have had this experience in a sure and palpable way."
- "An incredible journey of Self-discovery"
- "Every day I notice in so many moments what is going on in me... The fact to start the day in this way, affects the whole day. A lot of moments of awareness"
- "This experience has nourished me more than any food. Everybody should try it."

Future direction

For next year I was requested to start a regular parents and children group, especially to work with children who are home schooled.

I am also planning to hold, in the coming year, regular sessions on the exploration of
gently releasing some of the automatic reactions in us. Several people from the 21 day experiment asked for it, so it will be open for them and for other people in the community.

Next year I would like to explore again a 21 consecutive day experiment, this time one of awareness and letting go through Yoga Nidras.

Conclusions

From the experience and feedback of these sessions, I am completely convinced that a state of relaxation, together with the practice of the witness position, can create deep changes in participants and in the community.

Blessed are those...

Introduction

The epigraph taken for this book is the Mother’s 1971 message: “Blessed are those who take a leap towards the Future.” The Mother also wrote in 1971 that it is “a sweet year”. Part I of this book is a collection of reminiscences, most from the residents of Auroville and the rest from those deeply connected with it. Part II has remembrances of the early sadhaks of the Ashram who directly worked with the Mother. Part III seeks to explain the divine experiment of Auroville, and how the Mother’s creation takes us beyond the City of Dawn. These recollections are not of a past but recordations of a continuing present.

Description of project

The process of creating the book involved transcribing talks given in Auroville, and translating written articles from Auroville, the Ashram, and other publications. They are serialized as part I, II, and III.

The final product is a softcover book of 210 pages.

The book has been distributed to educational and other units in Auroville and to interested Aurovilians.

Reflections

As Prema Nandakumar says in her foreword, “Just as no two persons experienced the Mother’s presence in an identical manner; no two entries in this loving homage appear straight-jacketed. There is a joyous abandon in their style. There are reminiscences, interviews, passing thoughts, memories recollected in tranquility or recollected to overcome some personal crisis. But always a new angle, a new pitch.”

Conclusion

It is 42 years since the Mother left her corporeal body and this book is an attempt to capture the ambiance of Her Presence, and stir us to make a joyful effort for progress.

Bridging the Gaps: Ultimate Frisbee youth camp

Introduction

We conducted an Ultimate Frisbee Youth Camp bringing together 130 children (13-18 year olds of all levels) and 35 youth coaches (18-24 year olds who had undergone intensive training for this camp) from different states and backgrounds in India. It was a 5-day, intensive, live-in camp based on personality development through Ultimate Frisbee and other activities. The program was deliberately designed to bridge gaps
created by poverty, gender, caste, and language through common sports, art, and dance activities. The camp was conducted in Auroville (Dehashakti) in December 2014, as the latest in a biannual collaborative project (happening in Surat, Gujarat in summer) that aims to reach all children and youth in India.

**Description of project**

The Auroville Ultimate Frisbee Team in collaboration with Pudhiyadhor, an educational NGO in Chennai, organised and hosted an Ultimate Frisbee Youth Camp at the Dehashakti sports ground from December 26-30.

Each day began at 6am with a “full camp warm-up” consisting of almost 200 people including the children, coaches, chaperones, mentors and organizers doing a dance warm-up all together. Frisbee trainings then took place in the mornings and again in the evenings on all five days. In the middle of the day various activities were offered such as Awareness Through the Body (with Partha and Suzie), Art and logo design (with Vadivel), interactive introduction to Auroville (with Deepti), Garbology (with Ribhu’s help), and dance, team building exercises, and t-shirt painting (with Sangeetha).

There were also free periods when a team (6 children and 2 coaches on average) could sit together and talk, play any game or relax. In the evenings after dinner there were cultural activities like fire juggling by the Auroville fire juggling group, garba (with Falguni), and team and individual dances by the children.

**Outcomes**

One of the reasons for conducting this camp in Auroville was that Auroville itself is an experiment that aims to “bridge the gaps”. We hope Auroville could instill some of its ideals, and the camp to give some new insights.

This camp offered a great opportunity to youngsters from Auroville and the surrounding area to get to know a wider community, and for the visitors to get to know the Auroville community. It was a good way of building friendships and awareness of a wider India.

This camp also gave the Auroville kids the rare chance to be hosts, presenting the best of themselves and helping others to do so too. We hope this enabled them to see beyond themselves and recognize their capability to become leaders - open-minded and inclusive individuals able to resolve problems and overcome difficulties.

We can definitely say that we saw some kids and adults grow tremendously in those 5 days.

**Reflections**

As this was our first time co-organizing such a camp, the running of it was as much of a learning experience as participating in the camp. It brought us together in many different ways. Many gaps were bridged: friendships were made between children, coaches, mentors and organizers. People came together to do needed work like re-mounting tents, making plank pathways, bunding, and shifting bedding when the rains came. Children learnt phrases of each others’ languages (Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Tamil, Telegu and English) to be able to communicate. And at the end of 5 days, kids who had cried of homesickness earlier were unwilling to leave.

**Future direction**

We aim to organize this camp, with kids from across India, on a yearly basis. We are also planning to offer smaller camps for children from the bioregion and Auroville. We hope to involve more Auroville youth in the future, as well as different activities from Auroville. As our experience grows, so will our camps hopefully.
**Conclusion**

With a good organizing team and vision of where we want to go, a lot can be achieved. This camp showed us that in 5 intense days, gaps can be bridged between children from across India. More such camps may help to bridge gaps in Auroville too. Working with children and youth allows for change and improvement in mindsets from an early age, which can carry through their lives.

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**Child Protection Service**

**Introduction**

The aims of Child Protection Service are to build general awareness about Child Protection, foster healthy attitudes about gender, and to “open eyes” in order to prevent child abuse in Auroville and its surroundings. We take a grassroots approach which aims at protecting children by creating awareness from a young age onwards. Our main activity each year is to introduce this programme to children at different schools.

**Description of project**

We give up to eight classes a year at various schools. We reach altogether 132 students at the following schools and centres:

- Aikiyam School, 40 students, 6th and 7th standard
- Udavi School, 25 students, 8th standard
- Edayanchavadi Government School, 20 students, 8th standard
- Kuilapalayam Cultural Centre, 35 students, 2nd through 8th standard
- Life Education Centre, 12 students, all ages

We start the class by sharing about Human Anatomy with students. Then we discuss with them how we can protect ourselves. From there we guide them through thinking about cleanliness, healthy food, and various other issues related to our body, health and environment.

With 10 to 12 year old children we follow a method of giving a topic, then having students draw pictures and explain their work in groups. The topic can be Protection, Parts of the Body (mainly Reproductive System), Child Rights, Abuse, Domestic Violence, Child Labour, Prevention of Child Abuse. With 13 to 18 year old students we follow the 'Unicef' books and information from the internet.

We have distributed posters on child safety (awareness information) to Auroville schools, Auroville outreach schools, and Government schools.

During our class we ask the students to reflect what they have learned from the classes, such as:

- We should be careful while getting a lift.
- There are good touches and bad touches. We should be aware of this.
- We will teach this information to others.
- Any abnormal incident that could be child abuse should be immediately reported to the parents.
- Give respect to the female child.
- Don’t throw female babies away. Families should take care of baby girls.
- Learn the functions of the reproductive organs (for both genders).
- Widows must re-marry.
- We should not treat the children like slaves.
- In all aspects give equal rights to both genders.
Outcomes
The following points came out from the children:

- Girls need more freedom to express their ideas and to be independent.
- I will be aware of myself. I will make sure my friends and family are aware of child abuse. I feel our culture protects us from this type of abuse.
- I feel sorry for the children who go through the abuse. I even would request the Government to create an awareness program for the public and for all schools. The disabled children also should be protected.
- I am against child marriage.

Future direction
We will continue offering this programme next year and in the future.

Concert of Hindustani Music

Introduction
Nandita di is a Hindustani vocal music teacher who has been giving classes to interested participants in Auroville. Her students gave a performance to present what was learned over the year to the community.

Description of project
All students of Nandita di presented a concert on the theme of 'Barkha', i.e. rain, at Pitanga Cultural Centre on March 21, 2015. The concert lasted for 1 hour. All students performed together in spite of different age groups and different levels. Anticipating the performance, students learned new ragas and news songs over the year with a team spirit in their presentation.

Future direction
Next year, all students wish to deepen their learning at their own individual levels. More individual attention will be given by the teacher to each student in class.

Deepanam Life Science Lab

Introduction
The Life Science Lab at Deepanam School has been a place of activities and classes, as well as a place where children are free to come and observe the various live specimens – insects, fish, amphibians and reptiles. The aim of the Life Science Lab is to inspire students to learn firsthand from their natural environment. We aim to encourage investigation and discovery of outdoor surroundings. Here in Auroville we live in a special environment which is not to be neglected or taken for granted; the Life Science Lab and its activities sensitize students towards care of nature and awareness of how human ignorance can threaten our fellow species.

Description of project
Deepanam School students relate with the Life Science Lab in two ways:
1. Through Life Science classes, focused on the study of animals
2. Through individuals choosing to come and help in the maintenance of the Lab.

There are always several chores to be taken care of which invite the participation of the children. There are 15 aquariums, some of which are marine and some fresh water, which need regular cleaning and maintenance. They contain fish and invertebrates,
most of which were collected from our local coastal areas.

In our terrariums and outdoor pit we often have reptiles which were found or rescued in Auroville. These are kept for a short time and then released. This gives the children a unique opportunity to learn about these misunderstood creatures.

The approach taken at the Life Science Lab is based on individual students’ interest and need for self-discovery. We avoid making any rigid course so as to encourage students to be able to experience the common study of animals in different ways.

Near the end of the year the Deepanam team together with all the students put up an exhibition on some common wildlife of Auroville. We pooled together all the student projects on Life Science done over the previous months. This exhibition focused mainly on common snakes and birds, but also included studies of insects, bats and amphibians.

Many groups of students from other Auroville schools and Outreach schools visited the exhibition and the Lab. The Deepanam students were happy to realise their own knowledge on the subject and share with students from other schools.

Outcomes
The most evident achievement is that most of the students in Deepanam have a fluent understanding about the local reptiles, and know that not all snakes are poisonous and dangerous. The students in fact find great joy in learning how to handle snakes and lizards. The most common attitude about snakes, that they are evil or are creatures to be killed, is challenged here! Children are intrigued and curious to discover by themselves that these are pretty sweet and lovely friends, who have an important role in Nature.

Other projects, like learning about the different sorts of scorpions and spiders, have similar outcomes. Bird-watching and learning about the most common birds found at school is most enjoyable to children, who take this knowledge wherever they go and keep an eye open for discovering more.

Reflections
For a few years now we have been observing that some students with learning issues enjoy working in the Life Science Lab. When given a responsibility they are capable of carrying it out with great focus and concentration. Here in the Lab children can choose to identify a role for themselves and individually follow it with a sense of responsibility. Activities of this sort are much needed in education, so as to help children discover on their own their true capacities and interests.

Conclusion
The Life Science Lab is open to all schools to visit and learn about the various specimens and ongoing projects. For the students in Deepanam School it is a constant opportunity for learning and self-discovery.

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**Edible Weeds and Naturally Growing Plants in Auroville**

**Coloring book for adults and young**

Introduction
In a work-obsessed age, the coloring book for adults is a perfect antidote to stress. It helps to relax: by combining logic, as one follows the form, with creativity, as one mixes and matches shades. It's also a fun way to learn. While in the West such books increasingly top best-seller lists, as adults find the inner quiet that a coloring session can bring, this book is likely the first one from India. This volume—first in a planned series...
of three—focuses on edible plants which grow naturally, without being cultivated, and which can enrich our palate and plate.

**Description of project**

The idea for this book, and a series of 3, was more than two years old. However, the proposal was sent only in 2014, proposing that the project would be done over 6 months.

The process timeline was:

- July 2014 - Proposal sent to SAIIER
- November 2014 - Proposal review and meeting with SAIIER
- December 2014 - Proposal approved
- July 2015 - Files sent to the printer (Auroville Press)
- July 2015 - First screen print of the cover page
- September 2015 - First 100 copies to be printed by 7 September, remaining 900 copies to be ready by the end of the month

The final product is a paperback book (21 x 27.5 cm). The main book has 44 black-and-white pages containing 40 botanical drawings, and there is an additional 12-page removable insert (20.2 x 27.2 cm) containing colored versions of the drawings with information about each plant. A pocket on the inner back cover of the book holds the insert.

**Reflections (Nina)**

Since this was my first publication project – I had a lot to learn, for example, understanding the GSM of the paper so that it could be used for coloring, fact that AV Press was not able to acquire certain chosen paper type (NS Maplitho) due to unavailability of the product with its supplier, that the reverse of the front and back cover is called “verso” and what constituted 3 color screen print, etc. I also needed some practical understanding on how to store and secure an insert that will have to be attached with the book. In this regard consultation with AV Papers was very helpful.

Moreover it was an important learning that no matter in which media one uses for the drawings/art work – it takes several steps, cleaning, and processing before it can be of publishing quality. Similarly, no matter how well written or edited the write ups are – making them ready for printing takes a lot of time. For this and several other reasons it is very important to have correct match of people to do the desktop-publishing work. Those who takes interest in the project, are confident with the latest software, and are willing to work through the process until final result as desired by the author is achieved.

I believe, a good project always gets good blessings and helps from various quarters. So, despite many road-blocks that this project had experienced, I am grateful for the number of people who had volunteered to help. The project such as this could not have been come to this stage without the help of Aurovilians and non-Aurovilians who extended their energy and good will.

**Conclusion**

For me the idea of this book had started with wondering the identity of many ubiquitous plants that we all pass on the road. Being interested in science communication and an active doodler, I had proposed this coloring book for adults (and young) to make learning fun. In the process of making this book – there were thorough research done, identifying many I had encountered, then finding their uses, consulting reference books and backing them up with peer-reviewed articles whenever necessary. It was time consuming, exhausting, but immensely rewarding and learning experience. Some of which I hope the users of the book can experience.
Effective curricular integration of technology
both physical and virtual, to enhance learning
in Math, Science and logical thinking

Introduction
This project used physical technology and virtual (i.e. programming) technology as learning aids in Math and Science. The aim was to contextualize abstract concepts through hands-on activities that engage the thinking mind. We used DIY Bigshot cameras, Makey Makey, a Finch robot, and Scratch programming, in collaboration with other tools. We also addressed the question of effective use of computer facilities in schools, by changing the fundamental nature of children's interaction with computers, redefining the relationship from "users" to "programmers".

Description of project
Primary work focused on classroom interventions in mathematics and problem solving, for 5th-8th grade students at Udavi School and Isai Ambalam School. This is the age at which many abstract concepts are grounded. We received 10 Bigshot cameras from Prof. Sree Nayar of Columbia University, New York. The Finch robot and the Makey Makey by were donated by friends and visitors who felt that these technologies could make a real impact on the children's learning. In January 2015 three electronics engineers from Aura Auro joined us, which triggered a lot of hands-on activity by the children including working with motors, electronics and magnetism.

1. Scratch programming
This academic year the focus was on extensive use of technology starting with programming in Scratch with 7th graders, and mapping aspects of Math curricula through projects and challenges in programming. Three broad approaches were adopted for Math curricula through programming:

1. A set of challenges involved children demonstrating their understanding of abstract concepts visually through programming. The concepts included fractions, long division, and pie charts; for example demonstrating what it means to add numerator with numerator and denominator with denominator in a fraction.

2. A set of challenges based on programming was used to understand mathematical ideas such as linear expressions, percentages, and simple and compound interest. For example “5x +10” was graphed as rectangles of varying heights. Then the children could vary the slope or vary the added constant and see the resulting change. This allowed them to explore and interpret the formula. This exercise was then modified so that students could investigate solutions to equations, e.g. “5x+10=75”, which that used the given expression and the pictures, and paused when the result was reached.

3. Children created games that helped them learn and then progressively master concepts, such as positive and negative integers, and cube roots that result in two-digit numbers.

We found that once children got into the mode of creating their own programs, they tended to use available computers in creative ways, instead of drifting or getting carried away playing games.

2. Applications of programming in English class
We introduced programming in English class, letting children animate stories they had written using Scratch. 7th and 8th grade students participated in this activity. The 7th graders, who had been working rigourously with programming to learn
math, surprised us with how elaborate, complex and refined they could make their animated stories, despite being the younger group. Students did self-assessments of their work based on quality criteria that was agreed on beforehand by the class. The work of the 8th graders resulted in a presentation at the end of the year called 'If I had wings...', which was a 5 minute video, developed through over 1000 lines of code and simultaneous virtual play with 60 characters and over 30 changes in backdrop.

The English teacher reports: Every year the 7th and 8th grade classes explore different kinds of text such as stories, essays, letters, and dialogues in their creative writing class. This year, after the first term, the students chose a story to animate in Scratch. The children worked over the course of 8-10 sessions (including first term holidays) on the computer animating their stories.

The main accomplishments of the project were:

1. Creative writing and expression – The children were encouraged to use their imaginations to create stories in English. Their work on the computer fueled this creative process. The students enjoyed choosing their characters and settings, and experimented with a variety of graphics and colours. Giving concrete form to their imagination this way was a unique experience for them.

2. English language skills – The children had to type the stories and dialogues, and this gave them an opportunity to work on grammar, vocabulary and spelling.

3. Fun and familiarity with computers – Most of the children in Udavi do not have access to computers at home. This project was an opportunity for them to gain familiarity with the computers, a growing necessity in today’s context.

4. Organisation and perseverance – To complete the project successfully the children had to type their stories, choose appropriate images, arrange images and text in the proper order, and add audio effects. This was a huge and cumbersome task and a few could not complete it. However, all of those who finished had a sense of achievement which comes from persistence.

5. Logic-building capacity – As the stories were to be seen and understood by others (besides the teacher), the children got genuine feedback on their work. They came to better recognise the logical flaws that often creep up in the work of 12 and 13 year olds.

Children naturally respond to modern technology with enthusiasm and curiosity, and this was evident during the entire project. They showed a lot of enthusiasm to the extent that they were willing to sacrifice their holidays to complete their work. Their body language also showed that they were concentrated on an enjoyable task.

Psychologically, at a subtle level, the project gave a boost to their creative writing process because it let them see a visible end result of their imagination and the impact it had on others. Subsequent to this project some of the children worked with enhanced seriousness and put more thought into their creative writing.

Overall, I feel it was a wonderful project for the children.

3. Makey Makey

Beyond mathematics and English, programming was taken further into “sensing the real world” using Makey Makey. This invention kit lets kids set up electronics that respond to real-life events, such as their hand touching a plant (or another object that has some moisture content). Using Makey Makey the children made their own version of a water tank filling alarm, and a non-touch (pressure based) burglar alarm. These exercises helped children see how programming can connect to the real world, and think up further possibilities and applications. For their final project they built a mat made from stems of plants, which the Makey Makey could detect, and placed it on an insulator just above the ground. If someone stepped on the mat the mat would touch the floor triggering an alarm.
4. Finch robot

We worked on “controlling in the real world” with the Finch robot. This was done by directing the actions of the robot to go around obstacle courses and deliver small paper balls into goal buckets. The most popular game we created was the parking game, with a random set of commands that made the robot move around. The goal of a participant was to predict where the robot needed to be placed initially to reach a fixed goal. We used this version at the school fair which generated much interest.

5. Bigshot cameras

We also used physical technology, one being the DIY (Do It Yourself) “Bigshot” cameras that can be assembled by students. Over 50 children of 6th grade and higher assembled the cameras, took pictures, put the pictures on the computer, and then used the instructions backwards to disassemble the cameras for the next group to use. They worked on this project for about two weeks. The children enjoyed the work of assembling the apparatus. They took a number of pictures and picked up several techniques in photography. Overall it was an interesting exercise of group work, reading and comprehending instructions, and analyzing pictures. The camera’s hand crank also gave a context to look into gears and ratios. A lot more can be done using the cameras, such as learning about optics and imaging. The children were very curious about the 3-D images taken by the camera, and experimented with how it could perceive depth.

Reflections

Technology can be a powerful tool to explore new pathways of learning in children. However, just as any other tool its usage and the atmosphere created for its effective use is important. Rural children are able to take to Programming using visual programming languages like Scratch that allow them to stitch the code together (rather than type it and need to compile it). They are also able to advance in its use to make increasingly complex programs.

Programming is significantly different from the ready-made computer material for passive learning including online lectures or videos. Programming projects are also different from the so-called educational games that attempt to replicate rigor by asking children to solve sums to progress in a game. With those, children typically choose to play games that they are already good at, to get a higher score, rather than stretch themselves with new games. Playing games on the computer by and large appeals to a child’s vital.

However, instead of trying to program the child through the computer, if we let the children program the computer the work moves beyond the vital to mental and beyond. It breaks the socialization pattern many children learn that the computer is always right and we are always playing catch-up. With programming the children realize that the computer actually needs to be given step-by-step instructions and can’t make the simplest connections on its own. Programming requires children to think for the machine and break down complex problems into simpler problems. Children are able to make mistakes and learn from them without needing to constantly consult adults, which lets them handle their vital impulses of frustration, boredom, etc.

After working on programming for some time, when given a choice of what to do with a computer, more than half the children choose to create or refine something they built rather than play a computer program they had played before. When the children see a good computer program they appreciate the amount of work that goes into making a computer look smart.

The children learn implicit knowledge through programming such as the Cartesian system, velocity, etc, and they learn about the importance of agreed-upon conventions as they increasingly work with each other’s work.

Children who feel like failures with test scores in time-bound examinations,
persevere and feel proud when they are able to demonstrate their learning. The work with physical technology integrates their physical, vital and mental parts of being to create concrete objects. It can be as effective as any other technology through the complexity and dexterity of the object being worked on.

**Future direction**

The research prompts us to take STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) more seriously in our school and we recommend that other schools also look at it seriously. In a few years we may also be in a position to support the training of teachers for those schools that lack the volunteers or teachers to take this up effectively.

**Conclusion**

For effective Math and Science education there needs to be context for what is being taught. Technology has become ubiquitous and can no longer be ignored by schools. We have made a good beginning in the use of technology in Maths. We have been able to map some curricular areas, e.g. integers, long division, addition of fractions, linear algebra, etc, and implicit knowledge of the Cartesian system, etc. We have further noticed that children are eager to give life to stories they write by creating animations. They are willing to break patterns and get creative, and are open to handling complexity.

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**Eluciole circus**

**Introduction**

Eluciole circus offers circus performance training, aerial yoga, silk, trapeze, lyra, gymnastics, acrobatics, theater, dance, acro yoga, balance and concentration work, coordination, juggling and more.

**Description of project**

Groups of children from few Auroville schools including The Learning Community, Kindergarten, Nandanam, and Transition School came every week to Eluciole Circus. The schedule for schools was organized in the beginning of July before the start of the school year.

Other classes were offered for children and young adults from ages 5 to 15 throughout the week. Some workshops were organized for adults over the course of the year.

During classes the children have the support of many different artistic materials which help in developing many different skills and qualities. Through the activities and exercises the mind is in a meditative state while the body express the divine spirit.

**Outcomes**

Through their activities with Eluciole Circus the children develop control and discipline of the functioning of the body, toward an integral, methodical and harmonious development of all the parts and movements of the body. They also develop the power of concentration and the capacity of attention. They develop the beautiful qualities of confidence and trust.

**Reflections (Kalou)**

I can really see the progress of the children, in many different ways, after they have been practicing for a few years. I started to give them some goals to realize this year - they love it!
Future direction

Next year we will focus more on aerial work, flexibility, acrobatics, dance, and especially Aerial Yoga, to help the body conscience to grow, to become more strong, and to develop the universal conscience.

I would like to develop the Aerial Yoga for children and adults in Auroville. Aerial Yoga revolves around counteracting gravity. By relieving compression due to the pull of gravity while on the ground, the spine is elongated and the shoulders straightened. The few inches of suspension in the air releases tension on the bones and muscles, increasing flexibility. This practice uses a soft trapeze that lifts the body off the ground and at the same time allows for Yoga movements.

I want to mix some body expression (dance), some theater, even some live music and singing in our activity. This is our yoga: expressing the divine in all the possibilities of the human body!

Conclusion

Auroville is a place where children and adults can learn many different forms of expressing the divine through arts. The Circus is an effort to help the children to go deeper inside themselves and to be in touch with their divine part. Through it emerges Transformation, Art, Creativity, Joy, Balance, Harmony, Love, Magic, Happiness, Divine light.

Forest Treasure project (The Learning Community)

Introduction

In its educational programs, The Learning Community (TLC) has always had a close relationship with the forests of Auroville. This project aimed to intensify this relationship by enhancing the nature literacy of our students.

Description of project

TLC has been working in close relationship with the Fertile forest since TLC started seven years ago. Fertile is one of the TLC bases, which students spend time in throughout the year. Johnny, who has taken care of the forest for 40 years, has been working with the TLC team and children on a daily basis. Over the past two years TLC also conducted activities at Pitchandikulam Forest, and has developed strong connections with the place and with the Pitchandikulam team. This year TLC activities also took place at Evergreen forest.

Activities in the forests this year were organized by age group as follows:

- Pitchandikulam 6-8 years old (17 children) 32 visits total
- Fertile 9-12 years old (16 children) 32 visits total
- Evergreen 8-11 years (8 children) 18 visits total

To further broaden our knowledge, particularly with respect to animals such as snakes and porcupines, we also visited Aranya on three occasions. On these visits we were accompanied by two Auroville forest guides.

As part of the forests project students collected and preserved natural artifacts in specimen boxes. Children collected stones, quills, feathers, skeletons, seeds and pods, bark, and other objects from the forest. These were each identified and more background information was researched. The collections, both individual and collective, became a vivid library with each item adding a memory and story. They were described, identified, and compared and also discussed in a larger context. For example, at some
point students discovered a heap of porcupine quills in a den in Fertile forest, indicating that porcupines were killed by poachers. The quills became part of the collections but so did the discussions that were held on poaching and its effects on nature.

**Reflections**

We strongly believe that this and similar projects can add significant value to the nature literacy of children and recommend them as part of other school curricula. Regular and frequent visits with patient facilitators are key for the process.

**Future direction**

We found this approach very valuable and will continue with our forest activities next school year. To further deepen the connection, the same student groups will continue their work in their respective forests. We will also complement their learning with academic elements in their classrooms, and in this context plan to create a poster about indigenous animals and trees. In addition, we want to enhance their aesthetic perception and creative skills by introducing ‘nature craft’.

**Conclusion**

The forests are open to all Auroville children to enjoy, experience and learn from. We found that the children experienced nature in a new light through their treasure collections. A layer of understanding was added which textbooks cannot provide. Moreover, students felt more connected with their own habitat, which goes in hand with an enhanced sense of respect and care. By way of this project, students markedly improved their Auroville nature literacy and deepened their relationship to the forests.

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**Glimpses of Wonder**

*Children in Auroville Creating Worlds on Sand*

**Introduction**

This book by Aikya was done as a sketch with spontaneous sparks of Wonder. It describes her experiences facilitating the World Game, commonly known as Sandplay, with children in Auroville. The World Game gives children an opportunity to be creative, to be able to express their own individuality and unique living soul. The intended readership is those interested in learning about the activity, as well as people who love children and aspire towards a luminous future.

**Description of project**

The process of creating the book was:

1. 2005 onwards: gathering materials (observations and pictures) while playing the World Game with children
2. 2013-2014: starting to write while still gathering materials
3. 2014-2015: structuring the written information and pictures; working on design, editing

The final product is a printed 21cm by 21 cm softcover book of 124 pages. It is printed in full color with more than 100 pictures.

**Reflections**

Writing this book was a joyful process and brought many insights into the work and into myself.
Indian classical music, dance and veena

Introduction
For several years now we have been offering classes in South Indian classical music, dance and Veena to interested children and women in Auroville. These arts are part of the local cultural heritage and are very much alive. Practicing them develops technical and artistic abilities as well as physical and spiritual awareness.

Activities of the year
Our classical vocal music, dance, and Veena classes occurred on the weekends at the SAWCHU building in Bharat Nivas. Auroville children, Auroville women and six members from neighboring villages participated this year.

1. Vocal music
Carnatic music is considered one of the oldest systems of music in the world. It has a clear format as a medium of teaching, performing, prayer, and therapy. An important element of Carnatic music is its devotional content; the lyrics of the traditional compositions, whether mythological or social in nature, are set entirely against a devotional or philosophical background. This music eases tension and stress, and creates an environment that is good for concentrating and focusing.

We had two different classes: one for the women (5 members) and another for the children (25 members). Every month more children attended the class. The children became interested to learn the ragas and different devotional songs. At first they were often shy to open their voice and change the quality of different pitches, and later to make recordings. But when the recordings were presented to them, they couldn't believe it was their voice, so much they improved.

Twenty of our students, both children and women, participated in the Auroville Singing Festival. This was a first time experience for our group, and every child and organizer felt some tension, although they had practiced their songs. These were two devotional songs to the God Krishna, which the children presented very well.

2. Dance
Bharatanatyam was traditionally performed in South Indian temples to worship Gods and Goddesses. Today, the stage of Bharatanatyam has moved from the temple to the theater. Our class is taught in a spiritual context, harmonizing mind and body, rather than in Hindu religious context. The purpose of the class is for students to learn the basic postures, movements, and the choreography of Bharatanatyam as an introduction to Bharatanatyam and Indian culture. During this time students learn several fundamental footsteps (adavus), eye movements, neck movements, and hand gestures (hasta mudras). Our approach to Bharatanatyam is that of dancing for seeking peace and happiness, with the motivation of one's own personal spirituality and belief system. We want to think and move peacefully with a calm mind.

3. Veena
Four students attended Veena classes regularly and three students irregularly due to their school schedules. Our Veena classes use the Saraswati Veena, which has 24 fixed frets. This type of Veena evolved in Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu, during the reign of Raghunatha Nayak, and so is sometimes called the Tanjore Veena or the Raghunatha Veena.
Reflections
Music education is a space where the adult can be a facilitator rather than an authority, as the many successful programs run by the Auroville Singing Festival show.

One goal we have is to increase appreciation for Asian dances and cultures and to examine the role and meaning of dance in social, cultural, and historical contexts through Bharatanatyam. We identify unique qualities in Bharatanatyam and differentiate Bharatanatyam from other Indian dances and dance forms. We find ways of expressing and communicating meaning.

Conclusion
We strive to develop a great intimacy with the Bharatnatyam dance, so that we identify our movements with the deep meaning of the postures and figures. We strive to train our bodies and minds to reverberate the subtle vibrations of this sublime art and express them joyfully to the audience. Likewise we will attain more perfect mastery of playing Veena, becoming one with the sound and finally merging in *nadam brahma*, the divine sound of the origin, tuning in to the sounds in a receptive performing silence.

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**Integral Education - Understanding Parts of Being**

**Introduction**
Sopanam is creating a series of videos that present Sri Aurobindo’s Integral Yoga from an overall basic framework to the details. The current project and latest video focuses on the various Parts of Being as described by Sri Aurobindo.

**Description of project**
The Parts of Being video in process. The first 5 minutes of what will be a 60 minute video were completed this year (from December 2014 to March 2015). The core team of Sopanam is Manoj, who focuses on writing and directing, and Hemant, who focuses on visualisation and animation. The process of creating the video involves:

- Research and script writing
- Voice over dub for creating timed motion graphics
- Visualisation, 3D motion graphics models and sets
- Gathering of photos and live footages if required
- Rendering
- Music composition and recording
- Editing, composite, mix, outputs, reviews, corrections
- Final music and voice over recording
- Final master and production

Script work is progressing, 3D visualization and other related production works are ongoing. Since this is part of a larger project, only in relation with all other parts can this part be properly completed, at a later phase of the project.

**Reflections**
Previous project DVD production and wrapping up delayed the starting of this project.

**Conclusion**
This will be Cinematic audio-visual presentation, third in a series of educational videos on Sri Aurobindo’s Integral Yoga. Primarily meant for educational institutions the world over.
Learning from Life Experience: Field trips and outings
(Transition School)

Introduction
At Transition School there is a commitment to developing the whole child. Children's different learning styles are addressed through the implementation of different methods: cooperative learning, individual work, class projects, and outings. Teachers develop meaningful lesson objectives and good lesson plans that include field experiences.

Field trips and outings appeal to the students and offer many opportunities for learning. In Auroville and the surrounding area there are many activities and areas of research and innovative work, and this offers many opportunities to extend learning beyond the walls of the classroom. These types of experiences are memorable and help children to ground their learning and make sense of the world around them.

In many cases an outing is linked with a project that the class has been working on at school, and adds another element to the class work.

This year we decided to expand this part of our curriculum. We wanted to find out if field trips and outings increase the children's motivation to learn, and if these experiences help the children understand concepts and ideas more fully.

Description of project
As in a lot of educational research, we approached this project through the “action research” method – “learning by doing”. This involves a group of people identifying a problem or something they would like to change, doing something to resolve it, seeing how successful their efforts were, and if not satisfied, trying again.

The Transition School teachers know that children love to go on field trips; they enjoy being with their classmates on a trip outside the school walls. But our question was, "Are these trips educational? Do they motivate the children and do the children understand better what has been presented to them?" With these questions in mind the teachers worked out simple guidelines: educational goals and good planning are essential. It is also helpful to integrate the trip into the classroom program. Plan instruction and activities in class to prepare for the trip. Discuss what will happen at the trip site, and the expectations of the children. How will the teacher assess the children's interest? Their understanding of concepts?

With this in mind, individual teachers, sometimes with the help of their students, thought about places to go that could help the class investigate the topic. There are many different ways to investigate a topic, including:

- Going on field trips to observe examples of the topic.
- Interacting with experts in the field of study, who may volunteer their time to share knowledge with the children.
- Participating in work that is happening, and talking with the people doing the work.

We felt that there should be continuous assessment and evaluation. The students were expected to demonstrate what they had learned, through discussion, presentations, posters, powerpoint presentations, writing, or other methods. Many of our trips this year were based on the theme of understanding of our environment and environmental issues. Below are descriptions of some of our field trips.

1. Nadukuppam, Grades 2 and 6
In December the second and sixth grades went on a joint field trip to Nadukuppam village, where Pitchandikulam Forest is active with projects in education, social development, farming and ecological restoration. The sixth graders had been the
reading buddies for the younger students, and one of the significant aspects of this trip was the exchange between the two groups of students. The reading buddies relationship combined with this joint outing went a long way toward building bridges across the groups. Both groups were studying trees, so this was an ideal hands-on learning experience for all 38 children. Four teachers, five members of the Pitchandikulam staff and one parent accompanied the children.

We traveled by bus for the one-hour ride, stopping on the way to see the fruit bats roosting in big tamarind trees. The children were happy to learn that in the village where the bats roost, the villagers never use loudspeakers, as they see the bats as an auspicious presence don't want to disturb them.

We arrived at Nadukuppam shortly afterwards. First we visited the Nadukuppam school, and saw some of the environmental projects in place there, implemented by the teachers together with the Pitchandikulam team. It was interesting for the Transition students to see the similarities with ongoing projects in their own school.

Then we visited the spirulina unit, where spirulina is cultivated in open tanks. One of the guides from Pitchandikulam explained the process of cultivation and the benefits of spirulina to the students. This was followed by an invitation to try a spirulina drink.

After this, we visited the large area of Nadukuppam which Pitchandikulam is helping to reforest. We swam in the water catchment tanks, and the children sailed the local coracle boats there. We took a walk around the land, and everybody had the chance to plant some trees to contribute towards the reforestation work.

This was an inspiring trip which awakened interest in the children. It led to a wonderful tree-labelling project on the Transition school campus.

2. Biochar: Discipline Farm and Cuppa Chai, Grade 8

The eighth grade class worked on a project on Biochar during September and October 2014. The project was conducted by Deoyani Sarkhot.

First the students were shown a powerpoint presentation on Biochar – charcoal produced from plant matter and stored in the soil as a means of removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. The students learned about Biochar's benefits, applications and manufacture. They were also introduced to the use of charcoal in Auroville, specifically Annapurna and Discipline Farm, and looked at comparative data on farms yields from soils with and without charcoal.

Then we went on a field trip to Discipline Farm and the students saw the kiln that was being used to make charcoal. They were also able to see that the yield of a field in which biochar had been used was much greater that a control field. Deoyani and the volunteers at Discipline Farm explained the functioning of the 30 kg capacity charcoal kiln. We then went to the Cuppa Chai kiln across the road and saw the large 750 kg capacity kiln. We were unable to finish our research; we were supposed to make charcoal.

This lesson was part of the Environmental Science unit and it proved to be an inspiring one. The students wrote about what they had learned and referred to this project often.

3. Adyar Eco Park, Grade 8

The eighth grade also had the opportunity to go to Adyar Eco Park (also known as Adyar Poonga), an ecological park set up by the Government of Tamil Nadu, with Pitchandikulam Forest Consultants, in the Adyar estuary area of Chennai. We have taken students there in the past and find it a very inspiring example of how an ecologically damaged area can be restored to vibrant life. Visiting Adyar lets the children see what can be done with the right application of hard work, dedication and the knowledge of science. Being able to see such examples is important as sometimes
children of this age feel overwhelmed with all the news about ecological problems and disasters. After this trip they all wrote a personal narrative telling about the day, what they learned and how they felt about it. The students were inspired and impressed. Some of the comments were: “I thought I was going to be bored, but I am now different. I see what can be done through hard work and dedication.” “I have a new bond with nature—I want to learn more.”

4. Neyveli Lignite Corporation, 7th grade

The seventh grade made a day trip to the Neyveli Lignite thermal coal-fired power plant from which Auroville partly receives its electricity. We were received by an engineer in the Public Relations department, who explained about the geology of Neyveli with the aid of models of the different layers. We were also shown models of the steam generator, turbine, control instruments, cooling tower and other parts.

Then we descended into one of the three open-cast mines, and experienced first hand how the gigantic excavators worked. These machines are so huge that we were dwarfed by the scraper wheel. Three different layers of terraces were being excavated, and water was being pumped out. We saw the enormous conveyor belt transporting the lignite to the thermal power plant. We heard the deafening explosions as dynamite charges were laid to loosen the coal.

We learned about the cost of the project, its future, the land and water requirements, the labor and engineers involved, and the Neyveli Township created for the workers of this corporation, with its schools, hospital and free electricity.

After this we visited the greenbelt an area of the power plant: 40,000 square meters with trees, bushes, and water bodies (overflow from the mines), a deer park, and a little zoo. We were plied with snacks, a mid day meal, transport on site and more. Lastly we visited the Neyveli Township, where we saw an environmental exposition on the Neyveli Lignite mines and the corporation’s social enterprises in the township.

This trip generated a lot of discussion. The students also became more interested in renewable sources of energy and did research on various forms of energy. They presented their findings to other members of their class.

5. Pichavaram Mangrove Forest, Grade 7

The seventh grade went on a trip to the Pichavaram Mangrove Forest, near the temple town of Chidambaram, 60 km from Pondicherry. We hired two rowboats from the Tamil Nadu Tourist Department and had a wonderful late afternoon boat ride through this second largest Mangrove forest of India. It is next to the coast of the Bay of Bengal; tides from the sea bring salt water in and out twice a day. Two estuaries are formed by the Velar and the Coleroon rivers and the Killai backwaters. The sanctuary is 1100 hectares in size and has 4400 small and big canals with a depth of 3-10 feet. We meandered through the creeks and gullies, along mud flats and sand flats, observing the flora and fauna: seaweed, crabs, oysters, egrets, cormorants, storks and herons. We learned that in the migratory season, September to April, 177 bird species flock here.

We looked at Mangroves and learned about them. These trees have unique breathing-root systems with membranes that allow only fresh water to enter. Mangroves grow up from the water extending their ‘fingers’; the leaves have pores to take up oxygen. Mangroves are more than important for the coastal areas – they are crucial. Estuarine areas tend to be highly populated by humans, with the risk that the slightest ecological imbalance could take a heavy toll. Mangroves play a vital role in stabilizing these areas.

Mangroves are now seen by scientists as saviors in today’s scenario of global warming. We all know that most of the coastal areas throughout the world are going
to be affected by sea level rise due to global warming, cyclones and seasonal storms. The effects of this are already visible. Mangroves are buffers between the land and the sea. Coastlines throughout the world are facing serious problems of coastal erosion and threat of rising sea levels. To control such assault of the sea on land nature has provided the Mangroves, which not only help in preventing soil erosion but also act as a catalyst in reclaiming land from seas.

Mangrove forests and estuaries are the breeding and nursery grounds for a number of marine organisms including the commercially important shrimp, crab and fish species. Hence, loss of mangroves not only affects us indirectly but result in direct economic repercussions. Mangrove trees are also used for house building, furniture, telephone poles and certain household items. When these industries are managed appropriately it is possible to derive timber products from Mangrove forests without significant environmental degradation, maintaining their value as a nursery and a source of food.

6. Auroville’s Archeological Sites

Several groups of students visited Poppo’s Archeological museum in Kottakarai. Poppo, an Auroville pioneer and architect, has been rescuing and excavating archeological finds since the 1960’s, first coming upon treasures by accident while digging foundations for his buildings. He has slowly built up a collection of interesting and precious artifacts dating back to the Iron Age and Megalithic times (the year 0 AD). The Archeological Survey of India gave him permission to safeguard these artifacts in museum at his home until the time the building of the Tamil Heritage Center is completed.

Over the years in the Bharat Nivas, Center Field, and Savitri Bhavan areas, many burial sites were unearthed which are thought to date back to the Iron Age. The artifacts found beneath granite slabs in urns include cups, vessels, cowbells made of bronze and copper and iron, beads, and the semi-precious stone lapis lazuli. Iron objects such as swords, spades, spears, sickles and axes were also found. Poppo is a great raconteur, passionate about his work; he kindled students’ enthusiasm and their interest to know more about the people who lived on the Auroville plateau long ago.

We visited the newest excavation in the Matrimandir triangle with several cairn circles, marked by sandstone boulders 1 meter below the surface. Poppo and his crew have meticulously preserved their original form; later a park will be designed around these circles with boards explaining this amazing find right in the center of Auroville where daily hundreds of tourists pass. In the center of these cairns, large granite headstones are found, and occasionally burial urns with earthen pots, metal objects, and bones within the circle. All of these stones originated from several kilometers away and must have been brought here for the purpose. The larger granite pieces are from even further away, probably near Mailam.

For over 30 years Poppo has been excavating and mapping various sites in Auroville and preserving and rebuilding the urns, pot shards and other objects which he displays. This open museum helps us remember the mysteries of the past as we construct a city of the future.

7. Matrimandir

Several groups visited the Matrimandir and her different aspects. We viewed an exhibition of the designs of the gardens and the planned lake surrounding it, the gardens themselves, the chamber, the petals, and the top of the Matrimandir. This last was tied in with the Geography program some classes followed, providing an experience of the bird’s eye view, the directions, locations, “what can you see?”.

The children learned about the Matrimandir's 12 petals, their qualities and their
colors. They learned that the first eight petals concern one’s attitude towards the Divine (Sincerity, Humility, Gratitude, Perseverance, Aspiration, Receptivity, Progress, Courage) and the last four towards humanity (Goodness, Generosity, Equality and Peace).

We also visited the Banyan tree which is the true geographic center of Auroville, with its resident owls and parrots, and the Amphitheatre with the Urn in which the soil of 192 countries was deposited in 1968 to symbolize unity at the inauguration of Auroville. We learned about the testing ponds (to test the sealing for the lake), the special compost being made, the ashram and Auroville volunteers who come work every day, the workshops, planning and design offices. We also visited the town planning office in Town Hall with its maps, models and satellite pictures.

Visits to the Matrimandir, which usually happen around the Auroville week, are always in demand and the students never tire of them. The visits are a good opportunity to remind ourselves why we are here in Auroville and what this special center symbolizes for each of us. All the children have their own stories – some often walk in the gardens and visit them with their parents.

8. Eco Service, Auroville

Many groups of students went to participate in the work at the Eco Service, Auroville’s solid waste recycling unit. Auroville communities segregate their solid waste in 4-8 categories, and the Eco service collects it. In their premises it is sorted further into 55 categories and is mostly sold for recycling. That which cannot be recycled, “mixed waste”, goes to the landfill. A goal of the Eco Service is that everyone in Auroville knows how to segregate waste at source (at one’s home, office, school, workshop) in such a manner that the outcome is eventually one hundred percent recovery, or “zero waste”.

A young intern at Eco Service, Alex, created a programme for volunteering there called the “1-hour-experience” at the Eco Service. Participants would visit the Eco service for a 15-minute tour, and then for 45 minutes help sort waste into different categories for recycling. This program gave a sense of community participation and awareness. The goal was simple: develop the potential for beauty (symbolized by the color pink) and bring a sense of community (symbolized by stars) into our recycling and waste management. After the experience students received a pink star to pin on their clothes, and became garbage warriors!

The 1-hour experience was a success with the students; they learned a lot and developed more respect for the people sorting and handling waste every day. This outing was followed up with a lesson of a “waste audit” for their home or community waste, and a waste audit of the school. In the classroom now we have trays for not-crumpled and not-torn white and colored waste paper; this is collected by Auropapers, which gives the students recycled notebooks for Christmas.

Outcomes

The children did demonstrate enthusiasm and interest. We had many interesting presentations in the school. We will have to follow it further to see how it translates into deeper and more comprehensive learning. We planned to create a file that contains information on different subject areas and clearly describes where we can go, who we can meet, and what is the feedback of the students and teachers. This is in process.

Conclusion

We would like to continue this research and find better ways of evaluating the project. All indications are that if the trip is well planned and has a purpose that the students are aware of, it is a wonderful tool to enhance learning.
Library for New Colors centre

Introduction
This project was to create a library for village children at the New Colors creative educational children's center in Edayanchavadi.

Description of project
A functioning library was created with covered and organized books that are available for the children to read. All the children, teachers, and volunteers at New Colors participated in this project. We had meetings to discuss the positive aspects of a library, and demonstrated how to use the books properly. The children gave a stage performance about the importance of libraries.

Each time a child borrows a book from the library, we record their name, date, book name and the author name. After they finish reading the book, they do a small presentation in the circle time.

Outcomes
Many children are reading and exploring the books in library. They have improved a lot in their reading skills. Volunteers and teachers also benefit from the library. The books offer creative ideas and will be an ongoing support for academic improvement. This library has opened the eyes of wisdom for many children in the village.

Reflections
It was a busy year in setting the library. It is not fully finished and we still need help in many areas. We are working on it.

Future direction
The work to cover the books and arrange them is still ongoing, but once that is done the library will be opened to the wider community.

Lord Byron’s Love Letter

Introduction
“Lord Byron’s Love Letter” is a short funny play by Tennessee Williams. A small group of Aurovilians performed this play, with two aims:
1. To provide the participating Aurovilians in love with theater some acting tools, and the learning process of working directly on a short play, experiencing learning through funny and enjoyable activities.
2. To bring theater and culture around the town.

Description of project
Francesca, Jeff, Elke, Anandamayi, and Rena acted in “Lord Byron’s Love Letter”. Several performances were given:

- March 20, 8pm, Sacred Groves
- March 21, 8pm, Le Zephyr
- March 22, 5:30pm, Kalabhoomi amphitheatre
- Extra performance at Aurogreen

Reflections
It was a nice way to put the community together. Aurovilians still stop me on my way to tell me: Thank you!
**Future direction**

The intention is to go on with acting/learning activities with adults and kids. I (Francesca) am planning an Auroville kids theater festival which will involve all the primary schools. For the adults, I will continue with short plays.

**Conclusion**

The success was doing some acting activity which on the end involved the Auroville community. One lesson we took from the experience is: don’t go fast, don’t go big. Do small things, but do them at your best.

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**Matrimandir and the Park of Unity**

**Introduction**

*Matrimandir and the Park of Unity* is a photographic art book project which aims at illustrating the special energy around the Matrimandir.

**Description of project**

The book features photographs by Ireno and text by Alan. The photos underline the beauty, the nature, the work and all those inspiring life moments that make the Matrimandir so unique.

The work on the book started virtually in 1984, when Ireno too his first pictures of the Matrimandir area. The actual book project began in 2014 and has now been completed. The final product is an 11 x 8.5 inch hardcover book printed in 4 colors using 170 gsm Matt Art Paper, with stitching, perfect binding and individual shrink packaging.

There are many potential readers for this kind of publication: people interested or sympathizing with the Auroville project, visitors to Auroville, Aurovilians, and members of the general public interested in photography and art.

**Reflections (Ireno)**

A long term project can be really rewarding. A project that takes this long to materialize is like a sort of son that you see growing (while growing along with it). You nourish it, protect it and you want it to be well-built and beautiful.

It was a privilege to take photographs of a place that constantly inspires me. The fact that I had to visit the Matrimandir frequently was also a reward in itself.

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**Methodically learning to write English sentences**

**Introduction**

Isai Ambalam School attempted in 1999 a method for its Young Adults to enable them to write English sentences on their own. It was called Basic Sentence Structure Approach. The attempt of the school in using that approach for the Young Adults succeeded only partially. Later, the teachers tried to work out the principle based on which these structures could be identified and practiced; but they didn't succeed. Last year they came to know about Regis’ English Sentence Writing Formula and found in it that basis. They also found out that Regis had used an easy way of applying that formula – starting with thinking in one’s mother tongue and ending in writing correct English sentences. He used this process as it is natural for the students learning English as a second language. He enabled the students to use this process for learning each aspect of
his formula. This research report is an outcome of our effort in enabling the students to use this approach and to write their own English sentences.

Description of project

A sentence normally expresses an action done. It consists of an action, the one who does it and an object associated with that action. It is normally written in a setting of 3 words or word clusters. The action occurs in time – past, present or future – and its perfect forms. The action has 14 different parameters: what was done, to whom and for whom it was done, when, where, how it was done, for what it was done, etc. And a mode of feeling is implied in the action: 14 different modal words like “can”, “might”, “must”, “would”, “should” etc. are used for these different feelings. Based on this system the learners can learn to write single sentences without fault. Then they learn to connect these sentences appropriately, using conjunctions to form form longer sentences. Regis’ formula contains all these aspects:

\[ Ac \in W^3 \supset \{ T14 \times A4 \times M14 \} + C25 \]

Twelve teachers and 42 students at different levels of mastery of English volunteered to learn Regis’ method. “Learning to write English sentences” was divided into Basic and Advanced levels. It was decided to take up the Basic Level for experiment this year.

A research team of three teachers was formed with Nirmla as overall in-charge and Kavitha and Gomathi as deputies. The teachers learning the method were divided into two groups and the students into four groups. Their levels of English language and English sentence writing were assessed. Based on this we decided on the aspects of sentence writing, as expressed in the formula, to include for each group. The team assigned competent persons to mentor and monitor the groups, and a time schedule of learning was determined for each group.

Outcomes

Group 1 (children):

In group 1 there are 13 students. Through this approach their vocabulary skill has improved. Their writing speed has improved. All the 13 students have learnt to write after thinking in one’s own mother tongue and then to form English sentences. Eight of the thirteen students could write sentences using correct tenses. Each of them has written on 20 to 35 themes. This writing enabled them to write the sentences coherently about the themes. Almost all the students found it easy to use this process, and they were happy to learn thus.

Group 2 (children):

In this group there are 12 students. Through this method they learnt 100 to 150 action words. They are able to write the sentence in correct order. They got a clear idea of using their mother tongue thinking for writing English sentences. Six students out of the 12 students could write correct sentences using the tenses. They wrote on 10 to 12 themes. The other 3 students need more practice to write sentences on a specific theme. This process has helped all to write coherently, and the students felt happy to learn so.

Group 3 (children):

There are 8 students in this group. Through this approach all the 8 students can understand the process of writing English sentences. They can write correct English sentences through anglicization. Among 8 students, 5 students can write on 20 to 25 themes by using the tenses. Remaining 3 students are able to write the sentences using the tenses correctly. After learning this approach they are able to use the words of a in
the correct order. Their thinking level has improved and their writing skill has also improved. At the beginning it was hard for them to learn the process, but they were eager to learn and write more and more. They could maintain their mental stamina needed in this process. They were energetic during the English class, and were able to correct their own mistakes. This made them happy.

Group 4 (children):
There are 8 students in this group. This group felt it very difficult to follow the process and struggled a lot. Later they became involved and were able to write many more sentences. Their vocabulary skill has improved. Day-by-day they came forward to do their assignment themselves, which improved their self learning.

Group 5 (teachers):
This process was very new to the teachers. They felt eager to write the sentences. Almost all the 6 teachers have completed their plan; only 3 teachers could not completely learn to use all the conjunctives. They have written on 50 to 100 themes each with 20 to 30 sentences. They have understood the tenses thoroughly. They have learnt to write well all the 14 types of sentences and use them in their themes. They are able to find their mistakes and correct them. Before they learned this process they were writing in sort of clumsy and routine patterns, but through this practice with Regis’ process their quality of writing has improved a lot. They have become eager to learn more through the process.

Group 6 (teachers):
In this group there are 2 teachers only. Shanthi has finished higher secondary and Vijaya has completed 10th standard. So their learning levels were less than the other teachers. Hence this process helped them a lot. They used this approach fully and wrote 200 sentences in word agreement, 150 sentences in each tense and 50 sentences in T14. Shanthi has written 15 to 20 sentences on 10 themes. Vijaya focused more on tenses. Now she is able to write her daily journal in English with simple sentences. The teachers felt encouraged to learn through this process, felt energized while writing, and want to learn more deeply.

Some difficulties common to all six groups:

- At the beginning all the students found it difficult to write the sentences following the anglicizing process. After practicing it for 2 months they fully understood the concept.
  -> To address this difficulty, first we gave practice in writing Tamil sentences in these tenses. Then we played some language games with cards, pair chatting game, correcting the jumbled sentence game, all of which enabled them to remember the pattern that occur when these are used.

- They had not known the past forms of many action words. Hence initially they used only the action words whose past forms they had known already. Now they have learnt all their 150 to 200 new action words and their past forms.
  -> To address this difficulty, we had the students create their own dictionary. We asked the students to write the action words which they know already. We helped them to write the meaning of those words as well as their past forms.

- 15 students from 3rd and 4th groups had difficulty in using the action words in 3rd person singular (e.g. it goes, she writes, he sings). Still it persists.
  -> To address this difficulty, we played the ‘sit and stand game’ to understand the tenses.

- Ten students found it difficult to understand the use of several action words in the three tenses. (e.g. fly – flies – flew – will fly). That is, they found it difficult to
remember the different forms of the actions words in the three tenses.

→ To address this difficulty, a list of action words was given to each of them for practising these different forms of the tenses.

 אדם All the students felt difficulty in writing negative and interrogative sentences.

→ To address this difficulty, we played the ‘pair game’ to learn Negative and Affirmative sentences.

 어떤 They felt difficulty in learning to write T4 (use of ‘for’ as in ‘Malathi drew the picture for us’) and T5 (distinguishing between the ‘to’ used for infinite verb and preposition ‘to’ as in Ram went to the garden to pluck the flowers) and they also get confused in the use of anglicization process.

 15 students had difficulties in writing negative and interrogative sentences in present and past continuous tenses. They also find it difficult to distinguish clearly and use ‘do’, ‘does’, ‘is’, ‘was’, ‘are’ and ‘were’.

 Future direction

Our observations from the data show us that, for the aspects of sentence writing which they find difficult to learn, more and more practice through the Anglicising process can entirely remove those difficulties. Hence the school has decided to continue to use this approach in the school. Once we have established proficiency in the use of the basic level, it also would like to continue this research with the use of the advanced level of this formula and try to perfect our writing skills further.

Conclusion

We are happy to use this approach to teach the students sentence-writing in English. As our students are from rural areas and feel difficulty in learning this, this approach is removing that difficulty by allowing them to make use of their mother tongue. Earlier we tried to follow different alternative approaches like Bilingual Audio with Language Games and Basic Sentence Structure. They were helpful to a certain extent only. But this approach is much easier and more natural than others. Hence we have found this approach very appropriate for our rural Tamil students. Further in applying this formula we also could note down regularly and become aware of the learning outcome for each aspect of sentence writing by the students. We could track that process in detail too. After seeing the ease with which both the teachers as well as the students understood the concepts behind the formula and learnt to use it for writing their own English sentences, we also got the impression that these concepts can also be used for learning any other languages. The multi-lingual Auroville community can improvise on it and enable a very wide use of this idea.

My Nation project (Aikiyam School)

Introduction

Aikiyam School encourages teachers to include project-based learning among their regular teaching every year. Project based learning is a dynamic approach of teaching in which students explore real-world problems and challenges, simultaneously developing cross-curriculum skills while working in small collaborative groups. Through this approach students are engaged with learning and are inspired to obtain a deeper knowledge of the subjects. This method helps children analyze specific topics, contextualize their local knowledge, and generalize what they have learned to apply to other situations. This year Aikiyam teachers focused on one topic, ‘My Nation’.
Activities of the year

The whole school was involved in this project, with kindergarten through 8th grade children participating in various ways. In planning their curriculum and classes, teachers narrowed down the topic of 'My Nation' according to the lessons that children had to learn. Some of the project topics that emerged were: bio reserves of India, Indian transport, rivers of India, India and its states, ancient kingdoms of Tamil Nadu, and Indian village houses.

The project execution started at the beginning of October 2014 and continued through March 2015. At the beginning of each project, the teacher set hypotheses and chose questions that need to be analyzed through the project. Then project plans were worked out in the classroom, with the students and including the students' suggestions. Pupils used books, internet, and teacher-supplied materials to learn about their project topics. The project plans included activities like clay and wood craft work, book making, writing short plays, poster making and model making. Students also took field trips that related to what they were learning.

Children gave performances, created stories, and acted in and produced a creative short film called 'Trip to Delhi'. In that movie they explain how people plan for a trip, choose the mode of transportation, and travel to different places in real life. Students made posters about rare animal species of India, like Bengal Tigers and rhinoceros, and listed how the country can protect and help increase their populations. Young children made beautiful models of the houses of their village. Findings from student projects were shared with other classes.

Outcomes

Students learned about social, cultural, historical, and environmental aspects of India. Pupils also learned that India has all the climatic, topographical and geographical features of a continent. The project helped children understand India and its different landscapes, rivers and the areas that they flow in, different rulers who ruled their states, etc. They found that India has a well developed transport network, and that people in India can move to different parts of their country without any difficulty.

Reflections

Children were very interested to know the importance of bio reserves and their connection with the existing wildlife. The children performed a play on national integration and secularism, which showed the audience that they have a good understanding of the importance of tolerance among people.

The materials created by the children (posters, books, models, drawings) can help other children learn and understand about the vastness and diversity of their Nation. These can also be used as models by other teachers who want to carry out such classroom projects.

Conclusion

Children normally learn about things that are around them first, and with the help of that understanding they can imagine things that are far away. Through the 'My Nation' project, children found and understood the reality of Indian diversity.
Natural Horsemanship Program

Introduction
This one-year Natural Horsemanship program had the aim of helping Auroville children rediscover the best way to be with horses. During the program we learned how to achieve success without force, partnership without dominance, teamwork without fear, willingness without intimidation and harmony without coercion. As well as riding classes the program included theory of horse behavior, which was a great tool for the children to advance in their Horse-Man-Ship, and to understand themselves more deeply.

Description of project
From July 2014 to April 2015 we held 3 different types of horsemanship sessions weekly. The first type was for practical exercises, in which we followed the Parelli method Levels 1 and 2 which teach children firstly about ground safety and secondly about how to get a horse mentally and emotionally ready to learn and work together with a human. We used exercises based on the Parelli 7 Games which are games that horses play in nature. Subsequently we used these games to more specific purposes (working with tasks, obstacles, gymkhanas, etc.) in order to develop the children's coordination, body language, awareness of their energy and state of mind, and finally develop their organizational skills, teamwork and ultimately leadership.

The second type of session was for theory of Horse-Man-Ship where we went more deeply into what governs the horse in nature, understanding the different scale values that the horse and human have. Working with the book *Horse-Man-Ship Theory* we learned how to tap into our best potential to develop the horse and ourselves.

The third type of session was an open platform for everyone to explore what they learned in class, and be free to experiment, make mistakes, learn from the horses and improve their communication skills.

We had a total of 9 children from the age of 12 to 16 attending this course, and a total of 25 kids attending other classes (beginner and intermediate) where these topics were explored but in a less formal way (as it would have been too much information for their age group).

The program was supported by the Parelli Foundation, USA, which donated educational materials in view of the work done this year in Auroville, and by Carmen Zulauf - 5* Master Instructor (based in Switzerland) who coached the teachers and who has offered continued guidance.

The Natural Horsemanship program and the Evergreen Horses project at large were featured in the "Parelli Savvy Times", an international magazine focusing on Natural Horsemanship and the Parelli Method. This was great exposure for the initiative, which wants to offer this special form of education in Auroville and also to bring the concept of natural horsemanship to others in India.

Outcomes
The kids came to understand that there is much more to do with a horse than riding! They experienced that communication is two or more individuals understanding and sharing the same ideas, and that as humans we can develop the skill-set to help horses to become more calm, brave, connected, and ultimately willing to spend time with humans. During this learning process the horses acted as mirrors through which the children discovered things about themselves, both physically, in body language and in how the horse would react to each movement, and emotionally, in understanding how to deal with fear, frustration and anger.

A lot of technical aspects of horse riding and training were taught as well, starting
with horse care and including how to help a horse stay calm and connected. We put a lot of energy into understanding how to troubleshoot problems, and into giving the students the necessary strategies to be successful with horses by themselves without needing constant guidance.

The curriculum was reported in detail for each class and each achievement. We had 3 written assessments to evaluate how much was learned, and we had 4 practical assessments which were partly filmed and given to the children so that they could see themselves objectively and solve any issues if there were any.

**Future direction**

This year was the first time that Parelli Natural Horse-Man-Ship was so extensively studied by a group of people in India. So by pioneering this kind of work we collected a lot of data and feedback on how to plan our schedule for next year, where to put more energy, and where we might have started to soon and might need to revise the curriculum. This work of feedback and reflection helped us as teachers develop our skills exponentially, as the year’s work confronted us with questions, practical problems, and troubleshooting needs that helped us understand how to be more effective in teaching complex concepts to this particular age group.

This research work of Evergreen Horses will continue as next year the students will enter the next phase of learning. This year was the foundation for future classes which will be more complex and technical.

**Conclusion**

The Natural Horsemanship program created a community of young individuals who share the same passion, and who are now able to support each other taking advantage of their best qualities. We were able to plant a “seed” that goes beyond the skill of “not falling off a horse” – of individuals who are more able to self-analyze and transform some of the negative aspects of human qualities into something more neutral. This practice enables students to continue developing three important ingredients when working with horses: Love, Language and Leadership. Such introspection enables them to be more successful with horses and in other aspects of life.

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**Nature’s Theatre**

**Introduction**

In Nature’s Theatre we guide children in exploring the birth of shapes, their numbers and their qualities. We introduce the principle of the compass. All creation starts with a first point; we make that point our point. We measure our self and with the use of the compass construct a two dimensional shape made by drawing a curved line, where the beginning meets the end and which is always the same distance of that point, the centre. In this we create a safe space where a child can reveal himself as an individual amongst others.

Within the circle created with the use of one’s own body we create a second shape, the 5-pointed star. By looking at all the different stars on the floor; created by a group of children, we can see unity in diversity. We touch expressions related to the principles of the shapes (“do not go around in circles”, “there is no point in what you are doing”, etc.). Playing with geometric shapes, their relation to ourselves, our surroundings, and language makes patterns and systems visible - they become an experience. This experience elicits joy, creativity and harmonious collaboration without competition or judgment.
Description of project

This year participants in Nature's Theatre were mainly children in The Learning Community (TLC) of ages 6 to 9 years old. There was also a group of parents and children not related to TLC but using the space. Five additional children as individuals or in pairs did activities on a temporarily basis.

The aims of the Nature’s Theatre activities were:

- To bring children in contact with the mathematical archetypes of Nature and Science.
- To bring children in contact with numbers not only as quantities but also as qualities, each with its own shape, function and character. How do they influence us, what can they teach us?
- To discover the magic behind shapes, and their numbers. Witnessing their birth shows us we are part of one big creation, the Universe.
- To experience that our actions benefit our own development and that our ideas can benefit the collective, resulting in a feeling of joy, collaboration and a sense of purpose.

The first session of Nature’s Theatre starts with a story that introduces the compass and explains how to use it. The story includes the message that “we are all just like a star”. The story guides the group through a series of actions, a drawing movements song, and measurements of our bodies, and teaches us about proportion.

Quite a lot of time is spent with the first construction. Our first point is the beginning of all creation. How did we come to be? Where did it all start? We sit in quietness in a circle with our stars on our points and absorb the wonder of our own uniqueness and our similarities.

We note that expressions that use the word “point” often say something about our actions or behavior. (Examples of the Point and the Circle in language: “Come to the point”, “There is no point in what you are doing”, “My point of view”, “your point of view”)

We play a game where we all sit in a circle with an object in the centre representing the Point. We all describe what we see, and come to the conclusion that we not always see the totality of an object or idea, just a facet of it. We learn to listen to each other and value each others’ ideas. (“Going around in circles”, “Vicious circle”, “We have come full circle”, “Circle of friends”, “Stepping out of line”)

5-pointed star:

The next step is to construct a star shape. To understand the construction we have to keep repeating it in different ways. This year we worked with cloth and paint, paper, bamboo sticks, rope, wire and different deco material to create our 5-pointed star several times in different ways.

6-pointed star:

We also learned how to construct the 6-pointed star with bamboo sticks, a three-dimensional construction. We cut out paper triangles and played with them as a geometric puzzle. The six-pointed star is built out of two triangles (like Sri Aurobindo’s symbol) - one pointing up, one pointing down. The story this star wants to tell us is “as above as below”; “we are all connected, all part of the Universe”.

Spinning tops:

We made spinning tops from white paper circles which we colored.

We found that it does not matter what we draw; once we spin the top we see only circles.
Dolls:
We made little dolls to gain insight into body proportion, using the circle with star to apply what we learned. We found that when a doll’s body is in the right proportion it feels right and attractive.

The number 2, the birth of the line, and symmetry:
The circle with its centre is related to the number 1, wholeness and completeness. How does the 1 generate 2? We explored this question and its answer. The 1 can create 2 with a mirror; it simply needs another circle identical to itself. Then we have two centers, 2 points, with which we can make a line. Thus in Nature’s Theatre we experience the birth of the line.
Recognizing the bilateral symmetry of our bodies, this construction invites the creation of winged beings. The children participating the most this year were of ages 6 through 9, and very much in the world of magic, fairies, and butterflies and in love with the flying heart. Once they understood how to use this construction they were unstoppable in starting the design of their winged beings.
The number 2 also represents the birth of the Other. We used cutout transparent circles to play with, which showed us visually what happens when we cooperate and what happens when one person dominates or when we are in conflict.

Inner Child Cards:
We played with Inner Child Cards, a set of 75 illustrated cards that journey into fairy tales, myths, nature and number. Through the stories of childhood we had insight into the deeper meanings, symbols and numbers represented in the pictures. The images invoked the power of imagination while exploring archetypal truths about the human experience.
We would ask a question to be answered and then pick a card. The cards are big and solid, they stimulate the imagination. They can be used as a meditation or as an inspiration to share our stories. One way is to choose a card for the group, and share what we feel and see with the card. Another way is for each individual to pick a card. These activities let children practice taking turns, listening to each other, and expressing themselves in the group.

Orientation in space:
To explore how the group together occupies a space, each person chose a place for his Point constructed his circle with the star inside. These were then connected with lines to make one figure, like a star constellation. The exercise showed us group dynamics and how we occupy the space. Material from the Feuerstein method can then be used, connecting points to make 3-dimensional drawings.

Outcomes
*Can playing with geometry influence group processes in a positive way?*
It always amazes me to again experience the joy the participants have in doing these exercises. The introduction and the visible proof that “we are all just like stars” creates harmony in the group and opens us to joy, creativity and expression.
Children are naturally attracted by the circle. When they construct their own, according to their own measurement, together between the many we create a safe environment. When we start to realize the wonder of how amazing it is that we all start like a Point, so small that you can hardly see it, and that the little point knew exactly what to do to become a human being, something magical happens. It brings a harmony to the group, which carries through the year.
Does playing with geometry open the mind for understanding?

My experience is that it does. Children learn to see the play of the Universe with different eyes, recognizing shape and relating it to number, form, line and use in daily life.

Does playing with geometry help to know one self?

Playing with geometry helps with problem solving, be it in behavior or in creativity. It activates a way of thinking and being that needs fewer words to point out a problem and how it can be solved. Losing one’s centre, fooling around without purpose, becomes a recognisable situation and understanding this helps one to return to harmony and joy. We learn about our talents and our limitations.

Does playing with geometry stimulate self expression through art, play, theatre and stories?

My experience is that learning how geometry is used in art leads to a sense of joy and accomplishment. We learn to apply this knowledge in our designs in ways that produce better results. With group dynamics, when one feels safe, respected, and not judged, there opens a way of listening to each other, helping each other and sharing ideas.

Reflections

This year the sessions were short, 1 hour per group, which was too short. A minimum of 1½ to 2 hours is needed. The participants felt this too.

I would like to continue the research but I need to be able to build a space and atmosphere of Nature’s Theatre; this will be realized within Lilaloka. When Nature’s Theatre can be experienced in its own space, it will be able to develop with more continuity, as creations and constructions can stay and be used to build upon.

Future direction

The coming year I will mainly focus on presentations and documentation, not only of my own work but related programs developed by Aurovilians. Along with continuing to facilitate Nature’s Theatre, I will further develop educational tools, toys, stories, games, sharing of knowledge and art projects based on this play with geometry. These will include craft templates and descriptions of how the materials are used and made. They will be available in the Teachers’ Center for teachers to use as they feel.

Conclusion

The world is build up out of lines and shapes; to understand the birth of shapes and lines prepares the mind for understanding. Playing with geometry together creates a space of group harmony, wonder and peace.

Panorama of Contemporary Indian Cinema

Introduction

The aim of Aurofilm is to use Cinema as a tool for education and for artistic and creative research. We wish to offer to the Auroville community a way to develop taste, discernment and openness through the medium of film. Aurofilm’s annual “Panorama of Contemporary Indian Cinema” presents the best films recently produced in the different states of India to the international audience of Auroville. The chosen films are usually not available in the regular commercial circuits, and we believe they lead to a better understanding of the different traditions, cultures, arts and specificities present in this vast country.
Activities of the year

This annual film festival, the 7th of its kind, was held this year on 13 to 15 February 2015 at the Sri Aurobindo Auditorium, Bharat Nivas. The basis for our choice of films was the 10-day International Film Festival of India 2013 held in Goa, where 26 Indian feature films were shown. The program this year included:

- **CHHOTODER CHHOBI** ("A Short Story"), a Bengali film warmly telling a story about differently able people - the so-called dwarfs, also sometimes called "short people".
- **ELIZABETH EKADASHI** is a warm story about children in a temple town of Maharashtra and their untiring spirit and genuine efforts to help their widowed mother to make ends meet.
- **FANDRY** ("Wild Pigs") was our favourite film last year in Goa. The sharply written script is based on situations lived or witnessed by the film maker, Nagraj Manjule, for which this is a debut film. It is a take on the caste system, the damage and prejudice it still causes in remote villages, seen through the eyes of a teenage boy.
- **1st DECEMBER**, directed by Kannada filmmaker P. Sheshadri is taken from a real **fait divers** when a politician came for a "village stay" that turned out to be a very sour experience for his host family.
- **ADIM VICHAR** (Ancient Knowledge), made by Sabyasachi Mohapatra, is a colorful and lively fable based on the life and customs of some Odisha tribes. It talks about their wisdom and the way they may react to the intrusion of outsiders who try to take advantage of their gentleness and straightforwardness.
- **EK HAZARACHI NOTE** ("100 Rupee Note") was the closing film, made by Shrihari Sathe who also comes from Maharashtra. It is story stemming from the visit of a seeking-vote-politician to a small town. The politician, with his careless behavior related to money, turns the life of a simple ageing woman to chaos.

The strong presence of Marathi films (three out of six) reflects the advance made by this state over the past 3-4 years in terms of producing very good regional cinema, and films are well received by all kinds of national and international audiences.

The Directorate of Film Festivals, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India was the main source for procuring the 6 chosen films of the festival.

Vishal Prabhu, a writer, poet, film lover and film critic, was with us to provide background on the films and to present them at the festival. Introduction on stage before the film is always helpful and welcome for our diverse Auroville audience, in order to understand the importance of showing such films and to make them more accessible.

As in previous years we created a brochure for audience members containing the festival program, directors' backgrounds, directorial notes and summaries of the chosen films. The festival was publicized through posters at public sites in Auroville. We documented the festival with photos and video recording, and produced a short film about the event.

Outcomes

The festival was a 3-day-event with the intention of showcasing the variety produced in contemporary Indian cinema to the Aurovilians and their guests. The film screenings and talks over the three days, as well as the brochure we created, served this purpose. Two film screenings took place each evening for an average audience of 250 people. Many people attended several screenings and could exchange in between two films in the foyer, where juices and snacks were offered. Of the 400 printed brochures, 325 were distributed, the remaining will be given throughout the year to visitors to the Aurofilm studio.
Reflections
This annual 3-day Panorama of Contemporary Indian Cinema is gaining recognition and has its own success. It was a little difficult to establish it in the beginning, because the audience was not prepared and maybe not ready for this particular initiative; and it is possible that our selection in the first years was not always so discerning. But over the last 3 years, we have seen a good change in both, the selection and the warm response from the audience. We can see that for a good response, good communication is a must. Without over-doing it – for we have nothing to sell! – selecting, writing and presenting have to be done with attention and seriousness.

Future direction
We will continue holding this annual film festival, with a will to improve whatever can be improved.

Physical Education teacher training

Introduction
The Dehashakti physical education program strives for all-round development of the body, vital and mind. Over the years the program has been improved and modified to cater to the needs of the students. For Dehashakti to meet its greatest potential it needs a dynamic team of teachers who inspire the children to participate with the right spirit and understanding of physical education. It has been always a challenge to get such a team together.

We have noticed in the past couple of years that some of the youth from the outreach schools of Auroville have the potential to become such sports teachers. Thus we identified the need for a training program able to guide and equip these young teachers.

Description of project
We put together a training program for 7 young teachers from mixed backgrounds: 3 former Outreach School students (non Aurovilians), 2 long-term volunteers in Auroville, and 2 Aurovilians. The participants started as daily assistant teachers at sports, where they learned from the more experienced teachers.

We all met together for a two-hour session every week to share and discuss the week. The young teachers learned the importance of planning and class preparations as well. Our meetings included a brainstorm of all the activities at Dehashakti and the reasons behind conducting such a variety of sports. We discussed observations of the younger grades, the older ones, and the changes that take place over time in the students and their performance. We also had discussions to better understand the principles of teamwork and sportsmanship.

The new teachers were given the task of trying out various ways to inspire students to perform and participate at their best.

Outcomes
The new trainees immediately put to practice what they learned through the teacher training discussions, and they were able to note very interesting results. Some of the young teachers had been themselves participants in the Dehashakti program as children. Their new roles as teachers give them deeper insight into its purpose.

It was evident by the second term that the young trainees had begun to take on a more dynamic role in exploring ways to better their classes. They were better at planning and were more alert toward making the classes interesting for the students. By the time the Aurolympics teams were made and the four Houses chosen for the team...
competitions, the trainees were prepared to play the role of mentors for each House. So each House had two young, enthusiastic mentors, who found solutions and helped the team perform through their daily interactions with them. It was a big improvement in our program to have mentors for the Houses, as they helped the teams achieve positive team-spirit.

Reflections
This was the first year of our teacher training program and we found it to be very successful. We want to continue next year with the present batch of trainees, and also add a couple more. In this way we will ensure that Dehashakti has teachers with real motivation and dedication.

Conclusion
Hands-on experience, with proper sharing and guidance, is an effective way to train and prepare young adults to be inspiring teachers. We would like to continue building this training program to be able to offer it to more youngsters who can discover this potential in themselves.

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Play of Painting at Nandanam Kindergarten

Introduction
In Play of Painting a safe space is created where children come and paint with colours on paper placed on the wall, expressing whatever is present for them at the moment. It allows children to express themselves without fear or adult influence. Slowly when there is no praise or influence, children begin to paint what is their own expression, and research (by Arno Stern over 50 years) shows that a universal language progressively emerges. This language has been called 'formulation', and it transcends culture, sex, country. This is believed to be the organic memory of the organism being formed in the womb, and its expression a human developmental need.

Description of project
Over the years Play of Painting sessions have occurred at different schools and for different groups in Auroville. This report concerns Play of Painting at Nandanam Kindergarten, a school for children of 2 to 6 years old.

A Play of Painting session involves a room set up for the purpose, with a table palette (with 18 colours, three brushes and a water container per colour) in the middle of the room. Children choose the place at one of the walls where they want to paint, and stand ready with paper and two pins. The facilitator pins the top of the paper onto the wall and the children pin the bottom of the paper: Children are instructed on how to use the table palette, but there is no instruction on what to paint. Participants can paint as many paintings as they want in a session, and/or expand their work by adding paper to their original piece and paint using ladders; they can work on one painting in a session or one painting for as long as they want.

When a child is 3 years old she learns to hold the brush and take paint carefully; at 4 she learns to use the table palette without spilling colours; at 5 she learns to mix colours and use ladders; at 6 she knows how to use things well. This progress happens according to the development of motor skills.

Each child at Nandanam is given the opportunity to do Play of Painting once a week for three and a half years. The activity is not forced on them. So some children have many paintings in total, some few. These paintings are photographed and stored electronically and physically, first by date and later in a separate folder for each child.
Outcomes
Each child was given the space to express himself or herself through paint, the medium for formulation to emerge and fulfill this developmental need of the child. When one glances through a child’s paintings of the year, one can see the developmental journey of the child and how formulation though a universal language emerges unique to each child.

New teachers at Nandanam learned about Play of Painting in a special session where they experienced it directly and came to understand the theory behind this work.

Reflections
This year the 3-year-olds tried to take paint carefully even though they lacked full motor control of their hands. They would jump with joy as they made their traces of colour on paper. This was their first introduction to Play of Painting. The 4-year-olds seemed like old hands; the 5-year-olds worked the best (that is, regularly); the 6-year-olds had had some interruptions in their schedule due to too many activities.

Future direction
Next year we will freshen the space by re-painting the table palette and painting the back of the brushes for effective colour coding. We the facilitators aspire to center ourselves well, such that the activity has a deeper effect. We will try to bring more consciousness into all aspects of the work.

Conclusion
This activity helps children connect to their deeper selves while being in a group. It is well in tune with the integral education we aspire to in Auroville.

Raga Offerings: From Sincerity to Peace

Introduction (Chandra)
Raga Offerings: From Sincerity to Peace is an audio CD of bansuri (Indian flute) music, played in the traditional North-Indian classical style. The aim of this project is to embody through music the twelve qualities of Mother’s symbol. For each quality a specific traditional melody was chosen after a concentration in the corresponding petal of the Matrimandir. Each musical piece is five minutes long, with a meditative mood, and I hope that this music can help people to reconnect with these qualities that we aspire to embody in daily life.

Description of project
The timeline of this project was:
- March 2015: Finding and doing research on the corresponding melody for each quality.
- April-May 2015: Rehearsing, recording and mixing with different musicians, mostly in Sunshine Music studio, Auroville, but also including a trip to Mumbai to record with Pt. Hariprasad Chaurasia.
- June 2015: Research on production options.
- July 2015: Photo shoot and graphic design.
- August 2015: Printing of booklet and printing and burning of the first, limited number edition of CDs.
- September 2015: Release of the CD.

The final product is an album of 12 tracks improvised by Chandra, elapsing a time of 62 minutes. Various tracks feature accompaniment by Pt. Hariprasad Chaurasia on
bansuri, Ashaman on guitar, and Shastro on clarinet. 200 CDs were produced.

**Conclusion**

Chandra gave a bansuri recital in Bharat Nivas in association with the release of the CD. All proceeds from CD sales will go toward the funding of her studies at King’s College, Cambridge, beginning in October 2015.

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**Rainbow Child**

**Introduction**

The Rainbow Child programme offers Auroville children opportunities to discover various aspects of themselves and to acquire skills additional to those of formal school education.

**Description of project**

Regular classes of Yoga, energetic games, and arts and crafts were held at Pitanga Cultural Centre on Saturdays. Around 21 children from different schools, ages 5 to 10, participated regularly. The Yoga classes, taught by Gala, were totally full this year and sometimes overflowed the space in Pitanga hall. These classes included stretching and *pranayama*. As a teaching aid we have flashcards with pictures of *asanas*, which prompt the kids to perform the *asana* on the card.

This year Sabrina (a Newcomer of Auroville) joined our team and had sessions with the kids on “singing bowls” and different ancient ethnic musical instruments. The sounds of these instruments help children balance the vibrations of their bodies. Through the technique of “six healing sounds” we helped the children develop their ability to feel their inner body, as well as their capability to hear and analyze what they hear. These exercises are guided by our knowledge of the connection between hearing and storing information in the brain.

Through “energetic games” the children continued to explore their inner world in a fun and joyful way and to observe the body’s reactions. They were directed to discover ways of dealing with their emotions constructively.

Victor taught children how to feel their nature by working through crystals. His observations from the classes contribute to his research on how crystals can affect one’s energy and positively change one’s mood.

We also did a lot of arts and crafts such as geometric embroidery, 3D modeling from paper, and origami in few different styles. Children improved their artistic expression and asked to learn advanced drawing techniques. They were ready to experience new materials like drawing on canvas and cotton, and using fabric pens and stencils on t-shirts.

Children with the help of teachers created new games which were more subtle than the ones they were given. These games are now part of our regular program and still new ones are invented on a regular basis by the kids. Our reservoir of activities is constantly growing.

**Outcomes**

The quality of the children’s work and the refinement of their expression increased through the year. Children improved their knowledge and practice of yoga and *pranayama* and how these can help them in life. Their yoga practice increased their capacity to neutralize the stresses of modern life. Through arts and crafts the children practiced concentrating on a task and getting positive outcomes from their work.
Reflections

Behind the Rainbow Child program is a lot of information about specific children’s behavior. We find ways to work with hyperactive children and with attention deficit children (ADD/ADHD), and orient toward the emotional and physical health of children. Every year our class has a few students with asthma and asthmatic symptoms, and for such children we use special pranayama techniques. This year we developed a pedagogical methodology for the “new era” children. We are ready to share this information with other people and schools. We have already shared the knowledge of yoga classes with a class teacher in Transition School, who brings her students to Pitanga every year for our workshop on yoga asanas and pranayama.

Future direction

We are planning to do research with sound. With ancient musical instruments we will produce music, and with this music we will play. We will work with rhythm and explore emotional mood, voice and develop self-speech.

For the next year our other goals are to connect and focus with the 4 elements (water, fire, wind and earth). We would like to add more games related to the 4 elements to our program, and with these games improve and progress in meditation and concentration.

We would like to help the children be able to feel nature and their surroundings. How can we use the 4 elements in daily life and general communication? This will be thought through and shared in our classes.

Conclusion

The activities of the Rainbow Child program resulted in the children – of different ages, from different schools and some having specific weaknesses – improving their ability to integrate in this life and to communicate and socialize with other people. Our goal is to keep the Rainbow Child program flexible, depending on the kids who come and their different qualities and difficulties. We adjust to their needs in order for them to have a better understanding of life and what is awaiting them.

Saarang: An Introduction to Hindustani & Carnatic Music

Introduction

The Saarang exhibition and workshops explored the diversity of India through music. Saarang looked at at the common origins and underlying spiritual basis of Hindustani Classical music and Carnatic music - their vast variety of forms, styles, instruments, musicians and musical traditions, from ancient times to today.

Description of project

Research toward manifesting the Saarang exhibition and events was carried out from November 2014 to March 2015 at the Centre of Indian Culture, Bharat Nivas. This research formed the basis of 20 exhibition panels, an educational brochure, and ongoing workshops. The exhibition was open for the two months during which various sessions were offered, and remained in place for some time afterward.

Two live music performances were given, one of Hindustani music and one of Carnatic music, open to all. The second was preceded by a talk by Dr. Karan Singh.

Outcomes

Over two months an estimated 2000 people visited the exhibition and attended sessions and lecture-demonstrations. Attendees included students from Auroville schools, children from Lycée Français de Pondichéry, various student groups, and
Pondicherry University students.

Reflections
The project elicited a lot of curiosity and participation from the community and visitors, which was kept alive and deepened through weekly presentations on various aspects of Indian music.

Conclusion
Saarang presented an overview as well as distillation of Indian classical music in all its diversity. The exhibition can travel to reach more people, either set up somewhere else in Auroville or sent to other cultural institutions and visiting musicians, as a way to share our work.

Science Fair

Introduction
The aim of the Auroville Schools Science and Educational Training (ASSET) Centre is to give the the student community of Auroville and its bioregion the opportunity to experience the joy and fun of learning science.

Our objectives are:
- To promote interest in science and technology among the youth.
- To analyze how science and mathematics have developed and are affected by many diverse individuals, cultures, societies and environments.
- To popularize science and technology among the general public and create an awareness regarding its impact on socio-economic and sustainable development of the country.

Description of project
The ASSET Centre organized its yearly Science Fair, in which students from Auroville schools and from government and private schools of the region participated. This year the it was held at Aikiyam School on February 26th and 27th, 2015. It was a large gathering and exhibition in which students displayed and explained their science projects. Students had made working models that each demonstrated a particular science or maths concept. They had been given some tips on various possibilities to make exhibits and posters. The students worked in teams and individually on their projects. 462 students and 28 teachers participated.

Outcomes
Besides learning the science and maths concepts, students had the opportunity to develop and improve skills of team building, organisation, leadership, communication and creativity. They also had the opportunity to interact with students from other schools.

The public, especially the parents, enjoyed attending the Science Fair.

Future direction
We are planning to set up a permanent display with the models after the completion of this year’s Science Fair. So we are taking extra care to make models with good reliable materials. These can then be used as a teaching aids and resource materials.
Solitude Farm project (The Learning Community)

Introduction
The aim of this project was to connect children and adults of The Learning Community (TLC) to the food we can grow and eat locally in Auroville. The project built on what we learned last year about Permaculture farming and how to grow vegetables, fruits and grains. This year the project was focused more on processing the harvest, and on discovering practical ways to aim for a more sustainable life.

Description of project
This project included collecting information, mainly through interview and interaction with people, as well as hands-on work.

Part one of the project took place during the first school term at Solitude Farm with the older children. As planned, we helped with the farm work and researched the holistic approach of permaculture farming. Each child created his or her own garden bed and decided what to grow. We learned about crop rotation, green manure, water harvesting and recycling, seed saving, and how to use the different parts of a plant.

In the kitchen we worked with ragi, experimented with different recipes for a green smoothie, and learned how to make a liquid soap with elements solely from the farm.

We created a compost pile at Base Camp for the kitchen waste and tree leaves. We also researched, wrote (during the creative English class facilitated by Tamar) and created newsletters about our experiences at Solitude.

In November, we shifted the garden project to Base Camp so that the younger children could also take part in gardening and food processing. The Solitude team along with parents and volunteers from the community started a garden at Base Camp where we held gardening classes for small groups of children in the early mornings.

Once a week, Isabelle also accompanied two or three children to the Solitude restaurant kitchen for a 1½ hour session to help prepare the school lunch. (During the school year, TLC had lunch coming from Solitude Farm twice weekly, a premiere in the history of Auroville schools!)

Isabelle and Krishna coordinated the project with the help of the Solitude volunteer team, especially Sarah, the cook and kitchen manager at Solitude, and with the help and support of the TLC coordination group and parents for logistics.

Reflections
We observed that some children had difficulty being enthusiastic about unknown foods and changing their food habits. Introducing lunch from Solitude Farm instead of Solar Kitchen was a challenge. But most children enjoyed the cooking sessions, and were willing to taste new dishes after they had participated in their making. The regular contact and work in the garden, especially harvesting and eating tomatoes, beans, and rosella leaves on the spot, gave the children a direct connection with the plants that feed us.

Conclusion
Learning about what to eat and how to grow our food a fundamental body of knowledge that is disappearing in our modern society. The TLC team recognizes how privileged we are to be in Auroville, surrounded by dedicated organic farmers. We aim to foster and encourage learning about our local food and local ecosystem. We consider this an ongoing project and an important part of our school, community and life. We are now exploring other ways to integrate the topic of food into our curriculum.
Stewardship for New Emergence

Introduction
Solutions to Auroville’s and the world’s problems lie in our capacity to design and implement projects that have lasting impact and are grounded in our values. Stewardship for New Emergence is an innovative leadership program that has been proven all over the world to generate needed paradigmatic shifts. This is a unique results-oriented, learning-in-action program that sources our wisdom and existing expertise, enables us to hold multiple perspectives, and guides us in designing for system-level changes. The program consists of a series of 3 workshops, spaced apart by 1-2 months each. New capacities are introduced in workshops and participants practice these capacities in interim weekly sessions.

Description of project
The 9-day, “Stage 1” program of Stewardship for New Emergence took place in Auroville for its third consecutive year. The “Stage 2” program was offered for its second year. Participants in these sessions came from all areas of Auroville working life and beyond. 187 people participated for Stage 1 and 33 for Stage 2. The program also included practitioner coach learning-in-action training for 18 Aurovilians. The workshops were held in Auroville’s Unity Pavilion.

Facilitator for the Stewardship programs was Dr. Monica Sharma, a trained physician and epidemiologist who worked with the United Nations for 22 years, during which time she served in several leadership positions including as the Director of Leadership and Capacity Development. She currently engages worldwide as an international expert and practitioner on leadership development for sustainable change.

The objective of Stage 1 was to build integral stewardship capacities in Aurovilians and associates. This workshop series provided tools to the participants to better enable them to design and implement projects that have a sustainable impact in Auroville and the world at large. It offered the opportunity for established and budding leaders to explore issues that can transform organizations.

The objective of Stage 2 was for participants to deepen their understanding of stewardship principles that source inner wisdom. These workshops trained practitioner coaches who in future can facilitate the Stewardship training programs, so that the training can be built upon in the future in Auroville and its bio-region.

During her stay Monica Sharma also facilitated three special full-day sessions:
1. on Auroville, with 108 community members;
2. on the theme of forgiveness without condoning, with 80 Aurovilians and African students;
3. on the role of Auroville International, with 15 of its members.

She also had half- and full-day sessions mentoring various Auroville working groups and projects including the Auroville Council and Working Committee, Auroville Consulting, Auroville Statistical Office, Pitanga, Thamarai, and Aura Auro.

Outcomes
187 people participated in the Stage 1 workshops, including 31 villagers, 15 from the main Auroville working groups and services, and others from outside the area including participants of the Directorate of Town Panchayats. These people are now in practice groups and if they progress adequately, will be able to continue next year by either refreshing Stage 1 or attending Stage 2.
Reflections
It is generally felt that this training is of tremendous benefit to Auroville and its bio-region as it is supporting a field of learning in action that is fostering a movement towards value based, results-oriented, scaled project design. At this critical time when Auroville needs dynamic planning and leadership centred in its values, this training provides Aurovilians with tools to support this.

Future direction
We are currently planning the continuation of this program in 2016 and 2017 and hope to training many more people from the bio-region.

Conclusion
We believe this work is having a considerable impact on Auroville’s ability to respond and effectively plan for the future, from a base of solid grounding in the values and ideals of Auroville.

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Teachers’ Center

Introduction
The Teachers’ Center aims to encourage the development and implementation of Integral Education in Auroville through collaboration, networking, research, and innovation. It is a new activity that aims to grow into the roles of: providing teacher training, advisory services, and a teachers’ resource center; researching and developing didactic materials; and offering skills, tools, knowledge and sharing towards understanding and manifesting Integral Education.

Description of project
The Teachers Center opened officially in September 2014. In its first year of functioning the Teachers’ Center worked on the different areas defined in the aims and objectives:

1. Teacher training
Teacher training under the umbrella of the Teachers’ Center happened regularly. Most of the Teachers’ Center members had been engaged already in training teachers in different Auroville schools, including The Learning Community, Deepanam School, Transition School, Future School, Oli School, Nandnam Kindergarten, Aikiyam School, and New Era Secondary School. According the the needs, the teachers’ trainings took different forms: workshops, meetings in the schools or in the Teachers’ Center, consultation with teachers, advisory services, class observation with feedback, and other teacher guidance and support.

2. Networking
- Networking happened through the weekly “Conversations on Integral Education” held in the Teachers’ Center, to which teachers from all Auroville schools were invited.
- A “Special Needs Consortium” of teachers was coordinated by the Teachers’ Center, bringing together professionals in the field with representatives from different schools. Meetings were held monthly.
- The first in a series of gatherings called “The Manifestation of the Dream” was organized, on the topic of physical education.
3. Reference material

The current agenda of meetings and workshops is displayed on the accessible bulletin board outside the Teachers’ Center. The Center has a growing collection of reports and photographs which record different activities of the schools, as well as a growing library with books on professional development. The team, with help of Auroville volunteers, has begun creating educational materials that can be borrowed by teachers to use in a variety of projects. This is an ongoing process.

4. Pedagogy

A Peace Education project was started which will be proposed and introduced in the various schools.

Outcomes

The Teachers’ Center brought more exchanges between the different schools and their teachers. As it is a space dedicated to all teachers and not located in a particular school, it brought more unity between the teachers and gave a sense of working all together for the education in Auroville. We found that bringing our ideas and experience together, as well as our needs and difficulties, creates positive energy that enables us to find a way to progress.

Reflections

We followed an organic way of developing our activities, trying to keep harmony between the different projects undertaken, balancing our own availability with our objectives. Our activities were steadily increased especially during the Winter season, when we received invaluable help from professional volunteers. Along the way new opportunities opened such as the Peace Education Project. We are also grateful for the young Auroville volunteers who helped make educational materials throughout the year.

We have taken the attitude of respecting the freedom of each member to link to the Center in the way he or she deems best.

Future direction

We would like the Teachers Center to be open daily and to have a secretary who can receive people, give information, check out library books and materials, and do filing and other secretarial work such as accounting. We did find such person and will apply for a maintenance in our next budget. We also intend that people from outside Auroville will have ways to contribute to the Teachers’ Center.

We will continue our work on educational project boxes for lending to the schools, and make more educational material with the help of volunteers. We are working on a Teachers’ Center website that will feature a newsletter, information about our activities, and opportunities for sharing.

Some of our goals for next year are:

- To increase our collection of books for professional development.
- To link educational books for children to the project boxes.
- To offer an interesting collection of topics for our weekly “Conversations on Integral Education” that closely follows the needs of the teachers.
- To organize a variety of workshops that can help teachers progress in their daily work, such as by inviting guest teachers-trainers, or asking teachers to share their success stories.
- To create a visual database with photo material and videos on all the Auroville schools and their activities, as well as posters for display and leaflets to disseminate.
- To help organize teacher training for Special Needs requests.
- To continue research towards the Peace Education project.
To continue the series “The Manifestation of the Dream”, bringing teachers together around the ideals of Integral Education.

**The Dream**

**Introduction**

“The Dream” is a short video project that briefly tells a story of hardworking students who fall asleep after a hard day’s work and enter into a fantasy fashion design dream-world. The project was designed to provide the students at Lilith Fashion School with creative challenges not limited by the demands of real-world garment manufacture. The finished video serves to promote the school and its work, and is a creative showcase for the individual students’ work.

**Description of project**

Steps of producing the video were:
1. Conceptualizing and refining concept
2. Defining storyline
3. Creating storyboard
4. Applying for project support
5. Designing stage dresses
6. Shooting school scenes
7. Completing stage dresses
8. Shooting early fantasy scenes
9. Sourcing locations for final scenes
10. Shooting final scenes (exterior and interior)
11. Editing and post-production
12. Publishing finished video

The project commenced conceptual work in October 2014 and was completed in May 2015. The final product is a sixteen-minute short video that describes a creative fantasy storyline styled and conceptualised by the students.

**The Odd Couple**

**Introduction**

The play “The Odd Couple” by Neil Simon was produced and performed in Auroville, involving many Aurovillian actors and friends.

**Description of project**

*Synopsis: Two suddenly single pals — a sloppy sportswriter and a fastidious news writer — strain their friendship by turning roommates and unconsciously repeating the same mistakes they made in the marriages they just left.*

Francesca, Otto, Krishna, Kripa, Elke, Mita, Lyle, and Charu were involved in the comical performance. We rehearsed from August through December 2014, and gave three performances in December 2014 at the Sri Aurobindo Auditorium.

**Reflections (Francesca)**

This production was the first step towards a new theater activity in Auroville. I aim to continue working with theater and education. What I would share with others is the advice to progress in what you believe with humility and determination; just give your service how you know you can.
Values for Human Unity (Transition School)

Introduction

Transition School, a primary and middle school for children of Aurovilians and Newcomers, aims to create a learning environment that nurtures children's inner development while at the same time helping each child develop and refine his or her physical, vital and mental faculties. The exploration of values is integral to our work, and is included throughout the curriculum and in the physical and psychological environment of the school. This year at Transition School we worked on the value Respect. The teachers had a brainstorming meeting to come up with ideas to help children learn about Respect and develop an understanding and awareness of the importance of Respect. The aim was for the children and we, the teachers, to reflect upon our own attitudes and behavior patterns and work to change them if necessary. All the teachers then worked with their classes in different ways to support this learning and change.

Description of project

In our endeavour to create a comprehensive value-oriented education we use many different approaches. We understand that it is not enough for children to hear about values; to really learn about values, they must experience them at many different levels.

We used the approach of “action research” with our yearly values project. Action research involves actively participating in an endeavor to make a change in a condition, or to solve a problem, and we find that it is very useful in school situations.

We identified our value for this year: Respect, and then worked together and individually to find ways to explore this topic. This was an all-school project; the teachers and the students of all ages (6-14) were all active participants.

The teachers of the 1st to 4th grades made rubrics on four different aspects of Respect: “Respect for Myself”, “Respect for Other Children”, “Respect for Adults”, and “Respect for Things and the Environment”. We felt that the younger students would benefit from rubrics by which they could easily become aware of which behaviors are respectful and which are not. We hoped that with this awareness, along with teacher support and modeling, students would be motivated to become more respectful.

Respect Rubrics were completed by each student in September 2014 and then again in March 2015. Near the end of the school year, children compared the two Respect Rubrics they had completed.

We offered opportunities that encouraged the children to develop feelings or emotional commitment to Respect. Visualisation, imagination and intuition play an important role in the development of children and in the understanding of values. We had that children imagine “a world with Respect” and “a world without Respect” to make the value easier to understand and relate to.

Teachers carefully observed the children and offered opportunities to live Respect, to make decisions and act in ways that are in harmony with Respect, and to experience and understand the consequences of decisions and behaviour. Instances in the day-to-day life at school offer many possibilities to observant teachers. With our yearly values project we try to make the values concrete and tangible, real to the lives of the children.

Below are two descriptions the Values project applied in specific classes.

1. Class report - example from a class of younger students

The children brainstormed about Respect. They discussed why it would be an important value for the year. They noticed that when they followed the rules they created together during the first week of school, they were being respectful. Some of the activities initiated in our class were:
A kindness box: Anyone could write a short note sharing an act of kindness they witnessed, received or gave to another.

Games to greet each other: Games modeled and reinforced eye contact, caring, and inclusion.

Skits: Short impromptu skits in small groups contrasted disrespectful and respectful behavior. Discussion afterwards helped children verbalize how they felt when they had been treated disrespectfully, or when they were being disrespectful to others. Even though they were acting, the children realized they felt much better inside when they were being kind and respectful.

Fables: In groups of six or seven, the students wrote a fable with two different versions. The first version showed behavior which was disrespectful. The second one followed the same script except all behaviors were respectful to people and the environment.

Bell: When a teacher or student needed the attention of the whole class, a beautiful-sounding bell was rung. At the sound of the bell everyone was to stop what they were doing and look at the person ringing the bell. This had to be modeled throughout the year, and children needed reminders to follow the desired response. However, students said they liked the bell being used. When they stopped what they were doing they were showing respect for the person ringing the bell; and the person ringing the bell was showing respect towards everyone else by not yelling to get attention.

Birthdays: On birthdays we sat in a circle, lit a candle and sang "Happy Birthday" to the person in 5 languages. Students felt that by following this ritual and focusing attention on the day of someone's birth we were respecting them and honoring their special day.

Class meetings: Every Monday morning we had a regular class meeting where children could share anything with the class. It was also the time we discussed any difficulties students were having amongst themselves. Teachers modeled behaviors to help students learn what to do in situations where they did not feel respected.

Unscheduled meetings: Whenever students needed a teacher's support to work on difficulties they were having among themselves, we would meet and work on them together.

Overall, the students noticed changes within themselves and in the class. At times, they still have difficulties. They need reminders about how to behave respectfully. We continue to have unscheduled meetings when they need help to solve difficulties. However, now the meetings are shorter as not much time goes into the 'story'. More time is spent reflecting on: "Was I respectful, nice and kind in this situation?" and "What did I do (or not do) that added to the difficulty?". When the students begin to self-reflect and turn inwards, they calm down, voices become lower, and all aggressiveness disappears. Students are beginning to see how their behavior contributes to difficulties, rather than just blaming others.

Through skits and plays students noticed the difference they felt inside, depending on whether the situation was respectful or not. This may have helped the students develop empathy for people that were not previously being respected. As many students pointed out, at the beginning of the year two students in the class were excluded in and outside of the classroom. If they were included it was reluctantly. Clearly there has been an overall behavior change in the class as now both students are included and both seem happier. There is also a visible difference in everyone’s behavior and attitude towards each other. There is a general tendency towards being helpful and kind in the class. Noticing and acknowledging (in words or in writing) this behavior in others is an everyday occurrence. Positive changes came about as a
result of the activities for the value Respect. They created a more harmonious atmosphere in the classroom and playground. Children are more self aware and helpful. The effect of these outcomes was to make possible an environment for joyful learning.

2. Music subject report

Most years at Transition School, particular themes are chosen to run through the entire music curriculum. With individual classes and grades all structured differently, the themes help give a focus and sense of continuity to the entire program with its respective age groups. This year the two chosen themes were Choice and Respect.

The theme of “Respect” was decided upon as an all-school value, and was a particularly appropriate subject for music. The younger students in music class were taught to respect each other. We asked them to listen to others and themselves, to respect sound and silence, and to respect others who perform with them. Later they were introduced to the concept of respect for materials. This referred to instruments, performance and audio equipment, computers, and all things necessary to make music. The proper use and care of these things needed to be learned. In class the children then learned about judgment and criticism. What makes good music, a good song, or a good performance? They were taught to judge and evaluate the work that they do, while maintaining respect for others and themselves.

“Choice” was an idea mainly used in the upper grades. It is something we had experimented with over the last five years or so, and had lead to positive results for both teachers and students. Many of the projects done in this area had been frequently re-requested by students of different ages.

This year, students were asked to choose a song to rehearse and perform in the classroom context. The idea behind this was to have students discover the value of certain songs. What makes an appropriate song to sing in class? Why do some work and others not? Can a song be sung with other people just because it is enjoyable to listen to? With this in mind, they were asked to form groups and find the right choice for them. The songs had to be researched (the lyrics and sheet music found), rehearsed among themselves and with teachers, and performed for an audience.

For some children it was initially hit and miss. Certain groups, though they were advised, quickly found that some songs were impossible to perform with other students or even teachers. Sometimes the level of music was too hard. Other times, musically it simply wasn’t a good song to sing. Sometimes the subject matter or lyrics were not appropriate. Eventually, however, most students were able to find something that they were happy with.

Overall the project was a great success. Many students were very enthusiastic throughout the process, and expressed at the end of the year that they would like to do similar things again. For the teachers it also allowed a deeper way of working with students that might not normally be possible in conventional singing lessons.

Another positive aspect was that this activity allowed students to sing songs in languages other than English. Many songs were in Tamil and Hindi which gave all involved a chance to explore music from Indian cultures. Music being such a strong binding element in India, especially through films, we saw that in the classroom environment as well it brought many students together in a way that songs from Europe or America could never do.

Outcomes

Although there are no statistics to work with, the atmosphere in the school and the ability and willingness of the children and teachers to reflect and discuss the project give us indications about whether this emphasis on Respect, or other values, has an impact.
At the end of the year the students wrote their reflections about how they were doing on the value of Respect and how the class was doing. The students of one class wrote:

- I have improved, and I like to see that I improve almost every day. I really feel I have changed. I like my whole class. They are kind to me, so I am kind to them.
- The whole class sometimes needs a meeting to solve problems.
- I only used to brush my teeth once a day. Now I brush my teeth twice a day. Before I was getting angry when someone did something bad to me but now I don’t because I learned to say Stop. From this I learned to respect myself and others.
- I am kinder to my friends but sometimes I forget and need to be reminded to be kind.
- The class is behaving better than at the beginning of the year. People are much nicer to A and B (2 students that had previously been excluded or were the scapegoats). Kind acts are happening in the class. The kindness box is full of kindness. I have been kinder to everyone. They have been kinder to me. I like when people are kind to me. They probably also do too.
- I listen better when other children tell me to stop. I am more careful when others are working. I avoid fights more.
- It was pretty hard for me to concentrate on what a person was speaking about. Now I am making an effort. Most people play with me, even the girls.
- I became nice and kind with other kids. It makes me happy to see others happy. I used to get into fights but now if someone fights with me I tell them to stop or walk away. I started to sleep at 8:30 every day. I used to pay attention but now I am getting distracted by noises.
- I am really trying to keep myself healthy. The class is paying more attention. We help other people when need to.
- Before I used to eat more sweets. I am more honest because I wrote a lie on my August Respect Rubric. I think the class is getting along much better now. Especially being kind to A (student mentioned above). I am much better now than in August, even if I didn’t actually try, it came naturally.
- I say magic words (please and thank you) to ammas. Then they look happy. The class is working together. They help each other. I was not perfect in the beginning of the year and now I am better.
- Now I try to get along with others and avoid fights. I get help when needed. I focus more on my work and talk softly. I raise my hand and wait for my turn.
- I tell the ammas thank you and they make a nice smile. In the beginning of the year when kids teased me I used to hit or tease them back but these days I don’t hit back. I just say stop it. Before people were teasing A and B, but these days nobody teases A and B.
- I feel that the whole class is being nice and kind to me. We are taking care of others. I notice that from last year everyone is saying nice things, helping others, and working with others.
- I improved in lots of things but some things I still have to improve my behavior, hitting, and respecting a little more.
- People in the class are being more respectful. They are not teasing, being kind and nice and giving lots of compliments. Many people are noticing kindness. The classroom is more clean. The library is more clean. The toilets are not so clean.... I eat more from different food groups.

Conclusion

We need to continue this work, for many reasons. There are many values to explore, and every year we have new students. One indicator of success is that the students ask for this project. Our conclusion is that value education helps the children grow and develop.
White Peacock ceramic studio

Introduction

White Peacock is a creative space that guides ceramics classes and ‘open space’ activities for all age groups. We aim to give Aurovilians the possibility to explore the unique and responsive material, and the altogether magic process, of ceramic media. We exist for inspired amateurs and for children and we focus on the creative process.

Description of project

White Peacock offered regular classes and occasional workshops over the course of the year, and participated in Auroville festivals and exhibitions. Our activities are done in the spirit of unending education and openness for the new creative ideas. Our White Peacock clay club studio is in the Kindergarten compound, Center Field, Auroville.

Anna and Saraswati are the teachers for ceramic arts; Anna works with adults while Saraswati is mostly focused on children. They are helped by Helena and by Fedor who offers technical support (kiln servicing, exploration of the most effective ways of firing).

Regular classes this year included:
- Adult classes: 2 times a week (7-10 participants)
- Classes for The Learning Community: 2 times a week (5-7 participants)
- Sunday classes (up to 25 participants)

Other events and activities of the year included:
- Participation in Tsunamika Day festival at Bharat Nivas
- Participation in the Potter’s Market at the Visitors’ Center, where we conducted a clay class open to everybody on a non-commercial basis, and had about 90 participants
- Ongoing methodical support for the Kindergarten clay class
- Consultation for representatives of educational institutions on how to start a clay workshop (by request)
- A workshop for parents and children of The Learning Community, in which 27 people participated in making tiles for their new building
- A week-long workshop for 10 Tibetan students visiting Auroville
- Workshops for other visiting students
- Teacher training workshops

Reflections

We explored lots of new techniques and deepened the knowledge of the old methods with our students and club members. We are working towards making a great collection of video presentations from internationally recognized masters, to enrich our teaching and learning process.

This year brought us a new building (classroom cum firing room), accomplished with the help of many people. This gave us the awareness that the service we provide is needed and appreciated. The construction also taught us how to raise funds. Now that the building is complete we are working on a landscape development.

For the first time in January 2015, Auroville hosted a three-day Potters’ Market, and White Peacock participated in it as a vendor and by offering a clay corner and jewellery making corner. Unexpectedly we realized that the artifacts made by non-professionals (our students) found their appreciators. In fact, we gathered a lot of interest. We plan to be better prepared for the coming Potter’s Market in January 2016.

This year we moved towards a student-to-student sharing mode along with teacher-student communication. This allowed us to slowly transform the ‘class’ model into an
all-levels interaction and collaboration. We came to the beautiful moment when the elder students with their skills were able to assist the new younger students. This freed a lot of the teacher’s time and raised the community spirit, as well as gave the elder students more confidence.

**Future direction**
We will continue conducting regular classes and exploring further the endless possibilities of clay work. Our goals for next year are:

1. To put up an exhibition at Citadines at the end of the school year involving all the people who come and work at White Peacock during the year. This collective of more than 50 people will make a team effort to explore communication through clay. Most of the students will be making solo works as well as team projects for the exhibition.
2. To conduct an 8-day holiday camp in September where 10-12 children and adults can explore non-stop the ways of communicating through clay. Activities will include hand building and wheel throwing, as well as surface decoration techniques, field trips and introductions to different methods and experiences. We will connect with Golden Bridge pottery, Mandala and Flame potteries, have classes inspired by art masterpieces and by nature objects, and give space for informal sharing and tasty snacks.
3. To participate in the second annual Auroville Potters’ Market in January 2016. Apart from being the main fundraising event for White Peacock, the Market gives an amazing feeling of being a part of the professional potters community, and gives the opportunity to interact with masters and to learn from them. Students and teachers of White Peacock will bring some life to the event too, offering clay-related activities on the spot.
4. To involve more people in teaching – volunteers, interns, guest artists – when they visit Auroville.

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**Write Dance teacher training**

**Introduction**
Write Dance is a progressive music and movement programme for the development of pre-writing and writing skills in children. It involves dancing and movements, music, rhymes, songs, games, stories, role-play and many different sensory experiences. The programme has been found very helpful for children with special educational needs, from learning difficulties to dyspraxia. It includes many exercises for harmonising and connecting the two brain halves, improving cognitive learning and physical coordination. Write Dance awakens interest and spontaneity and improves both large and fine motor skills, providing the children with a strong foundation for writing.

**Description of project**
Helena offered a Write Dance teachers training for teachers in Auroville to use with students aged 2 through 12.

The Write Dance training included theory and background on:

- Developmental levels of sensory and motor skills
- When and how children are ready for cognitive learning
- Developmental differences between boys and girls

Trainings were held monthly on Saturdays over a period of 7 months, October 2014 to April 2015. They took place in 5 different Auroville schools: Transition School, Deepam School, The Learning Community, Nandanam, and Kindergarten. Approximately
25 people participated including teachers from these schools, teachers from Aikiyam School and Oli School, and some volunteers who were interested in this method. Participants all had copies of the three Write Dance books, DVDs and CDs about the method. Homework, observation and coaching were part of the training.

Outcomes
Results of this training for the teachers and their schools were:
- More awareness of the learning needs of children
- Knowledge and practice of how to integrate creativity in formal subjects to increase the level of learning
- Write Dance tables built at schools to let the children work with the different sensory materials
- In classrooms, more use of sensory materials, and use of music and movement as part of learning

The theory part was well received and increased the understanding of what to do and what not with children of a certain age. The whole training evoked enthusiasm and motivation in becoming a more equipped teacher.

Reflections
To have fully trained and confident Write Dance teachers after this 7-month training, who can work with the method independently, was an aim that did not fit with the actual capacities of the trainees. This will take more time and effort both from me (Helena) as a trainer and from the trainees. The trainees need to study the material more deeply and spend more effort practicing the skills with their students at school. Where needed the method will have to be partly translated in Tamil, for those children who do not understand English well enough.

Future direction
The coaching and observation aspect will continue from August 2015 onwards, to solidify and concretize the learning so far. The trainees will need to practice their skills and grow in confidence. I will make appointments with those who need more support and do a follow-up. I plan to hold another training in 2016-2017. In the meantime I will continue to teach Write Dance to six different groups of children (four different learning years) in the three main schools of Auroville, so there will be a continuation and deepening taking place; teachers are welcome to stay and observe.
Publications of the year

1. *The Path of Later On* - a story by the Mother
   Ruchi Mhasane (Illustrator), Hardcover, 36 pages

2. *Blessed are those... : Remembering Sweet Mother and Sri Aurobindo*
   Remembering the Mother Programme Team, Softcover, 190 pages

3. *Glimpses of Wonder: Children in Auroville Creating Worlds on Sand*
   Aikya, Softcover, 121 pages

4. *"Invocation : Study Notes on Savitri"* (2 issues, April and November 2014)
   Shraddhavan (Editor), Savitri Bhavan, 64 pages

5. *"Prarthana: Study Notes"* (2 issues, August 2014 and February 2015)
   Dhanalakshmi (Editor), Savitri Bhavan, 55 pages

6. *Raga Offerings: From Sincerity to Peace*
   Chandra, featuring Pt. Hariprasad Chaurasia, CD of 12 tracks, 62:00

7. *Glimpses of the Mother* (December 2014)
   Shraddhavan (Editor), Savitri Bhavan, Softcover, 55 pages

   Shraddhavan, Savitri Bhavan, Hardcover, 526 pages

9. *Matrimandir and the Park of Unity*
   Ireno Guerci, Hardcover, 127 pages

10. *Edible Weeds and Naturally Growing Plants in Auroville*
    Nina Sengupta, 44 pages with 12-page insert

11. *“Auroville Seyhi Madal”* (12 issues)
    Meenakshi (Editor), Ilaignarkal Education Centre, 8 pages
Acknowledgments

Contributors:

Compiled by: Kristen

Contact: saiier@auroville.org.in

An online version of this report, including photos, links and other media, can be found at:
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