SAIER
SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE
OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

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2010-2011

Volume 1: Centre of Educational Research

EDUCATIONAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RESEARCH IN AUROVILLE

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PREFACE

The work of SAIIER forms an integral whole within the experiment of Auroville. The experiment itself is an attempt to work out, give content and practical shape to the vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on the future evolution of man.

SAIIER aims to serve as an institution for new experiments and research in integral education within Auroville, ultimately an endeavour towards human unity. Being located in the International Township of Auroville and situated adjacent to several villages, SAIIER possesses unique potential for research and experimentation in education.

SAIIER was founded in 1984 to coordinate and further develop the educational research in Auroville. Presently there are about 200 researchers working under the institute’s umbrella, organized in research teams around the following areas:

Experiments in objectives, contents and methods of a new system of education
Experiments in fine arts
Experiments in environment and village extension work
Experiments in physical education
Research in special themes such as Indian culture, evolution and Savitri

The institute is composed of a number of autonomous research units, each of which functions in a democratic style of internal organization. The administrative work of the Institute is being coordinated from a central office situated at Bharat Nivas. The construction of the new building of SAIIER Office has been started this year in the administrative area of Auroville.

All the units under SAIIER are grouped into 7 centres which carry out research and their research activities. The following seven centres of SAIIER cover different aspects of the Auroville experiment:

1. Centre of Educational Research
2. Centre of Studies in Sri Aurobindo and the Mother
3. Centre of East, West, and Human Unity
4. Centre of Indian Culture
5. Centre of Arts, Crafts and Technologies
6. Centre of Man, Nature and Environment
7. Centre of Physical Education and Perfection of the Body

Volume 1 of this Annual Report contains only the reports of the Auroville schools and the Outreach schools, along with educational projects under the Centre of Educational Research. The rest is available in Volume 2.
INTRODUCTION: A BRIEF REVIEW

Schools in Auroville continue to expand and grow towards their objectives of integral education, harmony and human unity. On the material plane, Auroville schools and Outreach schools reveal a high commitment towards realizing student needs and making improvements in existing infrastructure and other facilities to accommodate an increasing demand in admission levels.

On average an Auroville child, through nursery, kindergarten, primary, secondary, and high school, receives a unique, individualized education which leads to a more integrated development of his or her faculties. One aspect of this is an equal focus on out-of-class learning and classroom education. The Auroville student is encouraged to learn through varied means and innovative strategies rather than the usual academic route. Different schools adopt their own methods for making this possible. Field trips, for example, are an important tool of learning at the high schools. Art, theatre, dance, and sports are other essential mediums of education in Auroville schools that aid the vital and cognitive development of a student. All schools, however, make a determined effort to utilize the varied resources – topographical, artistic, scientific and vocational -- available in the extended Auroville townscape rightly described by the Mother as “a place of unending education”.

Among the unconventional schooling methods that are currently active at present, mention could be made of The Learning Community, a newly emerging school that runs without walls or classrooms of a permanent nature. The small group of teachers and students move from one site of potential learning to another, depending on the nature of the project that is being followed. Experiments such as these highlight some new educational initiatives for the young. At the kindergarten level, for instance, the house-building project by six year olds is an annual feature at Centrefield. Equally noteworthy is Nandanam kindergarten’s project-based approach to natural elements.

Most schools reveal an eagerness to adopt methods of teaching and learning that are student-centred, and a curriculum that can be customized to the student needs especially at the high school level. Both Future School and Last School, although completely different in their approaches and methodology, are actively broadening their range of courses and offerings in order to fulfill the varied development needs of each student. Alongside this focus on individualized education, efforts to involve the students in group activities and to make them aware of positive community involvement is a visible factor in most schools especially in the middle level ones such as Transition and Deepanam. Balancing the inner and outer is a defining characteristic of schools in Auroville where the integral growth of the student is the main objective.

The number of local village children who are benefitting from AV outreach schools is steadily rising. Currently more than 1200 children are enrolled in the Outreach schools under SAIER (see graph). In comparison to Auroville schools, outreach schools like Aikiyam (formerly New Creation Bilingual School) and Isai Ambalam attract a large

1 Please note that the Auroville school reports are compiled starting with the high schools (Future School, Last School), then the middle-level schools (Transition and Deepanam) and ending with the kindergartens and pre-creche.
number of volunteer teachers from different parts of the world. The students of Aikiyam, as shown in its report, benefit hugely from teacher and volunteer aided activities at all levels from kindergarten to secondary level. Highlights of the past year include the Body Percussion program with a Turkish volunteer; Children’s Land project; From Market to Home (where students directly interacted with AV farmers), and other interesting creative activities (e.g. puppet shows, story writing after a field trip) enriched by volunteer involvement. Some Auroville programmes like Awareness Through The Body are well-received in both Auroville and outreach schools. The Annual Children’s Book fair conducted by the Tamil Heritage Centre and Ilaignarkal Education Centre is another popular event that benefits approximately 3000 children in and around Auroville.

Raising awareness on issues such as environmental degradation, health and healing, and gender equality is an important component of education in outreach schools. The children carry these values into their homes whereby changes in social attitudes in the wider bio region can slowly hope to take place. Focus on vocational training too equips the village children to have better control over their future. Life Education Centre (LEC), for example, reaches out to disadvantaged village teenage girls and helps them to improve their socio-economic conditions through capacity building and personal empowerment.

Projects have been given in two separate formats this year. Some follow-up projects conducted by specific schools accompany the report that has been submitted by that particular school, e.g. the kindergarten building blocks project. Other projects that are well-established and ongoing for some time have been compiled in a separate Projects section contained in this volume. These latter projects are mainly related to educational needs, though not always confined to them. While some, like the Rainbow Programme or the White Peacock can be classified under extracurricular activities that enrich a student’s journey through school years, others like SEF (Scholarship & Educational Fund) and Unending Educational Portal can be seen as vital to expanding educational options and exchanging of knowledge within Auroville and the outside world.

September 2011
Mission

Inspired by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, the vision of Future School is to develop an educational environment in which Auroville adolescents and all those dedicated to their education may reach their own unique potential through a balanced development of body, mind, emotion and spirit. Underlying this integral approach is the development of faculties that will allow us to pursue the unfolding of our inner truth in harmony with the material world.

Interwoven with this endeavor toward individual development is a collective aspiration toward a manifestation of the ideals of Auroville as expressed in its charter. Toward this, we aim to discover the essence behind our diverse cultural, ethnic, and individual heritages while reflecting the international character of Auroville.

Our deepest aspiration is to progressively develop our consciousness to prepare the youth and ourselves to manifest a truer, higher and more joyful life on earth.

Research Objectives

- Provide a student-centered, integral education for Auroville youth between the ages of 14 - 20.
- Develop and offer programs which foster awareness and growth of the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual aspects of the being.
- Encourage students to follow a value-oriented approach to life in which they have a deeper understanding of personal, community and global responsibility.
- Enable students to become self-aware, self-motivated, and self-controlled.
- Help students to explore ways to set and reach challenging goals.
- Expose students and ourselves to new experiences and approaches to learning and understanding.
- Provide educational programs and activities that open a wide range of possibilities for students upon ‘graduation’ from the school.
- Establish an interactive environment of beauty and light which inspires progress and creates a variety of opportunities for growth.
Program details

Learning Environment
As Auroville is an international community the school maintains an international character by bringing together students from many different nationalities, with their varied cultural and ethnic backgrounds, in an atmosphere of protected freedom and harmony. This is a basic step in the promotion of international understanding, peace and human unity. In addition to this, as most of the teachers are Aurovilians, they are truly dedicated to the ideals and Charter of Auroville and so can encourage, support and guide the mostly Aurovilian student body in their own explorations of their role in and relationship to Auroville. This influences the way they approach their work and sets the framework for the relationships amongst the students and the teachers. We hope that this environment, and the educational program itself, will help the students further understand themselves and their “raison d’etre”.

Program
Future School is currently offering a high school equivalent education to primarily Aurovilian students. This past year there were 63 adolescents/young adults from 15 nationalities enrolled in the school. Each student has an individualized program which is created according to their choices: around core subject areas they choose elective subjects as well as physical and creative arts activities. As most of these latter activities take place outside of the school campus, making use of the many diverse possibilities in Auroville at large, we actively assist them, usually through our mentoring program, in finding teachers/coaches/guides that can help their talents and interests in these areas to progress and grow. Students are generally expected to stay in the school for 4-5 years, which allows ample time each year for students to complete their core courses and explore and develop other areas of interest.

We consider Auroville itself to be a very rich educational resource for our youth so we regularly approach various individuals in order to organize other activities that are requested by students but have not yet been offered. In this way, there is more interaction between the community and its youth, and therefore more involvement and understanding on many levels.

The school incorporates many different teaching/learning methods and environments: projects, tutorials, independent research, traditional lectures; small groups, large groups, one-on-one approach, peer teaching, work experience and self-study. In this way we hope to meet the needs of each individual, and we feel that the combination of required areas of study with choice of particular subjects gives the students the chance to get in touch with new areas of knowledge and at the same time to explore their own interests and needs.

Evaluation
The students are actively involved in assessment and evaluation, of both their own progress and the effectiveness of the teachers and the school as a whole. As the Auroville schools do not give conventional grades or report cards, methods used for evaluation at Future School include:
Reflective assessments

- Teacher and class evaluation by students
- Student self-evaluation
- School self-assessment by staff
AUROVILLE SCHOOLS

- School assessment by students
- Observation
- Mentor meetings and other conferences

Skill-based assessments
- Internal tests, assignments and portfolios
- Project work with presentations, internal and/or public

Written progress reports

Activities 2010 - 2011

Field Trips

We were pleased to be able to offer several school trips this past year:

- **Aadyar Poonga, Chennai:** On February 4th 2011, Future School students and teachers gathered at the Visitors’ Centre to embark upon a journey to Aadyar Poonga. Once we arrived, we stepped out into the hot sun and Joss was there to welcome us and show us around. What was truly incredible was the transformation that Joss had created. Pictures compared the terrible dumping ground that Aadyar Poonga used to be (it had been Chennai’s main dump site for the last 50 years!) and what the same place looks like now. The area is now filled with all kinds of plants, trees and beautiful artwork made by Joss’s team back in Pitchandikulam, Auroville. All the plants and trees have also been transported from Auroville to Aadyar Poonga. Wildlife has started to return to the park; the sound of chirping birds bear proof of this. It is almost a miracle that such a massive transformation has taken place in a relatively short amount of time. The incredible result of the hard work by Joss and his team not only gives us hope that India will become a nation which will learn to segregate and recycle its waste, but is also an inspiration to so many of us to become more environmentally conscious. *(Ayesha K., student)*

- **Revelation Forest, Auroville:** On one of our field trips, in November 2010, a group of students and teachers went to Revelation, where Patrick took us for a walk through the forest and showed us the work he has been doing there for many years. He explained how carefully planned bunding and small dams stop erosion and collect the rainwater, so that it can replenish the aquifer. The thousands of planted trees hold the soil with their roots, and falling leaves create healthy topsoil. All kinds of animals and birds are attracted to this sanctuary. The ultimate goal is to re-establish the tropical dry evergreen forest of indigenous species that used to cover this land long ago. *(Kathrin)*

- **Eco-Service, Auroville:** In August 2010 we visited the Eco Service and the AV landfill to witness first-hand the fate of the waste that results from our daily activities. We were confronted with the solid waste segregation which was done by hand and reminded of the problems that certain categories of waste generate. Potential solutions and limitations concerning recycling and waste reduction were discussed and the many questions that were posed by students and teachers alike were competently answered by the Eco Service team members. The trip was an important reminder for all of us that even the most innovative and sophisticated waste management scheme starts with and heavily relies on public awareness and participation. *(Michael H.)*
Matrimandir: On September 3, 2010, Future School gathered at the Matrimandir. When we first arrived, most of us sat under the Banyan tree in quiet contemplation, while a few walked around the lotus pool. We then went together for concentration in the Chamber. The atmosphere was very calm and brought a feeling of unity amongst all who were present. There were many requests from students and staff alike to go to the Matrimandir together more often, which we will do. We are very grateful to have such a place to bring people of all ages and backgrounds together for collective, meditative experiences. (Erin)

Biology field-trips
- Visit to AV Health Centre to 1) see centrifuged blood to get a concrete idea of the constituents of blood, both the plasma (liquid) and the cells (solid) suspended in it, and 2) check the percentage of hemoglobin of each student to help them understand what is anaemia and what sort of nutrition is required for their growing bodies. Seeing these tests done in a medical lab creates a more holistic learning experience.
- Visit to Forecomers forest/canyon to get a feel of plant life by observing trees, shrubs, etc. in their natural environment, and to ponder on questions like 'how does the water reach the top of the tree?' before beginning the reading for the unit on Botany.
- Visit to Discipline Farm to see how an organic farm is maintained and to learn about bio-fertilizers, bio-pesticides and crop-rotation first hand by interviewing the farmers.
- Visit to Pitchandikulam and Revelation Forest by students studying Tropical Dry Evergreen Forests (TDEF). (Mita)

Community Involvement
- Auroville Marathon 2011: 15-20 students and teachers helped in various ways during the fourth Auroville Marathon that took place in February of this year. Some were part of the cycle escort for runners and some were manning the refreshment tables for runners.

Workshops
- In the month of March we had a three-day intensive self-defense course with Ms. Liel Wachsmann, black belt in several areas of martial arts and with much experience in teaching self defense. This course consisted of two hours of learning a day, although sadly this was not enough time to cover everything we would have wanted. All in all, however, the course was very good as it gave us the basic ideas of how to defend ourselves. (Mirrabelle, student)

Habits for Living
For the students of Future School there are many possibilities for the development of the mind, body and soul. It seeks to create an environment for knowing yourself, liking yourself and finding purpose.

To this end, the Core class for first year students (ages 14 and 15) completed two terms focused on principles that are timeless and universal. The course was entitled Habits for Living and was designed to encourage the students to become what their inner talents and desires lead them to become. Since this course has been so well-received it will continue to be a core class during the first year of study in our school.
Interdisciplinary Activities

- **Student teaching**: Including students in teaching activities is an attractive and stimulating learning approach for both the class participants and the student teacher. With this in mind, when some students needed extra support for advanced Math, we asked a senior student if he would be willing to help. He agreed and began by tutoring, but then later took on a small class of 6 students. He had this to say about the experience: “When I was asked to help some of my school mates with their math classes I could not imagine the amount of hard work and time that a single class requires between its preparation and its execution. I used to think that teachers had it easy but it’s actually the opposite. Teaching also helped me by forcing both my oratory skills and my English to improve in order to better explain a certain topic or concept. Overall these past six months have been a very positive experience that I would gladly repeat.” Ema graduated from Future School at the end of April, but will be staying on next school year as a full-time teacher.

- **Film Project**: An Auroville Film Festival initiative, the course provides the necessary tools to students to understand the making of a video, to deconstruct what they see on TV screens, their iPods, PSPs, posters, books, magazines, T-shirts etc. In this way, they are able to not only perceive the unreal nature of the materiel viewed but also choose how they want to engage with it. This is done by teaching the students the basics of film making such as Story, Script, Music, Sound effects, Camera techniques, Film shoot, Editing and completing a short film. The films made this way are then shown in the Auroville Film Festival in the student category. *(Sasi)*

New Courses/Activities

**Photography**: This class focused on the History of Photography, the meaning of the word and how it influences one to pre-visualize the photo. Traditional photography, including dark room practice, was also studied and then followed by Digital Photography. *(Sasi)*

Challenges

There are many challenges along the path towards materializing the educational ideals of Auroville.

- As the school grows it will become increasingly difficult to continue to offer personalized programs for each student. This will continue to be a priority, however, because we feel that being able to nurture the development of all aspects of the being in each individual student is a very important aspect of an Auroville school.
- Adequate numbers of dedicated community members are needed to maintain and expand the program on all levels to meet the needs of the students, present and future.
- Gaining recognition without accreditation continues to be a challenge for our school, in spite of the growing numbers of graduates who have successfully gone on to universities and other learning environments in India and around the world. *(Details can be provided upon request.)*

Follow-up on previous goals (for 2010 - 2011)

- Develop and offer additional inter-disciplinary courses - *see Activities section,*
'Interdisciplinary Activities'.

- Explore and integrate additional possibilities for work/study programs (for non-academic students who may prefer to have an educational program that includes some basic academic courses in school along with an apprenticeship) - This past school year, Future School provided academic support for students participating in a vocational training program for tailoring. Ongoing.

- Integrate more classes in the Arts (music, theatre, sculpture, photography etc.) - in our schedule this past year, we had a theater course and a film-making course offered for the first time, both of which were very well-received and will be offered again next year. In addition, a photography class has begun and there will be art classes on campus during the next school year. Ongoing.

- Construction of the permanent study lab/library began in June 2007. Through hard work by the staff and students of Future School and the generous support of many, fund-raising efforts have been successful and the building is now in use.

Goals for 2011-2012

We will work towards the following goals during the coming school year:

- Develop and offer additional inter-disciplinary courses
- Begin to document the methodology and ‘syllabus’ for at least one study area/course, which will be Biology with an integral approach.
- Explore and integrate additional possibilities for work/study programs (for non-academic students who may prefer to have an educational program that includes some basic academic courses in school along with an apprenticeship)
- Create more thorough documentation of our ex-students: where they are, what they are doing, what are their plans for the future (short and long term), etc.

Conclusion
Within Auroville’s endeavor towards unending education and human unity, the development of an educational system that equally benefits teachers and students is a necessary step in helping us reach our fuller potential as conscious, discerning individuals who are open to different ways of thinking about and responding to the world around us. Our primary goal continues to be the development and implementation of an integral education that is deeply rooted in the ideals of Auroville.

Future School Statistics

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<td>Nationalities represented</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>No. of part time teachers/staff</td>
<td>26</td>
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Goal / Objective / Outcome

Our aim is to assist the students in finding what they truly are and want to become, and to build in themselves a rich multifaceted personality, through a great variety of learning activities.

Program/Activity details

The program of studies is defined by the students themselves. It includes literature, art, social sciences, natural sciences, philosophy, mathematics, languages (including Tamil and Sanskrit) and sport, but also extra-curricular activities like dance, theater and trekking, so that all the parts of the being are awakened and developed.

Our school is going to be relocated in the Cultural Area, closer to the other schools of Auroville. A first phase has been completed for a budget of 45 lakhs.

Outputs

We had an average of 20 full time students during the year. In addition, courses have been offered to young Aurovilians and adults on Indian culture, Sri Aurobindo’s philosophy and Tamil. Our Art Center is being used by 70 students who are part of other Auroville schools’ programs.
Outcome

Personality development
Inviting the student to define their own program of development, within the ‘Free Progress’ approach, has a demonstrable structuring effect on their personality and increases their autonomy, self-confidence and motivation.

The fact that the spirit of Auroville’s ideals is very much present in the school, creates a process of personal and genuine assimilation of these idea-forces, not only for their own sake but also in relation to the issues of the contemporary world. These two elements are the frame within which the students define their position and project for the future.

Mental development
The main domains covered have been stress on literature, whether English, Indian or French, for the development of complexity into the cognitive capacities.
The faculties of understanding and of speech have been combined in a special training of the capacity to analyze and summarize long articles followed by oral presentations on contemporary issues.
Sri Aurobindo is being studied not as a normative knowledge, but as a means to open new doors of comprehension, to deepen and widen the mental faculty of synthetic understanding.

Development of the Vital Being
We keep observing how much the tapasya of art can carry ethical as well as aesthetical values: the search for harmony and perfection, the discipline involved and the need to go through all the phases of expression, from the original concept to material realization, is a powerful means of self-education and a simulation of life situations they will meet in the future. Through harmony and beauty, Art offers also one of the best means to bring the life force under the control of the more conscious parts of each one’s being.

Development of the Physical Being
The students have been following several types of physical activities: Dehashakti’s sports program and dance. In addition to physical health and balance, there are many psychological qualities involved in physical activities, which are being established in the physical consciousness with a stability that the mental and vital beings cannot offer.

Psychic and Spiritual Development
Although this part is not an object of teaching, it underlies in all our activities as the background that supports and gives sense to the rest. The awakening to the psychic element in human beings is the real aim of our education, the school activities offering the occasion and materials for it. It is basically founded on the psychological fact that one grows by what one gives and consciously offers, as a path of self-becoming and self-perfecting. Once this aim has become conscious in them, a lot of the educational effort is taken up by the students themselves. Its natural outputs are a growing capacity to self-determination, an aspiration to grow and to progress, a happy learning and a sense of togetherness.
Inspired by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, the aim of Transition School is to help our children develop integrally so that each child may develop naturally to his/her full potential, to impart a solid academic grounding, as well as to foster human values so that Auroville children can become responsible individuals, dedicated towards human unity. Here, children from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds grow together in an atmosphere of protected freedom and harmony, developing an understanding that we are citizens of one world. Our deepest aspiration is to prepare our children and ourselves to live in a higher consciousness to manifest a truer and higher life on earth. Transition School, founded in 1984, provides a learning environment for the children of Aurovilians and Newcomers to Auroville. Our students range in age from 6 to 14 (grades 1 through 8). The school has a total capacity of 200 students. Presently there are about 160 students; these students and the adults that work with them come from about 20 different countries and many states of India. This multi-cultural environment is challenging and offers stimulating opportunities for dynamic, creative teaching and learning experiences. It also exposes teachers and children to humanity's rich cultural heritage and diversity as well as providing us with a rich environment for our continuing research in integral education, a holistic approach which perceives each being as unique and aims to guide each individual in the quest for self-knowledge.

Our students learn to work in groups and also individually. Each group has a group teacher who is able to know and follow each child individually. Learning through projects and learning to do research is an important part of our work as it creates educational experiences and classroom environments that are interesting, motivating and challenging for children. Children are encouraged to explore their interests within the framework of a defined program. The work is designed to develop student centred approaches to learning, to develop transferable skills and personal qualities at the same time.
Sri Aurobindo and Mother are our guides and the ideals of the Charter of Auroville are foremost in our minds.

Some of the areas in which we are conducting an ongoing action research are:
- Development of curriculum and educational approaches that promote value oriented education.
- Experimentation in classroom and school management that includes the children as active participants.
- Research in and development of alternative and participatory forms of evaluation.
- Research on teacher development and training teachers for an integral education.

**Highlights**

**Presentations and Theater**

Our observations indicate that student presentations and children’s theatre have a positive impact on the child’s physical, emotional, social and cognitive development through multi-sensory learning opportunities. In Transition School theatre and student presentations are used as a tool for furthering integral education. Some of the objectives of this work at Transition School are:
- To promote self awareness and self confidence
- Give opportunities for student’s choice To learn to work with cooperation and collaboration
- To develop creativity and imagination
- To encourage social awareness, empathy, tolerance and deeper understanding
- To develop critical thinking skills
- To strengthen communication skills
- Allow students to explore their strengths and individual growth
- To develop self-discipline and concentration
- Include parents and other students
- Have fun

This year there were several theatre presentations as well as presentations within all of the classes in which students shared with parents, teachers and other students. Theater presentations included: “The Wizard of Oz”, “A Christmas Carol”, “Virtues” and a play presented by the third grade class. Some examples of presentations given this year include: oral book reports, reports on heroes, historical eras and science topics (Renaissance in Europe, Ancient India, Biomes of our Earth), Music Open House. Below are two reports that reflect the aims and methods used in the various classes:

**Grade 7: Tigers report on presentations**

Throughout the year we have used presentations as a learning tool for: gaining a deeper understanding of different subjects, developing self-confidence, learning to talk in public, learning to stay focused and have clear ideas when in public, improving the capacity for self-expression and expressiveness, learning to communicate to others effectively, developing flexibility and adaptability, and developing listening skill. Here we describe here two very different ways in which we used presentations.

One instance is when we used presentations to gain a deeper understanding of Auroville. To get started each child wrote a paper imagining themselves presenting Auroville to a person that knew nothing about it. Then they could choose one area of Auroville that
they were interested on and do research on it. After some classes of research through books and internet, they wrote a paper on their chosen topic. We worked through several drafts of their paper. They then presented one by one their research to the group. They had to reply to questions from their peers at the end of the presentation and if they did not know the answer they had to research it and come back with the answer another day. The group had to actively listen and take notes, so that at the end of all presentations they could come up with a compressive introduction to Auroville. Children were very much involved throughout the project and had lively discussions about the different aspects of Auroville.

Another instance was when children chose poems that they liked and worked on them: to understand their meaning, the use of the language and to find how to express them with intention and emotion. This time they presented their poems to a wider audience, we invited parents and friends to a poetry evening. Children liked been able to express beautiful thoughts or witty intelligent rhymes.

These two very different presentations complemented each other helping the children develop many abilities. In the first one they had to find a way to express themselves from their notes, so that the flow of the speech was spontaneous and they had to be ready to adapt to the moment. In the poetry presentation, they had to memorize a text and stick to it; they had to work on expressing a mood, an emotion and the sensorial impressions of the words.

**Theater: “The Wizard of Oz”**

This year, the sixth grade worked on a class play and musical - 'The Wizard of Oz'.

**Two of the main goals or themes of this project were working together as a group and taking responsibility.**

Language skills: Through learning their parts and the songs, the children improved their English skills. They had to learn to pronounce words clearly, in slow, loud voices and, at the same time, give expression to their part. Listening to others is also an essential skill, as well as becoming familiar with the plot of the story and the lines of other actors, so that each actor can respond appropriately to the other's words and actions.

Stage skills: Along with listening, working as a team is essential on stage. It is hard to imagine how the audience sees the actors, and position oneself so that the actor is always talking to the audience and to the other actors on stage. In rehearsals, we worked a lot on these skills.

Sets and props: During the February break, we came together to work on sets and props. Many children chose to spend their whole holiday week at school volunteering to do this work. We painted, stitched and pinned the sets as a team. Two skilled artists helped us and worked with the children to create the backdrops. This holiday work led to a wonderful group atmosphere of working together. The students were very proud of the work that was done.

Responsibility: Children had different responsibilities to find parts for their costumes or create them, and to bring or make different props for the play. Many of them brought items for others. They interacted with other people in the community to ask if they could borrow things and were also responsible for bringing them back afterwards. Another big
area of trust and responsibility was working backstage. At times when the students were not actively on stage, they had to either remain quiet backstage or help with scene changes. They were very eager for the performances to be successful and they were extremely responsible backstage.

Group work: Working on 'The Wizard of Oz' was a wonderful exercise in group work for the Horses. It brought them and the teachers who worked with them together. It was a close, shared experience. We had to function as a team and respect each other to bring all the different elements together into a unified whole.

This process started in November with theatre sports and rehearsals, and culminated in three performances in March. Prior to rehearsals, the book by Frank Baum had been read and studied in class. There was a great deal of collaboration, both among the students and among teachers who offered to help with costumes, sets, lights and recording (photos and film). The music teachers taught the songs and compiled them with an original composition for the introduction to the play and various sound effects that were used throughout the play. The element of music added the possibility for those children who wanted to explore this were given the possibility to do so.

When assessing our presentations and our plays we look at the opportunities that we offer to meet the various needs of the children; each one of them as an individual. We look at the effort, the cooperation and the progress that each one works towards.

Human Values for Integral Education—Peace

In a brainstorm session at a Transition School meeting, everyone agreed that the all school "Values Project", which was based on Harmony this year, was the major highlight of the year. It was not only a highlight, but a very important link, or thread that connected not only all of the different classes, but also the whole school. Some of the aims of the value project are:

- To help the students think about, reflect on and feel values and discover them in real and practical life situations.
- To give the students opportunity to develop feelings and emotional commitment to values.
- To learn how to express these values in relation to themselves, other people, their community and the world.
- To help the students understand their responsibility towards themselves and others and to learn to make conscientious personal and social choices.
- To encourage students to choose their own values and learn ways to develop them and live them.

Since the beginning of Transition School, a value-oriented approach has been underlying all of our work. Every year the school chooses a value to stress, a value that will be consciously included throughout the school year. In the past few years we have had projects on: Fraternity, Truth, Respect, Responsibility/Freedom, and this year Peace was the chosen theme. Below there are reports from the Music classes and the Awareness through the Body classes that illustrate some of the work done.

Report from Music

Having so many children from different ages and backgrounds, being able to transmit the
joy of learning music is not an easy task. Especially as students get older and their interests vary, encouraging them to involve themselves in the subject in a way that they can self-confidently express themselves can be quite challenging.

In order to overcome this, in the last few years we have tried to include in the program a more flexible and individualized way of learning; a method that tries to involve all students by giving them the choice of how to approach and integrate themselves in the subject.

Song writing is the tool that we have used in the last few years. It offers a broad scope for those that require flexibility and freedom, yet can be organized and guided in such a way that for those who have difficulty in tackling such tasks can be helped.

This year the topic Peace was chosen for the songs. Students were first asked to brainstorm words and phrases based on the chosen theme. They were then asked to split into groups and come up with words and phrases based on these, the idea being to give them preliminary topics for lyrics and a theme for their song.

Once a basic theme was chosen, the song was then structured into verses and choruses and finally a melody added. Having completed the song the teachers then helped the students add musical accompaniment to their work, and in the final stage the songs were performed, first to smaller groups and then to the whole school in an open house.

All in all this was a very successful project. This was now the third time that such a project was completed in Transition school and it was very evident in both the standard of musical ability as well as the level of creative writing that considerable progress had been made over the years. Furthermore this gave both students and teachers a very harmonious and cooperative way of working that allowed each person to bring in their own unique skills into the project.

Report from Awareness through the Body-ATB at Transition School 5th to 8th grade

“I use ATB techniques to calm myself when I feel lost or stressed; I take a deep breath and go back to neutral.”

“This year in ATB I learned to concentrate on one thing, to take control of my body, to control my moods, to work as a group and also to relax in almost any situation”

“I learned how to master myself, to work in a team, to trust my feelings, to identify my mind and my emotions”

“I learned how to keep in touch with my body”

“I learned about my different bodies, how to trust my physical body and how to respect other people”

Extracts from the end of the year Children’s feedback paper on ATB

One of the ATB highlights of the year was the work we did in line with the whole school year’s theme: Peace.

Our main objective was for children to acquire clear personal sensory memories for how Peace feels in their body. The emphasis was on both “personal unique experiences to each individual” and “clear physical sensation that one can remember”. If children can experience and create their own subjective memories of reference for Peace, then,
whenever they need, or want, at any time, in any situation, they can recall the memory and by doing so induce themselves into a Peaceful state.

To help children integrate Peace as a global sensation of mind, emotion, energy and body, we offered them exercises were they could become aware of the sensations that accompany Peace in the different layers of their being; which is their physical sensation when they experience Peace in their mind, in their emotions, in their energy/subtle body and when the experience it around them.

We proposed a wide variety of activities for children to have many possibilities to experience and integrate Peace. As each new activity complemented the previous ones, children had also the opportunity to keep deepening their experience and making it more complete with each new input. Some of the activities we offered were:

- **Short concentrations.** Such as: after placing the body in a comfortable align sited position, children were asked to gather their attention by focusing on the sensation of not moving, after a few moments they were asked to notice where in the body the felt the most quiet and Peaceful sensation at that moment. Ones they could identify it they were to stay connected to this part and allow the sensation to grow and become clearer. At the end of the concentration everyone shared their experience, trying to describe or give a name to the sensation that they felt, while pointing to the part of the body were they felt it. In other similar concentrations, done at different moments during the school year, children were observing whether the Peaceful place in the body was always the same or was changing, they were also asked, at other times, to look into the color of the sensation or to let the sensation grow and expand till it would encompass the whole body. With older children we also explored expanding the sensation of Peace beyond the physical body into the subtle physical body.

- **Deep relaxation.** We alternated during the school year short (from 10 to 20 min.) and long (from 40 to 50 min.) deep relaxations. The activity had 6 parts. First, taking a moment to notice the outer conscious level of awareness. Second, conscious breath inviting Peaceful sensations when inhaling and releasing “unPeaceful” sensation when exhaling. Third, we guided the children to move conscious attention to each and every part of the body, in a systematic way, inviting each part to become even more peaceful, at the end of that children had a moment to imprint in their memory the sensation of Peace in the physical and subtle physical bodies. Fourth, different types of guided visualizations were used to help the children enter a deeper sense of mental and emotional Peace, again children were allowed a few moments to record into themselves the memory of how it felt to them the Peaceful state in their mind and emotions. Fifth, we invited the children to go even deeper into themselves and find a global sense of Peace, a sensation that would encompass the whole of themselves. Sixth, to conclude we guided the children back to the outer conscious level carrying Peace with them, reminding them to remember that whenever they want or need, in any place or situation they can always take a moment to connect back to their inner sense of Peace. We reinforced what they acquired in deep relaxation by regularly taking some time to reconnect to their sensorial memories of Peace.

- **When in other activities** children would experience calmness and Peace we would call their attention to what they were experiencing at that moment and specifically to the sensation in their body, so that they could integrate one more
reference for the Peace state. Landscapes, plates, sensory awareness, subtle body exercises were the activities were this happened more often.

- **Breath.** We offered the children opportunities to explore the calming effect of focusing the attention in their breath, especially when they used what we call the wave breathing.

- **Modeling.** By letting a peer to create movement in their body while inhibiting any tendency or reaction to interfere with the induce movement, children discovered deeper sensations for calmness, Peace and wellbeing in their bodies, and they could perceive how this physical experience rippled into the other parts of their being.

After the whole year of interweaving the theme of Peace in our program we have observed that children are more able to bring themselves into a Peaceful state. They are also more able to notice when they or their surrounding become “unPeaceful” and often were capable to bring about a change, sometimes without a reminder from an adult, other times with just a simple reminder to notice what was happening and do something about it.

Here follows extracts from feedback papers of two children after a relaxation to integrate peace at a deep level:

“**I felt soft, warm, yellow, tingly. I felt as if I was hollow and with each breath peace filling up inside me like liquid, from my feet to my head. I felt the cocoon around me like warmth and when it had a hole, I could mend it by putting more peace on that point, from the outside, like when paint peels off you can always repaint it. I felt relaxed and happy. My feet were the most peaceful place in my body, I usually feel it in my feet because the Peace feels my feet first.”**

“**I felt heavy and warm. It felt as though I was filling my bubble with my whole body. I felt as if I was sinking into the floor. The bubble was round and reddish, warm and tingly. Peace was very relaxing, it had a sinking feeling and I did not want to move. With every breath I felt even more at peace and heavy. My mat felt as soft as the BIG sponge cushion. It really felt amazing.”**

**Individualized learning**

In our last annual report we spoke about changes that we had made in the class work that gave more opportunity for the children for choice and individualized learning. Throughout the school year we have been assessing this work and modifying it. Teachers and students are happy with the results. Here is a brief description of the work followed by a case study of a student.

At the beginning of a particular time period (usually one week for the younger children and 2 weeks for the older children) the students are told what is needed to be accomplished in all of the subject areas. Students are either given a typed sheep or are asked to copy their weekly work plan. Every day, there were lessons, discussions, and/or review in a certain subject area. After this whole class instruction, students were able to go to their desk and continue with this work, or choose to do something else on their work plan. At the end of the week, students highlighted all of the work completed. The
majority of the class was able to be focused during the week and completed the week’s goals. Those unable to do the assigned work took it for homework.

Overall, individualized learning has helped empower the students and encouraged them to take responsibility for themselves. This has been acknowledged by the students themselves. The grade eight students were asked if they thought that we should continue with individualized work plans, and they all responded in the affirmative.

Additionally, we need to further promote, group work, and cooperate. To help support this, project work in is done in groups. Students work together in a cooperative way in order to complete the research together. Difficulties are discussed and resolved together. Only when they could not be worked through in the group did the teacher have to help support a dialogue to resolve an issue. At the end of the project, each student completes a rubric on the group work looking at how they helped and hindered the group process.

**Case study of a fifth grade student:**
An example of a student who has profited tremendously from the individualized learning is *****. He is a highly intelligent child that was extremely messy in his work and disorganized in his thoughts. His handwriting was almost illegible, letters were in the wrong order, some were missing and so were parts of the sentences (no articles, no verbs etc). His copying from the blackboard or from a worksheet into his notebook (e.g. in math) was full of mistakes. He seemed always in a hurry, also when he spoke. He spoke often incoherently, omitting parts of sentences, sometimes stammering.

A special program was designed for him. This consisted of just 30 minutes of work twice a week with a tutor and our constant encouragement to apply what he had learned to his work in class (giving him more time, notebooks with more space between the lines and a bigger math grid, letting him check his own work carefully before handing it in ...) He has shown extraordinary changes.

His handwriting has improved a lot; he makes many less mistakes, is much better organized, is clearer in his thoughts ... and had the highest score in a pretty complex math test on fractions.

By the way: he has been selected as spokesman by the group and helps with the organization of our daily routine.

**Environmental Awareness**

The main goal of this work is to support environmental awareness, education and action amongst the students and the teachers. Teachers and students of the various classes will choose real-world project based environmental topics to explore through research project and activities. This was an all school activity and made a strong impact on the students. More details can be seen in the research report from Transition School.

**Outputs throughout the school**

The range of output across the school is wide and varied. It included:

a. PowerPoint presentations
b. Posters
c. Photographs
d. Work for the student portfolio
e. Essays
f. Theatre presentations  
g. Poetry recitals  
h. Student written books  
i. Poetry  
j. Open house presentations  
k. Drawings  
l. Music Open House: CD was produced  
m. Artwork and theatre props  
n. Reports by teachers and students  
o. Teachers study days

We also were able to build a waste water treatment plant as part of our work on Environmental Awareness.

Outcome

All of this is a work in progress; we think that our work and concentration can help all of us (teachers and students) to develop:

- A sense of wonder
- The chance to recognize and use our knowledge and special talents
- The ability to work and progress
- Self-knowledge
- Cooperative learning and teamwork skills
- Self-esteem and self discipline
- A sense of independent learning
- Opportunities to work on presentation skills
- A sense of well-being

Challenges

Difficulties: The Transition team felt that this school year was a good year. A year in which there was a lot of progress in many areas. Problems were faced and worked on
and the student and teacher team work was harmonious. As usual we do face the same difficulties -- finding, training and keeping committed teachers who understand the aims of integral education. Transition School has been developing a training and mentoring program to help bring people into the school. We have been able to integrate new people into the school, but this is an ongoing effort. We will need to find more teachers in order to keep up with the growth of the population of children in Auroville.

**Long-term Goals**

1) Further develop and improve the curriculum and educational approaches that promote values and human unity, especially in the areas of science and social studies.
2) Further develop individualized learning methods for Integral Education
3) 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.
4) Continue to develop the teacher training program for integral education.
5) Further develop special programs for special needs.

**Transition School Statistics**

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DEEPANAM SCHOOL

‘Moving Towards Free Progress’

Our Background

Deepanam School, in its current avatar, began in October 2006 with just 12 students, when some of their parents agreed to join us as teachers. We were determined to mould Deepanam on the lines of the Free Progress system outlined by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Inspired by this system as developed by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram International Centre of Education (SAICE) at its primary levels at ‘Delafon’ (Flower Room), we sought and received the support of its teachers. We look forward to the ever-growing guidance of these wonderful teachers in our onward journey. We are very grateful to SAIIER for all its financial assistance and trust that has been given to our team. The Auroville School Board too has patiently supported our endeavour.

Objectives and goals

We envision Deepanam as an experimental school in an environment, which gives the possibility to the children to develop the necessary qualities for free progress education and the joy of learning for its own sake. According to The Mother, “To love to learn is the most precious gift that one can make to a child, to learn always and everywhere.”

We wish to provide in the coming 5 years for 200 students from the age of 7 years to 14 years old, who would be participating in a “Free-Progress Education” or “Self-motivated-learning” on the lines as explained very distinctly by Sri Aurobindo:

“Each human being is a self-developing soul and the business of both parents and teacher is to enable and to help the child to educate himself, to develop his own intellectual, moral, aesthetic and practical capacities and to grow freely as an organic being. Not to be kneaded and pressured into form like an inert plastic material. If we give the deeper self, the real psychic entity within a chance to come forward, it will itself take up most of the business of education out of our hands and develop the capacity of the being towards a realization of its potentialities.”

Deepanam School Statistics

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Deepanam is a fast-growing school aspiring to provide the community at large with an education facility for Aurovilians, New Comers, Guests, and Friends of Auroville. As the Mother has said, *Auroville wants to be a universal town where men and women of all countries are able to live in peace and progressive harmony above all creeds, all politics and all nationalities. The purpose of Auroville is to realise human unity.*

**Our Raison d’être**

With full faith in the Charter the Mother has framed for Auroville, we formulate our policies on the principles and guidelines it has laid down.

**Auroville Charter**

*Auroville belongs to nobody in particular.*  
*Auroville belongs to humanity as a whole.*  
*But to live in Auroville, one must be the willing servitor of the Divine Consciousness.*  
*Auroville will be the place of an unending education, of constant progress, and a youth that never ages.*  
*Auroville wants to be the bridge between the past and the future. Taking advantage of all discoveries from without and from within, Auroville will boldly spring towards future realisations.*  
*Auroville will be a site of material and spiritual researches for a living embodiment of an actual Human Unity.*

In “an unending education” that the Charter lays down as our watchword, the gift of learning cannot be confined to just the teaching of academic subjects, however important or powerful their claim may be. Hence, to constantly arouse in our children the enthusiasm for knowledge and progress is the aim of all our endeavours and programs here at Deepanam.

Our school is based on Sri Aurobindo’s and the Mother’s Free-Progress education where the whole emphasis is on free growth and natural development. But, freedom sans discipline is a license given to the lower rajasic and tamasic tendencies; it can only impede the progress of our children. In fact, DISCIPLINE and FREEDOM are complementary and not contradictory truths or realities. They have been amply dealt with by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother—both for the children and adults of Auroville—and we need to turn to that (i.e., what they have said about discipline and freedom) in all humility and sincerity.
It is indispensable, in our present context, to correctly understand what Sri Aurobindo and Mother mean by the word “psychic”. For this, a sufficient beginning can be made by studying the Mother’s brief article “Psychic Education”. The modern intellect confuses this term with some sort of idealistic mental or moral condition against which we need to be very consciously on guard. We are organizing a program for students from the age of seven to fourteen years in which they learn, in progressive stages, to realize and value the full use the Free Progress Education. We prefer to keep the children in small groups or batches of about 10-15, for greater intensity.

Our Distinct Approach...

A child of seven or eight, and that is the earliest permissible age for the commencement of any regular kind of study, is capable of a good deal of concentration if he is interested. Interest is, after all, the basis of concentration. We make his lessons supremely uninteresting and repellent to the child, a harsh compulsion the basis of teaching and then complain of his restless inattention! — Sri Aurobindo

- Keeping in mind that “a method is never so well applied as when one has discovered it oneself,” and that “the interest of the students is proportionate to the true capacity of the teacher”, we work with children through flexible projects, rather than stick to rigid textbooks in fixed classes, and strive to make the process of learning appealing and interesting to them.
- It is not necessary that everyone belonging to a group does the same thing, but they do work towards the same goal or task by contributing differently, each according to his ability.
- No stress or obligation is imposed regarding the pace of study, nor are any marks given to them on that score; nor is rivalry or competition encouraged.
- We feel that if children are happy and healthy they will learn everything they need to learn. This is a big change in the mindset for many parents and teachers which we are gradually exploring, debating and applying.
- In our schedule we have been very flexible in order to accommodate as much as possible the needs of the moment of children and teachers.
- At the same time we are striving to keep a safe and structured atmosphere!

Methodology
We feel that children are happy and open to learning in these flexible conditions. Thus, the values of cooperation and coordination are automatically learned resulting in a better organization and progress.

Perceiving and accepting the differences in the learning styles, interests, and talents of her students, the teacher strives to provide a wide variety of materials that caters to all accordingly.

The teacher provides a learning environment that helps children achieve their goals, but keeps challenging students to strive further on. At the same time, the teacher must find ways of assessing their work by reviewing with them daily so that the next class can be prepared with additional materials. The students should be encouraged to maintain their own portfolios wherein they collect their work and evaluate their own progress.
We aspire to achieve the following ideals the Mother has explained about the educational activities in Auroville:

“In this place, children would be able to grow and develop integrally without losing contact with their soul. Education would be given, not with a view to passing examinations and getting certificates and posts, but for enriching the existing faculties and bringing forth new ones. In this place titles and positions would be supplanted by opportunities to serve and organize. The needs of the body will be provided for equally in the case of each and everyone. In the general organisation intellectual, moral and spiritual superiority will find expression not in the enhancement of the pleasures and powers of life but in the increase of duties and responsibilities.”

“Artistic beauty in all forms, painting, sculpture, music, literature, will be available equally to all, the opportunity to share in the joys they bring being limited solely by each one’s capacities and not by social or financial position....”

School Hours

We have divided our workdays, Monday through Friday, in two parts. In the mornings, from 8.20 to 12.30 we have a regular weekly schedule organising the classes according to the children’s age, for the regular scholastic subjects: mathematics, languages, sciences, etc. In the afternoons, from 1.15 to 3.15 pm the classes are based on free choices of the students from among the various activities: clay, crafts, embroidery, painting, tie & dye, cooking, origami, soft-toys & puppet making, dance, library, computers, etc. Here the classes are not based on the child’s age, as children choose activities as per their interests. A lot of emphasis is placed on creativity – music, dance (classical) and art. These are essential tools for self-discovery and children are encouraged to explore them in their own capacities. It is the process of learning and not the results that are given priorities.

“Between them music, art and poetry are a perfect education for the soul; they make and keep its movements purified, self-controlled, deep and harmonious. These, therefore, are agents which cannot profitably be neglected by humanity on its onward march or degraded to the mere satisfaction of sensuous pleasure which will disintegrate rather than build the character. They are, when properly used, great educating, edifying and civilising forces. (CWSA, vol 1, p. 448)”

-Sri Aurobindo

Group Dynamics

Students are encouraged to make their own choices individually and through that further their creative and artistic nature. This also helps them to express beauty and teaches them to concentrate in their works to bring around them a more harmonious well being. However, at Deepanam School, children are divided in groups depending on their age or mastery of the English language. For each group a schedule is made, by teachers and children together. Progressively children are encouraged to take up more initiative in their learning and making of their weekly schedules.
AUROVILLE SCHOOLS

Several activities happen in mixed age groups as well, like French, Sanskrit chanting, handicrafts, field trips and so on. Every class has a special project-day too, wherein the class takes up a science project or a garden-project or an archaeology-project, etc. Depending on the children’s enthusiasm the possibilities can be endless. In this way the group dynamic is encouraged. The feeling in children to be able to work together is of prime importance.

Some Frequently Asked Questions About Deepanam School

Why does Deepanam have so many guests’ children? Do you have a guest policy?

We at Deepanam have a process/policy before accepting guests; we consciously want to help families who come to explore, to participate, or to join Auroville. With each family, we have a detailed sharing/discussion about their background/purpose of being in Auroville and only then, if we are convinced they are sincerely here to:

- Participate in the Yoga of building this City and
- Appreciate Deepanam’s educational approach - which is preparing children for a Free Progress Education inspired by the writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother; for an education for the “joy of learning” and not for passing exams elsewhere!

It is only after ascertaining all this, that we finalize any admissions. In fact more and more of the families that joined last year are now turning New Comers or have become Aurovilians. As we are still a growing school we will need a couple of more years to be stabilized.

We are offering our energies to children who are the future and they ALL need to be welcomed to participate in this most unique experiment - Auroville.

Is Deepanam a “free” school where the children are permitted to freely indulge in their fancies?

We greatly stress on freedom of expression and growth, but to achieve this perfection of the inner being’s free flow, an outer discipline is indispensable. Though this sounds contradictory they do best together. As explained earlier, we believe that freedom sans discipline is a license given to the lower rajasic and tamasic tendencies; it can only impede the progress of our children. For, DISCIPLINE and FREEDOM are complementary and not contradictory truths or realities. They have been amply dealt with by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother—both for the children and adults of Auroville—and we need to turn to that (i.e., what they have said about discipline and freedom) in all humility and
sincerity.
Freedom is what makes education here different than other regular systems all over the world. Without “freedom” of learning, that is without an utilitarian reason - only then does the child enjoy learning and is able to discover his real inner “dharma.”

We feel that if children are happy and healthy they will learn everything they need to learn. This is a big change in the mindset for many parents and teachers which we are gradually exploring, debating and applying.
In our schedule we have been very flexible in order to accommodate as much as possible the needs of the moment of children and teachers.

**Does Deepanam have any syllabus that it follows?**

Each class teacher is free to work in the way it would best help the children to progress. What is important is that the teachers emphasize on the learning and not on the books selected or completed.
There are some standard measures taken and we do keep ourselves aware of the basic minimum to be achieved in comparison to the standard levels in India. For some classes in Maths we sometimes use NCERT (National Council of Educational Research and Training) text books. For Environmental Education and Science we are also using Oxford Publishers’ text books according to the students’ needs and requirements.

*But our aim is to help the child to know himself to discover his “true identity” that which helps him to know what he is living for - his self-realisation! Thus by his learning about himself he can know about others, about the universe! This becomes then the prime effort in our education - the so called syllabus that helps children and teachers in discovering ways that suits each child accordingly.*

Thank you for your interest and support. We hope to receive a growing support and encouragement from Auroville at large for our small and humble offering.

At Her Feet.

Deapanam Team
KINDERGARTEN

Kindergarten Statistics

<table>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Building or other construction work begun</td>
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Waste water treatment plant

Celebration of 25 years of Kindergarten

Objectives/Outcomes

- Celebrate the quarter of century of existence of our school
- Share all our photos archives with our community of Auroville
- Reconnect with ex-students and their family
- Showing our gratitude to our faithful teachers, working here since 25 years

In August 2010, our Kindergarten celebrated its 25th birthday with an open house
exhibiting its entire photos archives on 30 panels of photos and in photo albums. Students and their families, well-wishers, interested people came to visit the school.

More than 70 ex-students passed by and were invited to light a candle and place it on a huge Om on the floor of the hall. There was a big cake as a surprise for the two teachers, Miriam and Amuda, who have worked here from the beginning in 1985.

**Long term assistance by volunteers** This year we had about 8 volunteers at the Kindergarten working with us for at least 3 months each. There were 3 Germans, 2 Italians, 2 Indians and 1 Columbian, and 2 of them were guests, 3 newcomers and 3 Aurovilians.

They all were assisting the teachers in different classrooms at different times. This meant that each room had as many as 3 people including the teachers all the time. Therefore 3 people for 15 students was our ratio for most of the year. Normally we have only 2 people: generally a teacher and an assistant.

**Some outcomes**
- Our library got reorganized.
- We did a short play conceptualized by one of the volunteers.
- Our musical instruments were repaired and improved.
- There were lots of extra Body Awareness sessions.
- There were lots of helping hands.

**Some observations and difficulties**
1. Each volunteer needs to be met with, both on a regular basis and ad hoc, to help them to understand the work and the aims of the work. This requires time and energy from the main teachers. It was found helpful when volunteer and teacher have a common language not shared by the children so as to be able to explain things as they were happening without perturbing the students.
2. Children often take long to fully respect the assistant. Therefore, less than 6 months is not advisable.
3. Volunteers need to be self-motivated as teachers cannot push or drive, only guide and advise.
4. Volunteers need appropriate housing, preferably with other teachers working with children of the same school or similar age.

**Choice activities for mixed age group children**
For the third year, we organized special weeks where the children of two age groups are mixed and a choice of activities is proposed for as long as they want. In April, a third group of younger children, age 4, experimented to be with the older ones and to choose their activities, respecting some common rules.

**Objectives**
For teachers:
- discover or confirm real interests of each child
- know individually each child of 3 groups
- get more time and opportunity to observe affinities, social skills, concentration, behaviours
- separate fixed association of children who usually disrupt the harmony of the class

For children:
- be free to choose between 4 to 6 activities, twice in the morning
- concentrate on what they really like to do for as long as they want
- respect rules (staying 20 minutes before to move on, and wait if they are already 4 or 5 children at the activity of choice)
- play with children of different ages, not only peers

Program
Three times a year, for 4 to 7 days, the children of the two older groups (three groups in April, age 4 to 7) are mixed. They can choose between 4 or 6 age appropriate activities. After more or less 20 minutes, they are allowed to switch activity, respecting that no more than 5 children choose the same one. After the mid-morning break, they move to another room and are offered another set of activities. In each room, three teachers are available to the children.

Outputs
- statistics about attendance, participation and personal choices of each child
- a lot of drawings, paintings, collages, crafts to decorate the hall and then to take home
- photos for parents to see and children to remember

Outcomes
- Each teacher knows individually all children of 3 age groups
- Children know names of everybody
- They are more open to children of different ages (that was showing at the lunch tables where they are also mixed)
- Children experimented with carpentry, drama, not usually in their programme, and different techniques of painting
- Children improved their abilities (at stitching, for example)
- Creativity and concentration of some children revealed itself, especially in the crafts and blocks buildings
- The classrooms were more quiet than usual

Difficulties and challenges
Several children missed school, at the time of the programme, because of illness: chicken pox and mumps. Not all children seem to benefit from this programme of free choice:
- Some are quickly bored, want to move from one activity to another.
- Some are insecure, don’t know what they want to do, can’t concentrate.
- Some choose only passive activities, like hanging in the doll house or listening to stories.
- Smaller children are not at ease in a new setting; they stick to a friend or a teacher and don’t really choose what they like to do.

Hall displays

Objectives
- Provide an atmosphere in the entrance hall of the Kindergarten
- Create attractive and eye-catching displays to provoke curiosity and interest of children.
**Program**
The displays change every three weeks. The theme is chosen from festival occasions occurring during the month (Deepavali, Pongal, Christmas, Mother’s Birthday) or simple and age-appropriate themes such as farm, underwater, insects, flowers, etc. When the children have made a craft or a drawing according to the same topic, it can be added to the display.

**Outputs**
- More than a dozen large displays of mostly colourful cut papers, and also illustrations from magazines or calendars.

**Outcomes**
- A link between all the children of the school
- A pleasant surprise every 3 weeks for the children to discover and wonder
- A way to put the children in contact with things they might not have seen
- A dozen topics to engage the mind in identifying the objects and actions depicted
- A stimulation to raise questions
- A tool for teachers to work on language development and vocabulary building
- An introduction to crafts and artistic work on a specified topic.

**Theatre experiment**
We had a special drama or theatre experiment with the oldest group of children aged more or less 6. Sandy, a German volunteer who was a professional opera director, guided this group for staging a theatre performance of a simplified version of the children’s classic “The Little Prince” by Saint-Exupery. The approach to this little theatrical performance was original and evolved by focusing separately on all the different elements that are involved in such a performance as opposed to the more standard practice of studying the story or plot and enacting it.

For instance, the drama practice alternated between enacting particular movements of animals, people and objects, and producing different sounds with various musical instruments and with the human voice, and making the craftwork for the stage background. Only at the end all this came together when the children were actually recounted the plot and they enacted it with movements, music and speech, and set up. The other original feature about this performance was that most of the children got to be in different scenes the main character, the little prince. This naturally inspired them and boosted further their interest and involvement.

The drama was enacted in front of the whole school. We also invited a group of 6 years old children of Nandanam Kindergarten who were acquainted with the story.

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**FOLLOW-UP OF PROJECT**

**Building with blocks at Kindergarten**

For the 5th year, the buildings the children were making with wooden blocks were recorded with a digital camera. This year, the rockets largely spread on the floor were not the fashion among boys, but roads, garages, spring boards. We proposed more directed buildings, such as tunnels, stars, robots, dragons, snakes, insects, Christmas
trees, towers, and the children responded energetically and showed a wide range of creativity.

**Objectives**
- Make the children play with natural material, wood
- Give them a tool for make-believe play
- Give them the opportunity to develop creativity, and qualities of leadership or collaboration
- Make them discover by themselves balance, symmetry, mathematical concepts
- Help them to develop naturally big and small muscles
- Promote the use of wooden blocks in school
- Show by means of exhibitions the abilities of small children

**Program**
- A room dedicated to blocks building, with mats on the floor and sound-proof panels under roof
- 45 children (3 groups, age 3 1/2 to 7), have access at least once a week to the blocks room
- Sessions of 30 minutes to 1 hour in blocks room for small groups of children
- The children are free to build what they like or challenged to build something specific
- A set of blocks is also available in the blue room for children, age 4 to 5
- Sometimes the children are asked to draw their building
- Buildings are recorded on digital camera

**Outputs**
- Nearly 1500 digital photos of blocks buildings
- More than 400 photos printed and exhibited since 5 years
- 2 exhibitions this year, on the occasion of the 25 years of Kindergarten and at Christmas

**Outcomes**
- Respect of others, of material and of rules
- Development of big and small muscles by manipulation of blocks
- Improvement of self-confidence, well-being, social skills
- Development of creativity and aesthetic sense
- Stimulation and tool for make-believe play
- Discovery of balance, symmetry, mathematical concepts
- Showing proof of this developmentally appropriate activity for young children by means of photos and buildings exhibitions.
NANDANAM KINDERGARTEN

The following sections detail the research analysis conducted on the program, activities, and outcomes relating to the four student groups - Agni, Vayu, Prithvi, and Jallam - at Nandanam School for the year 2010-2011.

AGNI GROUP (5 ½ to 6 ½ year olds)
Project - My Body

Before exploring the environment around them, we felt it was more important for children to know more about their body; as it is more close to them and as it is by their body that they explore the environment. Keeping this in mind, we asked the children what they would like to know about their body. They expressed that they would like to know everything that is inside them.

It seemed to be a vast and complicated topic for this age group and we were not quite sure whether they had a genuine interest in it; so, we asked several questions in order to see what their understanding of the body was. Later, seeing their interest we tried to give a greater input and widen their knowledge.

Goals / Objectives / Outcome

To know the name and function of each organ. To know the process of the digestive system.
To study about the different types of teeth and how to take care of them (as children start losing their milk teeth at this age).
To understand the importance of healthy food, exercise and relaxation
To refine the five senses
To strengthen the fine and gross motor skills
To become more aware of one’s habits and practices
**Program/Activity details**

Initially, we focused on observing all that one could do with one’s body. Children showed many different actions that they could do like jumping, rolling, balancing, holding, pushing etc. Since they were focusing mainly on outer actions, we proposed an activity where they had to observe their inner movement. For example - we gave them some grapes to eat and also some water to drink and asked them to observe the whole process. Children were excited and they tried hard to feel how the food went down their throat, into their stomach etc.

Then we showed them pictures of the human body. We noticed that all the children immediately pointed out the heart. A few of them were also aware of the lungs, stomach and intestine. However, all of them seemed to be fascinated by the pictures of the inner organs. This gave us an opportunity to talk about each organ in detail, but at their level of understanding. This motivated each one to make a model of their body, through art and craft work. They joined forces and traced each other’s body outlines. We helped them draw and cut different organs that they could then place on the drawing of their body. By doing this exercise, children learnt the placement of their inner organs.

Since children were now aware of the function of each organ, we focused next on how to take care of their body. We checked each other’s hair, nails, ears etc. in order to realize the importance of cleanliness in relation to health and hygiene.

Brushing teeth was a topic by itself. We invited a dentist to talk about it. The dentist explained to the children more concretely by showing different types of teeth, some real ones and some as models. Children could compare between Carnivores, Herbivore and Omnivores. They learnt to group the animals that could fit in those categories. They also became conscious about their own teeth and their functions. Making a model of their teeth with clay and chalks was a wonderful experience. After this exploration children started taking more care of their teeth. In order to make their jaw stronger they even tried to chew the hard food, like the crust of the bread, raw carrots which, earlier, some of them were refusing to eat.

To encourage children to eat healthy food we did many activities like - discussion, played games based on food, prepared a healthy food chart where they came to know about the groups of food. And on the lunch table we had often discussions about which kind of food was helping the bone, which one the muscles etc. Realizing the need of good and organic food we also created a vegetable garden and did some experiments in cooking the vegetables that we grew.

To make our body strong and flexible we did regular exercises in the playground, swimming pool and Awareness Through the Body sessions.

As in the middle of the day, we have a time for relaxation; children often asked (since they are usually bubbling with energy) why they had to do it. We explain to them the need of the relaxation by asking them to take a moment to go inside and observe the difference.

While doing this topic we also worked on the five senses by doing several activities. Children became more aware about its link with the nervous system and it’s connectivity from one part to another.
We made a simple questionnaire that children filled up themselves. Through this questionnaire children grew aware of their physical selves ex: their size, weight, the color of their eyes, hair etc and also their habits and patterns.

**Outcome**

Qualitative -

**Children:** This topic brought more awareness in the children in all that concerned their body. They learnt to take good care of it and became more conscious about their hygiene. They started making healthy choices regarding food. Children have become stronger and show good balance in their body. Now most of them can swim well. Their vocabulary and writing skills have increased. Their power of thinking and reasoning has developed further and they can comprehend and express themselves more clearly.

**Teachers:** In the beginning the topic seemed a bit challenging for us to facilitate. For instance, we thought that explaining things in detail to children of this age could be boring and complicated. But we were amazed to see how much information they already had and how much more they could take in, with clarity. We have improved our facilitating skills for this topic and learnt to make it a more interesting learning experience for the children.

**Community:** Since children are the future of the community, with this awareness, at such an early age, children will definitely impact positively the community in the long run.

Quantitative-

Thirteen children participated in the program, two teachers improved their teaching skills and some of the families were influenced by the enthusiasm of the children.

**VAYU GROUP (4 ½ to 5 ½ year olds)**

Since we noticed that children were very much attracted to flowers we decided follow their interest and explore further the world of flowers.

Project: Flowers

**Goals / Objectives / Outcome**

Our primary aim in this project was simply to immerse ourselves in the beauty and wonder of flowers and to connect to their inner significance as given by the Mother; which in turn would help them connect to their psychic being. Through this intense experience we also aimed to help the children refine all their senses, address the need of strengthening the children’s fine motor skills and also work on some basic concepts like shapes, colors, sizes, numbers, letters etc... Through this project we also aimed to help develop the mental faculties of the children and their personality.

**Program/Activity details**

To begin with we visited a piece of land under the Sri Aurobindo Ashram where they grow exclusively flowers for the Samadhi. Children walked through the various fields of flowers observing their colors, shapes, smell and feel. It was very poetic and they felt as though
they were in a fairy land. We introduced to the children some of the simpler names of
the flowers as Mother had given them, like Courage, Hope, Progress, Concentration,
Power, Victory etc… Children enjoyed it thoroughly. We also visited their nursery to see
the various stages of work required to grow the flowers successfully. Next day we simply
walked around our school campus, collecting all the wild flowers - not looked after by
human hands but by the invisible hands of Nature. Here too children observed every
minute detail of the flowers and realized that different plants have different needs. Once
at school we gave children vases and they made beautiful arrangements with these wild
flowers.

We bought a set of cards with pictures of familiar flowers along with their respective
names as given by Mother. At the morning circle, two children would to pick a card each,
from the set. We would then read the name of the flowers explaining to them what it
meant. The names of the two flower cards selected would be the two qualities for us to
focus upon for the day. This greatly helped children to connect to these qualities and
allow them to get formed within them. Children really waited eagerly for their turn to
come for picking up the card.

Towards the end of the project children selected the flower that they connected to most,
dried them and glued them on beautiful handmade paper. We wrote down on the paper
the observations that the children had made on the flower, and by binding all these
papers together, we made a beautiful flower book. Children took so much interest that
often they would bring flowers from their garden and ask us the name Mother had given
them. We also introduced to the children The Mother’s symbol as a very special flower.
We drew it on a big paper and children colored it. They immediately related it to
Matrimandir and its twelve Petals. So we went for a visit to the Matrimandir petals.

We played various circle games with flowers, where blindfolded children had to identify
the flowers, either through their feel or their smell. We also made perfumes, syrups and
salads with fresh flowers. We made our own imaginary flowers through craft work. We
made flower mandalas, and kolams. We also visited Shraddhanjali, a unit of Auroville that
makes beautiful products using dry flowers, seeds and leaves.

We invited a teacher of botany to our class to explain to the children the function of
flowers in the plant world. The teacher gave each child a hibiscus flower and a
magnifying glass. As she explained the different parts of the flower and its function,
children separated the petals and observed closely each part of the flower. They
understood the role of insects and the concept of pollination in a very basic way. They
understood how fruits come from the flower and why we need to take care of the plant
and insect world. Later each child planted seeds of a flower he chose, and till today
children are taking great care of their plants, with a lot of love, observing the minutest
changes in them.

**Outcome**

Qualitative:
**Children:** By coming in touch with so much beauty, they experienced a great sense of
wonder in their sensitive and innocent hearts. Through the names of flowers given by the
Mother, children became aware of all the beautiful qualities within them. They developed
all their senses and their fine motor skills. On the mental level they improved the
understanding of the basic concepts, cultivated their imagination and developed a better comprehension of the nature around them. By taking charge of their plants, they became responsible, caring and sensitive. Since, during all activities, ample space was given to the children to express themselves in their own way, children became more independent, expressive, capable of coming up with their own ideas and finding their own solutions to problems that arise on the way.

Teachers: Teachers learnt to facilitate the project better, by covering all the different aspects, by involving the physical, the vital, the mental and even touching, as far as possible, the psychic development of the child.

Quantitative:
Sixteen children participated in the project, three teachers enhanced their teaching skills and several parents who love flowers, followed the project closely and contributed with their input whenever possible.

Time span - The whole project lasted for a month and a half.

PRITHIVI GROUP - (3 ½ to 4 ½ year olds)

Goal / Objective / Outcome

a) To refine the senses and the fine and the gross motor skills of the children.

b) To help children relate to their peers and their teachers trustingly, and for the teachers to understand where each child stands.

c) To help establish one common language - English, in the class room, so that the above goal may be achieved.

Program/Activity details

Firstly, we created a homely and loving atmosphere so that children may feel safe and free to explore. Then having observed their needs, we opened activity corners accordingly, where children could handle material independently and go more in depth
with their exploration. In these activity corners, at times children played individually and at times in small groups, in a spontaneous manner.

The corners we created were for drama, reading, art and craft, a separate corner for painting, a corner for play dough and clay, sand and water, games and puzzles. To experience the joy of being together, we did group activities regularly, both indoors (during circle time and through art and craft activities) and outdoors (during sports time and when we went for long walks).

In fact, regular walks to Matrimandir were chosen consciously this year, in order to help the physical and sensory development of the children. Once there, we explored the gardens and the surrounding area extensively.

To refine the senses we also played various sensory games during circle times.

Since English is not a mother tongue for most of the children here, during our daily conversations we made conscious effort to give simple instructions, repeat as many times as required, so that children may assimilate the vocabulary and use it later when needed. We would also read stories regularly to small groups of children in the story corner, and then later, gaining confidence, often children would re-tell the story that we had read aloud, to the entire class. Often children would make up their own stories.

At times, these stories then would become a starting point for children to take up roles in the drama corner. Objects then would be created in the craft corner, by the children, which would help them go more in depth in their role play experience. Ex: a crown for the princess, a mask for the dragon etc....

**Outcome**

**Qualitative** -

**Children:** Children achieved a greater mastery of their fine motors, became comfortable with scissors and are starting to handle various materials appropriately. All their senses have been very much stimulated. Their span of concentration has increased. Their memory and capacity for retention has developed. They are much more imaginative and creative. They can think independently and comprehend better. They are open and trusting towards adults who occasionally come to participate in the school’s program. They are able to share and care for each other and can often solve their disputes on their own. They are able to appreciate each other, and have also become more sensitive and loving towards nature and are often marveling at all its wonders!!

**Teacher:** Each year the dynamics in the group is new and it is always an occasion for new learning experience also for the teachers.

**Quantitative:**

Ten children participated in the program and two teachers improved their teaching skills. Since this year, in particular, communication with the parents flowed harmoniously; they too could understand and support our work better.

**Time span** - The program lasted for the full school year.
JALAM GROUP - (2 ½ to 3 ½ year olds)

Goal / Objective / Outcome

We noticed this year that most of the children had a very strong personality and were clear about what they wanted to do and how they wanted to do it. This often meant that they preferred to play individually and needed more of a one to one attention from us. We noticed this specially, when, quite in the beginning of the year, we attempted to work on a project on farm animals, all together. Children were not quite able to work collectively. So, one of the things we worked on specially this year was group integration.

Program/Activity details

Initially, when we realized that children were still quite focused on themselves and not so much aware of their environment and their friends, we let them take their time and waited for them to be ready to work collectively. It was only toward the beginning of the last term that we were able to take up a project collectively. The project we took up this time was ‘Sea Animals’.

We created a sea landscape on a big panel, which immediately drew children’s attention. We then started talking about it during circle time, introducing different fishes, their patterns, sizes habitat etc... We played several sensorial games during the circle time, in relation to patterns sizes textures etc...and specially, we created sea mandalas regularly, all together, with various material ex: sand, cloth, flower, pebbles, buttons etc...

During craft work, we preferred to work in smaller groups, though. Two teachers, would propose craft work to not more than 5 to 6 children; while the third teacher would facilitate other simpler activities, (always related to the project ) that children could do independently and individually. This way of proceeding made it easier for children to learn to work together without feeling at a loss in too large a group, it allowed teachers to pay more individual attention to the children whenever required and it also allowed children to join the activity, when they were actually ready and interested.

While proposing the craft work, we always put forward various materials so that children had several options. They could explore all the materials and decide how they wanted to go about their work. We also played outdoor games related to the project - children jumped through big waves, pretended to swim, fish etc...

Outcome

Qualitative -

Children: Children improved their fine and gross motor skills and refined their senses. They are more aware now of the underwater world. They have increased their capacity to reason, understand and express themselves better. They are able to concentrate longer on any activity they chose to do. They are more creative and imaginative.

Children interact and cooperate more, they are able to listen to each other and the teachers, and wait for their turns. They are more independent and responsible.

Teachers: Teachers learnt to give space for the required process, consciously supporting
and facilitating it.

Parents: Since, as part of the program, parents were invited turn by turn, to spend a full day in school and involve themselves in the activities, they too got a deeper understanding of what was happening at school and could accompany the children better.

Quantitative
Fourteen children participated in this program. Three teachers improved their teaching skills and parents of fourteen children understood better the needs of their children.

Time span - The whole program lasted the entire school year.

Nandanam Kindergarten Statistics

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AUROVILLE PRE CRECHE

About the program

Our aim is to offer the small kids of Auroville safe and harmonious atmosphere for being, exploring and learning. The parents can find here a supportive place to meet and share the experience about raising their children.

The pre crèche is well established with its specific atmosphere. It is on a never ending process of evolution as different teachers and parents contribute, sharing their various points of view on raising children. Our growth since the beginning has been very much according to the needs and the attitude expressed by the community for childcare.

We offer 2 programs - Toddlers Group and Babies Group.

School statistics
Number of children: Toddlers 22 Babies 18
Number of teachers: 5 full time and 1 part time

Toddlers Group

This year we had around 22 children between one and a half years and two years old. This is the group of children who come every day and stay without their parents.

We take great care to help the children settle in gently, feel safe and loved, get used to the team and the place, and slowly learn to be separated, in a harmonious way, from their parents. Due to the tender age, we try to keep a good balance between free play and organized activities, offering a flexible structure, but mostly following and channeling the flows of energy. We provide time and space to choose by themselves the area of interest and to explore and understand themselves and each other. They are supported to gradually learn to follow some basic discipline and simple rules.
This year we explored more physical activities and spent more time with nature. Every other day we walked around in the field and once a week, whenever appropriate, we were going for full morning outings to the Dehashakthi sports ground or Matrimandir.

Babies Group

This year, we had an average of 18 children from 8 months old to one and a half year old with their parents, of many different nationalities. This group gathers twice a week and the number varies, since not all the children come all the time.

The baby group is a very good supportive place where babies can share space and time and here we put lot of importance on the interaction not only with children, but with their parents. Parents are happily reporting about changes in the characters of their children and the enriching environment. Teachers do much to guide and suggest to parents positive lines of bringing up children. The babies get involved in various activities of daily life, including collective sharing, cleanliness, eating together, singing etc. They come in the morning with their parents and start with a circle where the child learns concentration. A candle is repeatedly lit, which each child blows out in turn and after this, they are guided towards an activity, or are free to explore their own field of interest. The group offers opportunities to parents to get more involved in organizing various activities to encourage greater togetherness and fun for their children.

Highlights

As usual we celebrated creatively with the children some special days - birthdays, Deepavali, Ganesh birthday, Christmas with parents, Pongal, Auroville Birthday and the last day of school. And the children also traveled on the bus to a child’s house in Auroville for a birthday party. During the summer time we built a proper shed and did some landscaping work in order to give the children a more improved atmosphere. We also purchased new toys and games for the children. We repaired and painted the school building and teachers took time to be there in the school to clean the place. At the same time we have built a parking place for the teachers as well for parents.

We have now introduced giving children lunch. We tried to experiment it with few days and it had been a big success as the children love eating together with other children and also the parents were happy to take the children back home ready for a nap as soon they reach home instead of waking children already asleep while traveling back home. We received a lot of encouraging feedback from the parents after the lunch scheme was implemented. We try to improve the pre crèche more and more in keeping with Auroville‘ s ideals.

Facing Challenges

Even after a lot of new repairs and ongoing repair and maintenance work the pre crèche has been facing all kinds of difficulties during the monsoon times. Even though we are open during these times it has been a huge task for the teachers to keep the children in good condition.

Together with SAIIER we had applied for government grants to build proper buildings.
After a long time back and now with the hard work of SAIER we have been able to get the 1st installments of grants from the Government. We thank SAIER for their help in achieving what has been a dream for most teachers. We are about to start now and are only waiting for the permission from L’avenir for site plan etc.

**Goals and Achievements**

The Pre crèche aims to provide an integral environment for parents and children of different nationalities to interact in a healthy and supported way. With the continued growth of the community, the pre crèche remains committed to a multi cultural environment where different people from different backgrounds really get a chance to know one another.

This is of course not always easy, but an important part of our success as a school is to encourage a healthy interaction of all our children from a very young age. It is our sincere hope that these precious first impressions of school, for many their first exposure to the larger Auroville community, will be the first step in exploring the wonderful riches Auroville has to offer.
LILALOKA REPORT

Goal / Objectives

Lilaloka, the place of Play (in Sanskrit), offers a new educational approach centred on Joy, in order to become our own life’s creator. Lilaloka offers various activities, based on Play, which allow the child to reveal himself or herself as an individual and amongst others, without competition or judgement. This place is open to all children, schooled or not, having difficulties or not, beyond all categorizations and allowing mixing of ages.

The team of Lilaloka wants to work in collaboration with schools and parents, considering each child as an evolving being. Lilaloka is a project in the making, still in the fund raising stage.

Program/Activity details

For the time being there are no buildings yet, but the entire architectural concept is complete. Many meetings took place at different levels with some groups of Auroville as we were looking for a land allocation: meeting with the concerned neighbors for their approval, several meetings with L’avenir (the “old” and the “new”). We had to explore many possibilities before getting the final land. We asked to be under SAIIER umbrella, as Lilaloka is a project on a new educational research.

Outcome

The team has learnt to work in harmony and with trust amongst its members, and developed a lot its communication and organization skills, which is very important as a base for this project. A new member has been welcomed (Saskia), enriching the team.

Outputs

We managed to have electronic versions of our leaflet and brochure posted on Auronet and the educational portal. We also managed to print a limited paper edition of our brochure in A4 and leaflet in A5, both English and French languages as well as an interactive power point presentation of the project in English.

Quantitative

Weekly, in a first phase, we will be able to welcome:
- 65 children (and adults) for the play of painting - 5 ateliers of 12 people.
- 30 children for individual activities: recreational horse-riding, individual play sessions.
- 80 children for the library - ludotheque.
- 120 children for other group activities in the big hall.

Training will be offered in play of painting; short introductions for teachers (1 day workshops), full year training (2 practitioners per year, open to students from India) and recreational horse-riding (1 trainee per year).
THE LEARNING COMMUNITY

The Learning Community (TLC) began its second year of operation with 5 new children, making a total of 11. The first month was spent creating a new classroom in Fertile - converting an old cow shed into a classroom, with a cow dung floor, a brick perimeter, painting the walls, setting up a science lab and creating spaces for materials. Working together facilitated team building, with children becoming more familiar with each other and creating a group.

One major change in the school’s program involved expanding the Explorer Centre into what Maria Montessori calls The Great Story. Endless interdisciplinary projects can fit within this greater context, such as chemistry experiments, outdoor trips to study geography, math and geometry, or cultural diversity. The common thread is the concept that everyone and every living thing belongs to the Universe. The aim is to help address existential questions: Who am I? Where am I? And a sense of ownership and belonging: “This is my story, I am the universe.”

The Great Story is presented in a way that is unique, has impact, and conceived to arouse a child’s inquisitiveness and thirst for knowledge. The child should be inspired by the marvel of creation, excited by new insights and concepts, and enthralled by the creativity and ingenuity that is part of the human spirit. At the beginning of the school year, the story was told, from the creation of the Universe to the evolution of Language and Numbers.

Following is the gist of each lesson, which served as the framework:
- First Great Lesson - Coming of the Universe and the Earth
- Second Great Lesson - Coming of Life
- Third Great Lesson - Coming of Human Beings
- Fourth Great Lesson - Communication in Signs
- Fifth Great Lesson - The Story of Numbers

Areas that have been covered this year by the Great Story
This year we focused on the first great lesson - The coming of the universe and the earth. This served as a framework for the sub-projects throughout the year. A visual timeline was created on the walls of the school using artwork, colored paper, pictures, etc. This served as a visual reminder and a reference point to where the sub-projects fit into the timeline.
The first term Project was for each child to tell the story of creation as it is told in his or her culture. Each child took on an extensive research project, and then devised different methods of presenting and communicating their own creation story. While drawing several parallels between cultures, different perspectives were examined.

In the second term we moved on to the story of a star. Our second big project for the year was about the four elements: Earth, Water, Air and Fire. Each child chose the element he/she resonated the most with and completed four missions.

Mission 1: The God or Goddess of the chosen Element
These elements not only have physical manifestations or material substances, but also spiritual essences. They are associated gods and goddesses – For example in Greek mythology, fire is associated with Hades, and in Indian mythology fire is associated with Yajna. The mission was to describe the God or Goddess of the chosen element according to one of the mythologies of the world or according to oneself and ones’ imagination.

Mission 2: The elements at the macro level
Each element also appears at the macro level, for example, the land, the sea, the sky and the sun. The mission was to investigate the nature of the element by understanding the structure and properties of the land, the sea/rivers/lakes, the sky or the sun. For example, if the chosen element was earth then the child could investigate the layers of the earth or different landforms.

Mission 3: Playing with the element
The children were given the task to create a toy or a machine made out of simple materials to extend the exploration of the element chosen. For instance if the element was water then it could be an exploration of the flow of water through gutters, pipes and dams; or making a variety of water-wheels and little boats.

Mission 4: Experiencing the element through the body
The children were asked to share an exercise with the class that allows the body to experience the element. For example, a breathing exercise to experience air or a massage or a dance.

The third term Project was to look at the history of the universe and how this story came to be.

It was interesting to go back to the great story we heard at the beginning of the year and look at how this story came to be. It’s a story that started about 3000 years ago and still continues. It is a story that has been put together by many people over the years. It is the biggest ever group of people that have played the story building game!

James Muir Den is the author of The Cosmic Verses, in which he tells us the history of the universe through Rhyme. We used this book as our reader. The projects we worked on sprung forth from the chapters of this book. Every second week each child was given a poem to work with. Through poetry, we explored history and through history we explored math and science and geography. We used different mediums such as drama, puppetry, interviews, mime and several others. The children expanded their skills in the process of research. We were not able to complete the book at the end of the term and will continue in the new term.
In the second term, the school went on a 10-day trip to the Av Nature Camp in Kodaikanal. It was a very beneficial time for both children and adult facilitators, in learning to function together as a group and experiencing the wild nature around.

Field trips and wilderness experiences play an important part of the school’s educational framework. Wilderness experiences embody the values of tenacity, responsibility, judgment, self-discipline, and compassion. These experiences strengthen self-confidence, improve relationships and encourage good judgment, thus building “maturity and character”. The ability to work as part of a team, to take orders and respond accordingly and to eventually to lead others, requires among other attributes: -good communication and listening skills, effective interpersonal skills, to overcome challenges, and to utilise initiative, drive and motivation not only in themselves but in others. Wilderness experiences can be an effective way of developing these qualities within individuals.

These excursions are an opportunity for self-learning, introducing children to a place where external distractions such as noise, pollution, peer pressure, family conflict, interpersonal relationship issues etc seem to pale into insignificance when confronted with the wonders of tranquillity, raw and uncontaminated nature along with an opportunity to experience internal and external ‘space’ within which to make a connection to their inner self. Children are given the opportunity to explore what is really meant by self-fulfilment and self-actualization, it is in essence the centre of our own ‘spiritual' being, the one place where we once existed without life’s ‘baggage’ and contamination.

Within such environments, individuals can learn to appreciate nature and its resources, understand the importance of conservation and sustainability, and to be aware of the finely balanced relationship between humanity and the sensitive eco-system that exists on our planet.

There is an added dimension in sport and recreational terms, both group and individual activities can become a route through which all individuals may be introduced to a wide range of physical and aesthetically rewarding sports, hobbies and leisure activities.

Furthermore, experiential experience elicits and encourages a responsible attitude towards excitement and risk, which may replace other forms of excitement seeking.

Wilderness environments allow young people unique opportunities to operate, test out, discover and take on board elements that they feel they need in order to view themselves as a unique human being who whilst may be a small cog in a large wheel, they are nonetheless essential and an important component part if that wheel is to continue to rotate.

Following is a comprehensive list of the field trips undertaken during this school year:
- Overnight trip to Eternity
- One-week trip to Kabunji near Kodaikanal
- Day trip to the Kolam in Matur on cycles
- Overnight trip to Gingee
- Overnight trip to Gingee to meet the Tiru TLC School
- Day trip to Gingee
- Ten-day trip to Panchgani with Johnny, Natasha and Fabrice
In addition to the regular schedules, we have twice undertaken a week of ‘service learning’, where each child has chosen a unit in the larger community of Auroville and has worked for a week in this unit.

“Community” has two connotations. One is what the learners get from the community. The other is what the learners give to the community. Every aspect of the community is an integral part of the learning program in TLC. The Auroville community provides a context for this learning, and community members serve as resources and partners in teaching. Helping in the community is seen as people-to-people shared learning. The “teachers” are community members of all ages, they are motivated people who have acquired knowledge and skills and are willing to share these with children. It also fosters professional mentorship by making contact with working professionals in the community. These interactions also build life changing experiences and relationships.

A component of a learning programme that focuses on the application of theory is an authentic, work-based context. It offers a way to extend children’s attention beyond the classroom to the world as it actually is, and to engage them in the process of devising solutions to the social and environmental problems they will confront as adults. This approach engages children academically by combining real world experience with classroom learning. It promotes citizenship and prepares children to understand and respect their community.

There is an added facet in reclaiming a sense of authentic personhood from the roles we play in society--roles such as expert, teacher, student, consumer, and employee. Children are given an opportunity to experience their own multifaceted dynamic nature in more real and less contrived environments.

Following is a list of units in which the children were placed.

The Auroville Bakery       Carpentry with Kengi
Kofpu                       Pour Tous
Cosmetics with Sharanam     Miniature
Upasana                     Bijou
The Botanical gardens       The Matrimandir gardens
Solitude                    Naturellement
Musical instrument workshop

Physical education plays an important role in our school. Each student is encouraged to participate in a minimum of 1 hour of sport a day (many do more than this) and individual attention is paid to each child, depending on their needs and interests.

“The basic programme,” described here by the Mother “will be to build a body, beautiful in form, harmonious in posture, supple and agile in its movements, powerful in its activities and resistant in its health and organic function.” Apart from the regular Dehashakti programme, in which the children participated, following is a list of additional sports activities offered to the students.

Gymnastics  4 hours/week - Builds strength, flexibility and coordination through Hatha yoga, ballet work out, and basic exercises of rhythmic gymnastics.
Swimming   3 hours/week - Builds strength, develops endurance, helps to tone all the muscles of the body, gives an overall fitness, improves coordination and harmony in
movements, develops the obedience of the body to the mind’s will with special focus on awakening the body awareness, independent of mental or vital control. The children practice crawl, breaststroke, backstroke and dolphin.

Circus 2 hours/week - Intensive practice of Hoola Hoop and acro-yoga (2 performances).

Football 1.5 hours/week - Enhances team spirit, endurance and coordination.

Modern Jazz 1.5 hours/week - Based on ballet work out, develops sense of rhythm, grace (1 performance of salsa jazz).

Odyssey 1.5 hours/week - Develops the independent movement of head, chest and pelvis.

New Dance 1.5 hours/week - Exploration of body movements and possibilities through games and stories.

Rock Climbing 1 hour/week - Demands a high level of concentration, responsibility, develop arm strength...

Kung Fu 1 hour/week - Emphasizes moral development as well as physical training, stressing values like respect, courage, tolerance, and reverence for life. The very nature of Kung Fu training is a long process of character building.

Aikido 3 hours/week - A mental as well as physical training, emphasizing the ability to relax the mind and body even under the stress of dangerous situations. This is necessary to enable the practitioner to perform the bold enter-and-blend movements that underlie aikido techniques, wherein an attack is met with confidence and directness.

Several of the children have also participated in individual one-to-one sessions with different facilitators. These have included Angelica and Stefania, for special needs, Tia and Helgard for art therapy and Paulien for ‘write dance’.

We decided not to move from Fertile this year during monsoon time. This proved both rewarding, as we have continued to benefit from Johnny’s invaluable input and guidance, as well as challenging, due to physical circumstances, as much of our material became very damp and we had to remove a lot from the space. It became increasingly difficult to maintain cleanliness and neatness during the rainy season. Temporarily we have been given the use of one of the classrooms in the new Last School campus, next to Future school. We have moved many of our materials and books to this space, and the children are currently using it for concentrated work slots a few times a week. We are very grateful to Last School for giving us the use of this space until the end of this academic year.

In the third term, we welcomed an additional student to TLC, making a total of 12 children. We now facilitate an age group spanning from 7 - 11 years. The children are often divided into 2 groups for the more academic side of their schedules, in subjects such as English and Mathematics. In other areas, we try to keep the group together, so that benefit can be gleaned from the mixed age group. We are expecting a further rise in our student body next year, and have accepted 4 additional students.

It has been a year full of learning for all involved in TLC, with close collaborative work between children, parents and facilitators. We are very grateful to all those who have been so generous with their time and given so much to the children. The project continues to be an experiment in collective learning, and we look forward to the challenges and changes that come our way for the next school year.
KAILASH RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMME

Kailash is a residence complex located in the center of Auroville and dedicated to the Auroville youth between 15 to 21 years of age. Since ten years Kailash is hosting for a period of few months to several years (a maximum of 6 years) an average of 12 Aurovilans and 2 guests of Auroville. There are 14 rooms (12 single and 2 double) for Aurovillian and non-Aurovillian youth who fit the criteria that they have to be in an educational process-meaning school, in an apprenticeship, or at work. Kailash offers a place to live for those who want to experience a collective life. People joining the residence understand that they are sharing a space, and even if they have their private space in their rooms, their life styles cannot disturb the collectivity and the others. As Kailash is a community, there are a few commitments to community life such as dinner cooking shifts, weekly community meetings, and regular community work.

So far around 100 young people have stayed in Kailash since the project came into being in 2001. A major concern for many is a missing structure in Auroville providing diverse range of apprenticeships, which allows an integral further development of personal skills and recognized standards. The Auroville youth choose to join Kailash for several reasons. The main one is that they feel the need for a greater autonomy; they want to experience more freedom and more responsibility.

The Kailash guests are usually students in Auroville often studying at Future School. They are in Auroville for (usually) a year and look for a place where they find community and friendship of people the same age as them.

After 10 years of existence, the experiment of Kailash has been taken one step further this coming year. The supervision of the residents on a daily basis will be transferred to a council of former Kailash residents. Young adults who spent several years in Kailash will involve themselves in a supportive and advisory role. They will share their learning and experiences as “older brothers”. We hope that this experiment will be valuable for both the group of residents and the matured graduated youth. We believe this will increase the educative value of the project. Of course adult supervision will not disappear from the project but, will remain as much as possible in a distant position.
SAIIER TRANSPORT SERVICE

Activity

The SAIIER Transport Service was started in 1985-86. It works mainly for the Auroville Schools and takes students from different places to the schools. It also takes the students on sports trips, field trips, beach trips, excursion trips, etc. The Transport Service offers trips to Pondicherry for Aurovilians who want to go to the Ashram, shopping, etc. It also aids the transport needs of Auroville programs such as cultural events. The food van delivers lunch to all the schools and makes special trips for the elderly.

Presently the service consists of eleven vehicles: four Buses, two Tempo Travelers, one Jeep, One Tata Ace Mini Carrier and one Unicorn Motor Bike. The Transport also has two new buildings: Office-cum-Caretaker's building and a workshop building. In total there are 6 sheds, one big store room and one workshop. In the future, the Transport Service plans to get more vehicles according to the increased requirement resulting from growth of schools and student population.

We also take care of Auroville Community Transport (ACT) which consists of two mazda buses and their three staff members. The mazda buses transport people from Pondicherry to Matrimandir daily. ACT also offers Pondicherry trips for Aurovilians every day. Every Friday a mazda bus carries people to Sadhana forest for environment education program.

Goal

In future when we get more vehicles we would like to expand our services to the community. The Transport Service has extended its compound by 50 meters. The additional space will be used for future planning.
CENTRE OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

OUTREACH SCHOOLS
AIKIYAM SCHOOL

Workshops for Teachers and Volunteers

This academic year all the Aikiyam teachers attended two Saturday workshops to exchange ideas for informal, formative evaluation, and to create guidelines for volunteers and teachers working with volunteers.

Now that Aikiyam is no longer following the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) curriculum, the single standardized exam given once a year, which determines a student’s achievement and grade level, is no longer required. These make or break, one-size-fits-all exams make no allowance for individual, economic, racial or cultural differences and may change the course of a child’s life on the basis of a few hours of writing once a year. In place of the national, summative exam we are now able to assess a student’s progress with a varied series of informal, formative assessments such as short but more frequent tests for spelling, etc.; portfolios with samples of student’s work; and/or teacher’s observations and continuous documentation. Performances, presentations and exhibitions in which students demonstrate what they have learned are also useful forms of formative assessment, enabling us to measure a student’s abilities and interests in many different ways to form a composite picture of the whole child.

For the second half of each workshop we addressed ways to make the volunteer experience more effective for both teachers and the volunteers themselves. Aikiyam is very fortunate to have a continuous stream of volunteers from abroad. Some come for a full year, some for a few months. They enrich the school with their fresh energy and new ideas and they expose the children to many different languages and cultures. In the workshop teachers and volunteers separately brainstormed lists for the rewards and problems of volunteering and from these lists together created three sets of guidelines for teachers when working with volunteers, for volunteers when in the school, and for the school to welcome and monitor the activities of the volunteers.
The workshop was very productive but not always serious. We played some games good for children, shared some songs and experiences, and left with some new strategies.

**Awareness Through the Body**

This program was introduced by Stephania who has been working as a support therapist with the Special Needs students. Children benefit from the activities in both their learning processes and personal development. The activities assist in the child's need for body movement and self-expression. It is imperative during these fundamental years for children to develop sensory integration and body awareness through listening for meaning, self control, attention, coordination and motor-skills exercises. These are pre-requisites and foundations for further learning development.

The activities are in a game-like form so the children easily enter into them. With a playing approach, using fantasy, curiosity and creativity, they discover experience and practice new skills which will help them with their further developmental stages. As Tamil is the students’ first language, there was some concern they would have difficulty to understand instructions, however it was discovered that they quickly pick up new words and get used to the English words because they are learning them through games. The children’s other teachers report how they are full of enthusiasm, and look forward to the next Awareness Through the Body session. They have also noticed the benefits in their own classrooms. The children are more able to listen for meaning; their attention span is increasing as well as their capacity to interact in a harmonious way with the group.

**Body Percussion**

A Turkish volunteer brought another kind of body awareness to the Aikiyam School children. The instrument used was freely available: the body. After three years of volunteering at Aikiyam School for a few months at a time, to experience each child's response was its own reward for both the volunteer and our teachers. The children become focused and are eager to learn. The basic movements of finger-clicking, hand-clapping, thigh-patting and foot-stomping elicit in them an excited and energized air. The classes are conducted with the fewest of words, with grace and calm and subtle attention to the self and others. When intervention was necessary, it was done with a precision to which children naturally respond. It could be said that no word or gesture was 'wasted'. The children learned to have fun with their bodies, and this is a precious gift.

**Cycling for Tree Planting**

For the second year, Aikiyam School students participated in a two-day cycle trip to Thevadenampetai organized by the Botanical Garden in Auroville. Out of the nineteen participants from four schools, three boys and one girl (and a teacher) were from Aikiyam. They travelled on their bicycles for 166 kilometers through numerous Tamil villages. The purpose of the rally was to create awareness among the villagers about “how tree planting will help to solve ecological problems”. The way they spread the message was to talk to villagers who could not read or write, and give pictorial pamphlets to villagers who could read. From their home experience, our students understand about the problems of villagers who live away from towns and cities. Our children appreciated the hospitality shown by the rural people along their route.
Friday outings to Sadhana Forest

Aikiyam students participated in the Children’s Land Project at Sadhana Forest every Friday for 2.5 hours. After only one month it was an obvious decision to keep the program running for a longer period of time. Our Special Needs children from standards 5, 6, 7 and 8 were especially eager participants. Indeed, all the children enjoyed it and learned through the wide-variety of engaging and interesting activities. One student from standard 8, who had always been difficult to manage, was suddenly in “full bloom” expressing himself and contributing to all the activities.

Activities in Children’s Land programme

1. Learning songs in different languages
2. Planning and brain-storming about Children’s Land
3. Making a circle garden
4. Playing orientation games
5. Having a mud bath in the end
6. Sharing our children’s work with a school in London through painting and drawing
7. Volcano method planting (a very good technique for all types of soil)
8. Caring for, loving and respecting nature

Some outcomes from the Children’s Land programme

1. Skills in organizing work
2. Sharing and helping each other
3. Learning life skills
4. Responsibility
5. Mingling with people of different nationalities

All the outings were a great success!

Ramayana Play

The Ramayana play was a new effort of the Aikiyam School teachers during the third term in which they explored collaborative teaching in a bilingual classroom and experienced its impact on thematic projects. The idea came from one of our teacher resource advisors, Heidi Watts, during one of our weekly INSET (In Service Education Training) meetings. Our 8th grade English teacher Sathya and Heidi proposed we do a project on Ramayana. Our Tamil and Social Science teachers suggested that they could tell the story in Tamil and ask the students to enact one of the scenes of the epic.

Students discussed and selected a scene that is suitable for a play and worked on the dialogue in their mother tongue Tamil. They translated their dialogue into English with the help of the teachers and practiced the play regularly. We also discovered among us one volunteer who is good at making masks with waste newspapers; this was included in the play process. The students enacted the play for the whole school at the end of the project. It was an interesting project which brought together dialogue-writing in Tamil, translating the dialogue into English, asking children to bring all characteristics and emotions of the characters in their speech and action and asking them to design their own masks with the help of other classmates.

Overall School Highlights

Creche through Lower Kindergarten: The creche children enjoyed a project on “colour” - learning their significance and importance. They visited the fish aquarium in Puducherry, and in the school gardens observed all the different-coloured flowers. Kindergarten children engaged in memory games, and matching alphabets and numbers. They often play with Lego, puzzles, and pattern blocks. Using dot picture books created by the teachers, the children had a lot of hand-coordination practice by following the dot-to-dot pictures and then colouring them in.

Standard 1 Reading: This year our volunteer chose the correct level of books from the
library for the children to read. Every morning for half an hour they read. Afterwards they shared about what they read which improved their spoken English. The volunteer was a great support to the children in their reading.

**Standard 2 Math:** All the 10 units were covered from the textbooks, especially addition and subtraction were focused on by giving and spending special time and attention. Multiplication tables also from 1 to 10 were taught to them. We used different kinds of methods to be able to understand the concepts and contents. All the units were assessed after giving each one. Assessing them continuously we were able to arrive at a conclusion that the students were capable of grasping the terms and they would be ready to face in their following years.

**Standards 2 & 3 Special Project:** This year the children learned all about dinosaurs. The children learned the names of some dinosaurs, the different shapes, eating habits, when and how they lived, and why they died out and do not live now. For the presentation we invited students, teachers, guests and volunteers. We presented a puppet show, a fashion show, some action songs, creative story-writing and songs, and 5 different kinds of books. The classrooms were decorated with charts, worksheets, a view of the world when the dinosaurs lived, a big thermocol dinosaur model and the children’s clay work. This project took more than 2 and a half months to finish.

**Standard 4 “From Market to Home”:** In March 2011 the standard 4 class visited Annapurna Farm. Before the children went to the farm they read Chapter 15 in their Environmental Science school book to learn about where food comes from. They also learnt that farmers work long hours to prepare vegetables for the market so we can buy them fresh every day. At the farm, every child had a questionnaire to complete so they could ask the workers about the farm, for example what they grew and how they grew it, and then fill in the answers. In the English class we had Deborah, a volunteer, who guided the children to write and illustrate their own story. It really helped the children develop their writing skills and be more creative.

**Standard 5 Language:** This year we gave more importance to reading and writing in Tamil and English. Each day the children chose a topic in both languages and wrote about it. This way they improved their writing skills. In English they did three (3) projects in the English language on the following topics: 1. That Wonderful Waste; 2. Tenses; 3. Book-making on a topic of their own choice.
Standard 6 Ecological awareness, English writing and Art, History: The children participated in the regular field trips to Sadhana Forest to engage in the Children’s Land Project (see above). They also benefited from the volunteer Deborah’s instruction on how to write and illustrate their own story. In February, the children were taken for one day to the Gingee Fort where the history of the area was brought to life for them.

Standard 7 students over their weekends spent time working in the school garden and helping at Sadhana Forest. The students were also involved in a project on the media and advertising industry, from which they learned a lot. They created an advertisement of their own.

Standard 8 students have successfully completed projects on Spirulina Cultivation, Ramayana, Students Council, and Constitution of our School. Students have also participated in the Science exhibition conducted by Auroville Schools Science Educational Teaching (ASSET) at Isaiambalam.

Library: Every school day up to 28 children came to the library to read and practice their pronunciation, and 12 come to browse the virtual library on the Internet. The paper-based and electronic media helped the students to collect data and increase their general knowledge.

Special Needs Class: Children’s Village Project / unit length: 2 months

Core Purpose: “If I was the Panchayat of the village, which games would I organize for the children?”
- Using this knowledge, students will design an itinerary in the school campus and organize their chosen activities where the entire school will be invited.
- In addition, students will write a story for a puppet show to introduce their Village Project and create puppets made of recycled materials.
- As a culminating activity, students will make a slide show of the project using software on the computer to present to the school at the end of the year.

Procedures (in English and Tamil) for the teachers
- Prepare a creative writing session with a magic ball to let children imagine how their village would look like.
- Based on these ideas, a puppet show dialogue can be written.
• Write a recipe for banana rolls and cost calculations for word problems.
• Cutting bamboo, binding them with coconut wire and covering them with newspapers or saris and other decorations.
• Making Magician's hats and using face make-up.
• Creating puppets with recycling materials.
• Writing different invitations for different age groups.
• Creating a list of Magician's vocabulary and tricks instructions.

Learning Outcomes: Skills and Processes

What children should be able to do with this knowledge (skills & processes they should develop)
• Imagine the name and the colours of their own puppet.
• Design and create their own puppet using recycled materials.
• Play a puppet show introducing their children's village.
• Design an itinerary with different activities for different age groups using existing resources and games.
• Follow the order of steps to make banana rolls.
• Cut and making bamboo stands. Decorate them.
• Rehearse and act out some magic tricks.
• Prepare their costumes and make-up for the activities day.
• Write their invitation letters in English and Tamil.
• Use different steps of the movie maker software to insert pictures, add on music, write captions and choose their sequence.

Aikiyam School Statistics

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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Nationalities represented</td>
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<td>Number of student graduated</td>
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<td>Number of full time staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
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<td>Aurovilians on maintenance</td>
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<td>8</td>
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ISAI AMBALAM SCHOOL

Isai Ambalam School Statistics

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<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>No. of students in the primary level</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>No. of students in the middle level</td>
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<td>Number which left for other reasons</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Number of full time teachers</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Mission

Creation of a learning environment in which the students and the teachers reach their highest mental and spiritual consciousness possible for one's level, so as to live, learn, teach and function from there.

Overall Goal

Effective and successful application of the educational principles of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother through appropriate educational methods for educating rural students and dissemination of the knowledge of the process of this successful application to the teaching community inside and outside Auroville.
Specific Objectives

1. Creation of a Model School imparting education up to the 8th or 10th standard level where mainly alternative educational methods, incorporating the educational principles of Sri Aurobindo and Mother, will be used for enabling its students to achieve their educational objectives and to realize their educational potential to the maximum possible extent.

2. Creation of a teacher’s training centre where teachers will be trained in the effective use of these alternative educational methods.

3. Creation and implementation of a short-term course for a practical learning of Sri Aurobindo’s evolutionary perspective of human life on earth and the process of evolution, and offering it to the students, the teachers and others, who wish to follow a conscious process for progressing in their path towards perfection.

Highlights

(a) Learning of the children
In this year separate learning programmes for each of the 104 students were written and implemented. Learning programmes for each of the students contained:

(1) Essential knowledge content appropriate to his/her age and level
(2) Other knowledge or skill content for which he/she had inclination, aptitude or special talent
(3) Essential psychological life skills
(4) Further skills or knowledge he/she wanted to acquire.

Ponni, Vaigai Groups (Preschool level, 3+ and 4+ years): 51 children (23 boys and 28 girls)

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. For the other developments weekly or fortnightly thematic projects were used.

This year 12 out of the 51 children discontinued their studies in December. Out of the remaining 39, for 20 children, Learning Programmes could be completed by 70 to 80% and for 19 children Learning Programme completion was 50 to 60%. For implementing the programme 36 projects designed around 36 themes were used. In the Cognitive Development part of the programme, for which Glenn Doman method was used, the maximum number of Tamil and English words learnt was 450 to 500 by 6 children, 250 to 300 words by 8 children and 100 to 150 words by 8 children. For the remaining 17 children, we had given Montessori activities. This number was much less than last year due to various factors. One reason is half of them were very irregular in attending the school; however these children had learnt the meaning of 300 English words on seeing the pictures. This year all the children showed considerable interest and involvement in acquiring Motor, Language and Creative development.
Narmadha Group (Primary level - 1st standard to 4th standard): 39 students (24 boys and 15 girls)

For implementing the learning programmes, teachers of this Group used ABL (Activities-Based Learning) Cards with its ladder system, Phonics Method for Reading, computer educational CDs, project work, and allocating a specific period of 30 minutes for practicing spoken English skills.

At the 1st and 2nd standards, 1st part of the learning programme pertaining to essential knowledge content was 70% completed. The second part of the programme was completed by 50%.

At the 3rd and 4th level the 1st part of the learning programme was completed by 70% for 3 students, 60% for 4 and 30% for one student. Three students completed their Activity Based Learning part of their learning programmes. The second part of the programme was completed by 70% for 9 students and 40% for the remaining ones. The third part was written only for 5 students and completed by 40%. The fourth part of the programme was completed 45% by 4 students. This year we started using computers for removing the learning difficulties of the students. For that we used educational CDs and Internet. Students managed to remove 30% of their learning difficulties in their academic subject content. Apart from this they all improved their general knowledge through computer CDs related to their topics.

Students in the primary level completed all the learning steps in their ABL ladder by the end of the second term itself. They started their next level ladder in the 3rd term.

This year 9 students in this level left the school for various reasons.

Gangai Group (Upper Primary & Middle levels, 5th and 6th standards) 14 students (7 boys & 7 girls)

Learning Programmes for Tamil and English was completed by 80% for 7 students, 60% by 2 students and 50% by 5 students. For Tamil they were 90% completed for 9 students, 60% for 5 students. For Maths they were 80% completed for all. For science and social science they were completed by 80% for 6 students and by 65% for 8 students.

The 2nd part of the learning programme was completed by 70% for 7 students in problem-solving, leadership skill, communication skill, organization skill and creative skill. 9 students were able to take responsibility for completing their learning plan.

The 3rd part of the learning programme was completed by 75% for six students (handling the computer, drawing and acting).

The 4th part of the programme was completed by 70% by 3 students, 60% by 3 students in Tamil typing, formatting and power point. This year one student from this group left the school.

(b) Involving the parents in the learning of their children
1. There were 4 Parent-Teacher meetings, with the parents of the preschool and primary students. One of the meetings was held in October in Poonthurai village from where a large number of students were coming. Seven parents of the preschool children came
forward to apply the Word Flash Cards programme at home also for their children.

(c) Researches and improvements in the educational methods used in the school
1. This year we organized the initial level English learning in a new sequence. One thousand essential English words were identified, and categorized under 28 themes. Meanings of the English words were learnt through pictures or actions. Computer-aided materials were also prepared for this purpose and used. The use of these materials enabled them to retain the meanings of words easily. Learning activities for all the 8 kinds of development at the preschool level were planned around each of these themes. Based on this planning learning of English by the preschool and primary children took place. Creative activities and free games formed part of this planning.

2. Auroville-Based Bilingual Project for improving spoken English recommenced this year. Kavitha and a Weltwaarts intern, Mathias, coordinated this. Thirty places in Auroville - units, communities, public places, Matrimandir etc. - were identified. For this year 10 places were selected. Students prepared a list of questions and went to each of these places. They interacted with the people and got the answers. After their return they rendered all these questions and answers in English with the help of the teachers. Whatever difficulties they faced in doing so were noted down. On the basis of these, bilingual texts, in English and Tamil, were prepared along with their audio version. Language games were prepared to learn the grammar item that they found difficult while preparing the English text. They listened to the audio and played the games. In this process they learnt to speak English - they learnt to ask questions and answer them, and narrate simple events and give a simple description of places. All the students involved showed a considerable improvement in their spoken English.

3. Online learning by the middle level students continued using Heymath! Com website for learning the 6th, 7th and 8th standard math topics.

4. This year we added Montessori activities for the preschool children. Many activities were given for clay work and wooden blocks.

5. After finishing their 8th standard public examination the Middle level Students learnt English and Tamil typing on the computer. They also learnt MS Word, Power Point and Photoshop application skills.
(d) Training received by the teachers
1. Stella, Nirmala and a Weltwaarts intern, Nasko went to Cuddalore for 2 days and received training for organizing the library and its activities.
2. All the teachers received a half day workshop on library activities at Isai Ambalam School which was conducted by Mrs. Sandhya and Mr. Krishna from Hippocampus Foundation of Bangalore.
3. Stella, Kavitha, Tamizhvani, and Shirley went to the Creative School in Bangalore to receive training in the use of the educational principles of Rudolf Steiner, and the training was given by Mrs. Seetha Anand, an expert in Waldorf methodology.

(e) Use of school’s research work by others
1. 12 teachers from Aristo English Convent School in Cuddalore received a 3-day training in the use of Phonics Method for Reading.
2. An in-service training in the use of Primary Level ABL Card System, Education by Design method, Thematic Project Work method and Bilingual Audio with Language Games method was given to 3 teachers of Pondicherry Multipurpose Social Service Society working in Karaikkal. This training was spread over the entire academic year. These teachers have succeeded in using these methods in their two learning centres in Karaikkal, which were established for the 100 students from the rehabilitated fisherman communities affected by tsunami. They have also succeeded in re-creating the joyous and eager learning atmosphere of Isai Ambalam School there.
3. Six teachers from Thullir Learning Centre in Dharmapuri district of Tamil Nadu received a one-week training in the use of alternative educational methods.

(f) Papers presented, and seminars or conferences attended
1. In September Subash went to Creative School in Bangalore and conducted a 2-day workshop on a spiritual approach to education, based on conscious, personal development. There were 18 participants in this workshop including all the teachers of Creative School.
2. In March, 2011 Subash submitted a paper in a seminar organized by Arul Vazhi Education Centre of Auroville on “What the Tamil Devotees of Sri Aurobindo and Mother Can Do Next in Building the City of Auroville”.

(g) Volunteers and visitors
Volunteers:
1. Shirley from U.S.A. for 3 months. She taught English to various groups of students and teachers in an interesting way. She also assisted teachers in conducting training workshops.
2. Martina and Mattias, two Weltwaarts interns from Germany worked with Primary and Middle Level Students till March.
3. Zenna and Nicholas from Australia worked with Primary Level Children.
4. Sandra, Anna and Jenni from England worked with the primary level students. They had also prepared TLMs for the students to write English alphabets without confusion. In addition they created tunes for 25 English poems on all the primary level topics in Environment written by an English expert, sang them in their own voice and prepared an audio CD of them. These songs are used by the children to learn the essential English vocabulary in Environment topics at the primary level.
5. From Valley School in Bangalore 14 students at the Plus One level and their two teachers came and stayed for half a day. They interacted with the middle and primary level students and also taught them.
6. Ms. Reshma of Creative School in Bangalore visited the school and interacted with all the teachers on how to assess the outcome of learning of all levels of students in the formative way. She had accepted the invitation from the teachers to conduct a workshop on it.

**(h) Special events in this year**
1. This year 6 primary level students and 3 middle level students got the ‘Meritorious Student Award’ from SAIER.
2. At the end of the second term a cultural performance was given by all the students. The highlight of the programme was the performance in English by the primary students of the story of “Goldilocks and the Three Bears”. The audience was enthralled by it.
3. On 27th April the annual performance took place and the students staged a play based on their learning about Auroville through the use of Bilingual Audio with Language Games method. In that performance they displaced their skills in spoken English learnt in that process.
4. Preschool students went on an excursion to Pondicherry Botanical Garden and Ousteri lake.
5. Mrs. Meenakshi and Mr.Anbazhagan of “Puthiya Thalaimurai Kalvi”, a Tamil Educational Weekly Magazine, visited the school. They observed the learning in the school and the use of different alternative educational methods. They had published a 3-page article on Isai Ambalam School accompanied by several photos.
6. SAIER’s ASSET organization conducted a Science Exhibition inside the school premises. Nearly ten schools have participated in the exhibition. Our students also joined in the Exhibition.

**Goals and achievements**

1. In fulfilling the goal of creating the model school
Designing Learning Programmes for all the students, implementing them and assessing their outcomes continued throughout the year. Outcomes determined could be achieved by 75%. Teachers are becoming more skilled in designing and implementing the Learning Programmes.

2. In fulfilling the goal of creating a teacher’s training centre
In this year the dissemination of the process of using alternative educational methods for teaching/learning was not much. Only 23 teachers from outside got trained.

3. In fulfilling the goal of creating and implementing a practical course on Sri Aurobindo’s evolutionary perspective of human life on earth and the process of evolution.

We could not still start implementing this objective.
ARULVAZHI EDUCATION CENTRE

ARULVAZHI means in Tamil “Way of Grace”. This Education Centre, situated near Promesse community of Auroville, has been catering to the educational and cultural needs of children aged 3 to 18 years of the neighboring village, in the light of the teachings of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. Over the years it has expanded its scope to include women’s education and also serve as a platform for interaction with the delegates from different parts of Tamil Nadu and Auroville. The aim is to provide value-based education in an atmosphere of simplicity, beauty, joy and harmony wherein the children can develop naturally.

Goals and objectives

In his “Renaissance in India”, Sri Aurobindo has stated:

“The method of India is to discover the spirit within and the higher hidden 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. The work of renaissance in India must be to make this spirit, the higher view of life, this sense of deeper potentiality once more a creative, perhaps a dominant power in the world.

But to that truth of itself it (India) is as yet only vaguely awake; the mass of Indian action is still at the moment proceeding under the impress of the European motive and method and because there is a spirit within us to which they are foreign, the action is poor in will, feeble in form and ineffective in results, for it does not come from the roots of our being.”

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 to a child, to learn always and everywhere...”......the finest present one can give the child would be teaching him to know himself and to master himself.”

Arulvazhi School Statistics

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</thead>
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<td>Number of students graduated</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Number which left for other reasons</td>
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</tr>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Number of full time staff (including maintenance)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Number of part-time staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Aurovillians on maintenance</td>
<td>4</td>
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</table>
The activities and the structure of the centre are based according to the above guidelines.

**Arulvazhi has six areas of activities**
1) Kindergarten group for 22 children aged 3 to 6 years
2) Primary stage children group for 45 children
3) Computer group for 12 children
4) Special yoga asana group for 45 children
5) Adolescent girls group (12 to 17 yrs) of 22 children training in asanas, cultural expression, health education, social awareness particularly in relation to gender problems
6) Puduulagam group for about 8 children.

**Group I: Kindergarten**
Importance is given to the development and use of the sense organs. Along with this is added the cultivation of discrimination and of aesthetic sense, the capacity to choose what is beautiful, simple, healthy and pure.

**Group II: 6-12 years**
For the second group apart from free hand exercises, sports and games, special emphasis is laid on asanas. The children are encouraged to practice and develop indigenous forms of art, folk songs, stage plays etc.

**Group III: Computer class students.** Classes in computer training are conducted between 5.00pm to 7.30pm, six days in a week.

**Group IV: Special yoga asana classes are conducted from 6.00AM to 7.30AM, in which about 45 children participate.** Both boys and girls are given equal importance in all respects.

**Group V: Adolescent girls groups (12 to 17 yrs) of 22 children are trained in asanas, cultural expression, health education, social awareness, particularly in relation to gender problems.**

**Group VI: 12-17 years (Puduulagam group)**
These children (8) attend games, and receive academic education from 5.00 PM to 8.00PM.

**Activities**

1. 4th April, 2010 is the centenary of the arrival of Sri Aurobindo to Puducherry. This day was celebrated in the Centre with readings in Tamil from his prison life experiences and their significance.

2. In May 2010 a summer camp was organized on the theme “Inner and outer growth from near too far. Various resource persons gave their valuable contribution. The students also visited Gingee, Mylam and Chennai (trekking, visiting planetarium, zoological park etc).

3. In June and July, the normal activities of the centre were carried out. Savitri classes in Tamil were started and continued every Saturday by Sudarshan and Bhuvanasundari throughout the year.

4. Sri Aurobindo’s birthday and India’s Independence Day was celebrated on 15th August, 2010 with the hoisting of the National Flag in the Centre and with a small
cultural event. The staff participated in the Flag hoisting function in Bharat Nivas also.

5. In September, the students participated in the Swami Ramalingam’s commemoration function. The Yoga asana group gave a demonstration in the Sadhana forest to the delight of the community and visitors. Teachers' Day was celebrated on 5th September, the students honoring the teachers. Ganesh Chaturthi was celebrated, and the psychological and inner significance of the day and also how it played an importance role in the freedom struggle was explained.

6. Navarathri festival was celebrated and its spiritual, psychological and practical significance was elaborated. A visit also was organized to Vadalur, where the Satyagnanasabha of Vallalar Swami Ramalingam is situated.

7. Deepavali was celebrated on 5th November. Students were told of its All-India celebration and also the celebration of the Gujarati New Year Day. Children’s Day was celebrated on 14th November. 17th November is the Mahasamadhi day of the Mother and the staff and students paid their homage with a visit to Her room and meditation. On 25th November, the staff did a marathon walk around the Tiruvannamalai Hill and visited Ramanashram, Seshadri Swamigal Asham, and Yogi Ramsuratkumar Ashram

8. On 1st December, the Yoga class students gave a yoga demonstration in the Rani Meyyammmai Hall, Mount Road, Chennai on the occasion of the Birth Anniversary celebrations of Yogi Ramsuratkumar.

9. Tamilnadu’s premier festival of Pongal and Tamil New Year Day was celebrated with enthusiasm. On 26th January, there was the National Flag hoisting and a cultural programme on Republic day. The yoga students went on tour to Gingee, Mylam, Tivanur and Tiruvannamalai.

10. February is a special month because of Mother’s birthday on 21st, Auroville’s birthday on 28th, and the teachers and students attended a number of programmes giving them a practical experience of human unity in this international city. The
students visited the Science Exhibition organized in Auroville, wherein their peers from outside schools participated and there was a good interaction with all.

11. On 12th March, there was a grand dance-drama of Savitri by the Arulvazhi students (with narration in Tamil) staged in the Sri Aurobindo Auditorium. Nearly 700 students of outreach schools and 100 others enjoyed the performance. A bi-lingual booklet in Tamil-English on Savitri was distributed on the occasion.

12. Two delegates from Arulvazhi were deputed to go to Agastya Foundation to get trained in the interactive educational tools of education. When they came back after training, they conducted classes for the students of Arulvazhi.

13. 29th March is the anniversary day of the first meeting of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. It is also the annual day of this Centre. The Savitri dance-drama was staged again in the Centre for the benefit of the delegates of the seminar organized by the Tamil Heritage Centre on this day, which was well appreciated.

14. Sports competitions were organized and prizes distributed to successful students. Others received consolation prizes. 15 children who showed special talents were given awards thanks to a donation through Saiier.

15. One girl student of Puduulagam won the first prize in drawing competition held by the C.P.R. Environmental Centre Chennai-National Environment Awareness Campaign. One non-Tamil adult girl student learnt to read and write simple Tamil in 11 days.

Seminars and workshops were conducted in cooperation with the Tamil Heritage Centre on themes from Sri Aurobindonian literature, wherein delegates from Auroville, Puducherry and other parts of Tamilnadu participated for mutual improvement of knowledge.

Outcome

Considering the proximity of the international community of Auroville, the village children get practical exposure to the actual human unity and unity in diversity. This educational centre works in close collaboration with existing government educational structure. Excursions to places of great cultural, educational and spiritual interest are arranged. The children are encouraged to practice and develop indigenous forms of art, folk songs, stage plays, etc. The self-improvement programmes for girls train them in various activities like child care, sports and crafts like tailoring etc. Every year the activities are expanding. The influence of this centre is felt in the family life of the students also by greater respect, harmony and adjustment. They are able to get an improvement in the quality of life. This is quite visible when their relatives and friends visit them from other rural areas.

Important goals

Due to the four lane national highway project, the major part of the building in which the Centre was functioning was demolished. The Centre is now developing the activities in a new place and trying to get adequate space as before for its multifarious activities.
ILaignarkal School Statistics

Our alternative school can accommodate a maximum of 50 students only.

<table>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Number which left for other reasons</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Number of full time staff</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Number of part time staff</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Aurovilians on maintenance</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Buildings or other new construction completed</td>
<td>Improved fence, plumbing and waste water treatment plants were built and a new generator room for water supply by HARVEST, water management unit of Auroville</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mission of our school

- To provide increased educational opportunities for each age group, mainly youth (15 and above) appropriate to their specific needs, and increase training facilities to gain a greater range of vocational skills, communication skills and improve income generating capacities.

- To be a bridge between the Auroville City and its neighbourhood through educational programmes, cultural activities and healing.

- To carry on research in Tamil, the language of this region as well as one of the four languages for Auroville schools as suggested by The Mother; develop teaching methods and materials particularly suited to first and second generation learners in collaboration with local, national, international, educational institutions such as CIIL (Central Institute of Indian Languages) Mysore, CICT (Central Institute of Classical Tamil) Chennai, Rural University-Gandhigram, Kasturba Gandhi Kanya Gurukulam-Vedharanyam, Pondicherry University, Rural Health Centre-Ravuthankuppam, Jwala Home-Murunkapakkam, Vivekananda Community College-Kizputhupttu, cultural centres, regular public schools and after work schools in the villages around Auroville.

- Disseminate the materials in order to increase the ability of teachers and managers of functional schools in life skills and youth leaders to reactivate the existing rural social institutions: thereby contribute to rising standards in the alternative schools. To put in a nutshell our school aims to realize the principle
‘Education for All’ with the **unending education** inspiration imbibe d from The Charter of Auroville.

- To include all educational initiatives and methods which build self-awareness, self-esteem and self confidence in order to draw out, develop, support community leadership and involvement capacities in working students, youth, teachers, parents and staff by providing channels to be constantly in touch with their higher aspirations, and co-evolve with the universal city, Auroville.

- To provide improved, harmonious and beautiful physical resources which will have a multiple effect on the above objectives. The mission remains the same -- to give exposure to young people on the Ideals of Human Unity as envisaged by The Mother in the Charter of Auroville.

- To create a friendly learning atmosphere for the Auroville workers and their family members and extend a helping hand whenever they need support.

**Has the mission changed in the last year? Why and how?**

The young people (workers of Auroville and their wards) are coming with middle school and high school educational background. They are looking for opportunities in further education through Open University programmes, working knowledge in languages, better communication skills, more technical training in tailoring, computer, gardening, cooking, institutional management, science of yoga and body awareness, aesthetic arts and crafts linked with Tamil Heritage and teachings of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother. Therefore, we are building up a team of experts, better teaching materials and techniques. 2010-2011 happened to be a successful year with the presence of two new trained staff to meet these special needs.

The mission remains the same but has been redefined clearly. The needs of the students are changing; accordingly we create facilities for them utilizing the available space, materials and human resources.

**Highlights**

**a) Publication**

- 12 issues of the monthly Tamil news letter *‘Auroville Grama Seydhi Madal’* - 8-10 pages published regularly. Well received by a wider circle of readers which is increasing every year. Most articles are on Tamil culture, history, the words of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother; bilingual language programmes, literary letters, and biographies on great personalities; creative writing, research articles. Children’s corner, book reviews and Auroville regional special positive news etc. are other features In addition, two special issues were released as supplements on special topics.

- We circulate our monthly newsletters to many friends of Auroville, libraries, literary associations and research centres serving in the fields of organic farming, herbal plantation, natural colours, social welfare, childcare, Tamil literature, culture & yoga. Nearly 25 publishers send their complementary copies to our library on exchange. We are distributing printed copies to a larger circle of friends
all over Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry and Auroville region in particular.

- We have researched and collected materials for publication on the following topics, ready for publication which we could not achieve in 2010-11 due to financial constraints.

1. Important places around Auroville.
2. Neythal - the coastal life in Auroville region.
3. Clay pottery of Tamil Nadu with particular reference to Auroville cultural region.
4. A study on the biographical sketch - Sri Aurobindo and his ancestors & family members.
5. Collection of songs and poems on various life themes for children.
7. Sri Aurobindo's selected English poems - translated in Tamil.

b) Viyazha vattam (Thursday circle - weekly gathering)
Every Thursday evening we read classical Tamil works. Listen to lectures by Tamil scholars. These materials are reviewed by staff and students.

This year the study circle specialized in the classical Buddhist Tamil epic Manimegalai of second century - Sangam period authored by Seeththalai Saththanar. Our efforts of learning the epic for 9 months gave us the strength to take up a project in Auroville with the backing of Tamil Heritage Centre for a full day workshop for students of Tamil literature, all age groups numbering 120. Nearly 20 scholars and academicians, our staff and students of Ilaignarkal and friends of Viyazha vattam put their best efforts in collaboration with Tamil Heritage Centre, Bharat Nivas and made the peoples’ workshop a success creating poetry, performing theatre, writing stories & singing songs in groups which were well presented.

c) Visits by Friends
- On 24th November 2010 NSS students of Vallalar Higher Secondary School, Pondy numbering 85 had a one day camp.
- On 20th January 2011 Gandhi Darshan - Chennai - School students from all over Tamil Nadu led by Senior Gandhians had a one day workshop on Human Unity.
On 18th February a visit by Sandra, Italian - She is a friend of Khadi spinners and weavers had a one day camp with us under the guidance of our staff. She gave a special class on fibers and Khadi production.

School students from all over Tamil Nadu led by Senior Gandhian, Sri Srinivasan, Editor, Bharatamani, Chennai

d) Our visits and tours
   - All the staff and students visited an exhibition on Rabindranath Tagore at Pondy Railway Junction organized by Indian Railways to mark the 150th year anniversary of the great National Poet.
   - Saaram women's group visited Vedapurieswarar temple to see the clay doll show and handicrafts Exhibition from North - East at Pondy during October festival time.

e) Summer special
   - Children’s summer classes: Nearly 15 children of Auroville workers attended classes during summer vacation. Arts, crafts, language sessions were led by trained staff.

f) Children and Parents-Educare
   - January 2011 Mrs Germana who is a representative from our Italian friends circle supporting girl children's health and educational care through Ilaignarkal, visited parents of 14 children along with their young wards; had a good time together. The children's progress and total development were shared. Another new girl child was included this year.
   - Twice a month, on child - parent “Educare” group numbering 25 meets at our school and discusses health, education and social awareness programmes related to child care with particular reference to girls, selected from Auroville villages.
g) Meaningful Festivals and celebrations

- **Teachers’ day celebration:** 5th September: Ilaignarkal students celebrated Teachers’ Day, by honouring their teachers. They recited their own poems and presented theatre performance, group songs and dance. Teacher - Student relationship was highlighted in a beautiful way. Guru - Disciple element was felt strongly as in the Indian tradition. The students conducted the whole evening function exhibiting their leadership abilities. The students made a promise to offer resources towards a one day tour with the staff. A big thanks giving!

- **Sharing day celebration:** 4th January the annual sharing day was celebrated in a colourful way by putting up the light of David star. Each one brought their best gift and received one gift back; there were 70 participants from the school’s side and 25 guests. Young children presented a cultural event. Nicky (Belgium) a well wisher of our school and Corrie Boss (Netherlands) were our chief guests. This was followed by a candle ceremony for peace and goodwill on Earth with the recitation of Om Namo Bhagawathe.

- 'Kolu' - Festival of evolution: Navaratari - Doll show. It was a meaningful festivity highlighting the evolution of life on the Earth. We arranged the colourful clay dolls in a larger class room. For about 10 days stream of visitors came. Our students put their best efforts in arts, decoration, music, dance, group singing and organizing discourse. Sacred eatables were prepared and distributed.

h) **Annual Children's Book Fair 2010**
A 10-day Children's Book Fair in collaboration with Tamil Heritage Centre, Bharat Nivas was held in our campus between 13.02.2011 to 22.02.11. Nearly 3000 children were benefitted. Besides sale of books at reduced prices, many interesting group activities and workshops were conducted by our trained staff.

i) **Best Students Award by SAIER 2010 - 11**
Five of our students were selected as best students of this year and they were awarded `1000/- each to utilize for their further education.

- a. Mrs. Uma (Kottakarai) Staff, Town hall
- b. Miss. Nagalakshmi (Kottakarai) teacher in Alankuppam
- c. Miss. Shobha (Kerala) Auroville worker
- d. Selvan. Ravichandren (Sangamam community) Apprentice
- e. Mrs. Sumathi (Sanjeevinagar) Auroville worker

j) **Best Youth Award 2010**
On 28th March 2011, Ilaignarkal J. Manou memorial award for the Best Youth was presented to Mr Gopinathan, M.A. Aravindapuram. He is a volunteer teacher in the Auroville outreach school. He is also an ardent student of archeology.

k) **Personality development courses conducted for interest groups**

- Leadership training for construction staff in and around Auroville guided by resource persons were conducted on 04.02.2011 to 06.02.2011 and
04.03.2011 to 06.03.2011 two camps. The participants stayed 3 days together in the campus which gave them the opportunity for sharing experiences.

- During the 3 day camps - viewing and reviewing programme was conducted, screening the following films:
  1. Gandhi
  2. Kamaraj
  3. Bhararthiyar
  4. V.O. Chidambharam (Kappalotiya Tamizhan)

The participants appreciated the values embodied in these great personalities.

I) Research 2010 - 11

As done in the previous year, Meenakshi and Rajagopalan, our staff are concentrating on collecting written materials, quotations, pictures, books and journals pertaining to the life of Sri Aurobindo. This is an ongoing project to honour Sri Aurobindo's arrival centenary. Rajagopalan is visiting schools, women's clubs and cultural centres in the neighboring villages to convey the message of Sri Aurobindo and the role played by the Tamil patriots, poets, friends in receiving him to the Tamil land. The research continues. We have prepared posters and charts related to this theme.

**Difficulties**

- Financial constraints as usual. Our publication sector needs additional grants for early printing.
- The school campus needs further attention and care in the following areas
  1. Landscaping
  2. Storage space.
  3. Washing and drying area with a covered shed.

**Our important goals: Present**

**Goal 1:** To organize vocational training programmes i.e., computer training, tailoring, herbal cooking, gardening and painting. Achieved moderately with utilization of available space and equipment.

**Comments:** We need more expertise in the relevant subjects - for which we need more funds for maintenance and salaries. The equipment has to be brought under AMC. Additional new computers with more gadgets are needed.

**Goal 2:** To make use of the tailoring provision created under vocational training programme and space for Saaram women’s group in designing and tailoring to meet their own needs.

**Comments:** A well trained tailor with educational qualification is yet to be found.

**Goal 3:** To develop a good resource library.

**Comments:** Appointment of a part time qualified librarian, construction of reading room facilities, and building appropriate book shelves for the protection of all the books already catalogued - yet to be realized.
TAMIL ULAGAM EVENING SCHOOLS

Introduction

Tamil Ulagam Evening Schools are a joint collaborative project with Secours Polulair France, Les Enfants de Pondy Patch and the Auroville outreach schools of SAIIER. This project is a completely village oriented educational project. Les Enfants De Pondy Patch, through SAIIER, has now raised the funds necessary to sponsor 119 children for their public school education.

There are eleven evening schools in the villages surrounding Auroville. Here we provide a joyful learning atmosphere for the children to develop self-confidence and personal growth in an environment of freedom. Our subjects include Eye-Hand Coordination, Language, Painting, Drawing, Clay, Health and Hygiene, Journalism, History, Cultural Enrichment, Natural/Ayurvedic Medicine, Organic Gardening, Music Classes, Theatre and Yoga Asanas.

There are about 765 children between the ages of 6 to 14 years who are served by the Tamil Ulagam Evening Schools. Every school has an average of 2 - 4 teachers, plus regular external and visiting teachers for Yoga, Music, Cultural Enrichment, History, Natural/Ayurvedic Medicine, Language, Sports, Theatre, General Knowledge, Organic Gardening, Hygiene, and much more. Auroville volunteers also contribute to the education.

Focus

Each night, Evening Schools start their classes using different ways of meditative and concentration techniques to bring the children’s focus to their evening program. The children can bring in their own stories to read, or without a script relate a story themselves to the whole group. They also read passages of Thirukkural and share its meaning with the class. Because they do this in front of the group, this helps them gain self-confidence and removes their fears and inhibitions, as wished by the Mother.

Organic Gardening

This year we are giving lessons and training to the children about the Organic Kitchen Garden. The children were invited to see the Botanical Garden, where they were shown all the different plants and their uses. A demonstration was given to show how to prepare the compost, and then how to plant and then replant seedlings. They were also shown an educational video about various native plants and trees, and shown the principles and importance of water harvest. After seeing this, we did a Practical Program at the Kottakarai Farm on Saturday and Sunday. The children were shown many things in practice: how to prepare the soil and build bunding, the different types of seedlings and how to replant them in the soil, watering, and the importance and methods of mulching. Together we planted many types of vegetables: tomato, ladies fingers, chilies, French beans, eggplant, custard beans, cucumbers, and pumpkins. They also learned how to weed the field that contained ragi, kambu and vargu. They were shown the rice field, and how to harvest peanuts. Because we gave them training, we all shared in the bounty when it came time for the harvest. The children were very, very happy and excited about
the vegetables they got. In this way, the Evening Schools show the children the real-life satisfaction and results of learning, knowledge, and work. The Mother said it was very important to find joy in work.

Natural/Ayurvedic Medicine

In the village, the long-held knowledge of Nature’s medicines is slowly disappearing as many people are turning to Homeopathy and Allopathy. While Homeopathy and Allopathy are valid, the knowledge of using medicinal plants is extremely important and must not be lost. Now we are reminding and re-teaching the children on how to use Ayurvedic medicine. These plants grow naturally next to houses, or in other areas easy to access free of charge. The children learn the various purposes for the plants, and how to properly prepare and use them.

For example, they are taught which plant is good for healing wounds, and which plant they could use to cure belly pains. They also learn which plants do not cause side effects. We have given one-month workshops on this topic, and each class receives this environmental education. Because of this, two of the schools’ children wrote an entire play on this topic! They themselves selected the student actors for each role, and with the help of the teachers made a theatre production. They invited the parents, family and villagers to their play, performing the story they created themselves from this knowledge.

In their play, the children promoted environmental awareness to show the profound effects that cutting trees has on the environment, which makes less rain fall. The audience was surprised and delighted with the play, the children’s knowledge, and their environmental message. This whole activity taught the children to think, to creatively develop their knowledge, to put the knowledge in action and to learn by teaching (acting), which is one of the most powerful ways to learn.

From this project, the children learned not only practical medicinal knowledge, they also appreciated the value of their culture’s nature-based wisdom. They learned that it is possible to share the excitement of knowledge in a creative and enjoyable way.
Spiritual and Cultural Significance

In Tamil Nadu we have many festivals happening in the various regions. For example, Ganesh Pooja, Krishna Jayanthi, Saraswathi Pooja, Deepavali, Pongal, Ramzan and Christmas. For these festival days there is usually a holiday, but the children often do not understand the spiritual, cultural, or historical significances relating to these special days. In the Evening Schools, we teach them the full meaning of these days. The children are very happy to know about this, because it gives them a deeper understanding of their own richly fascinating and important culture. This understanding also makes them feel more connected, and gives them a fuller spiritual framework. This is in keeping with The Mother’s vision of Human Unity.

We also teach the children about important leaders who have devoted their lives for the service of the country. For example, we taught about the lives and achievements of eminent Indian people such as Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. Ambedkar, E.V.R. Periyar, Annai Theresa, Kamaraj, and Indira Gandhi, just to name a few. We also teach about the lives and philosophies of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother. These are the people we encourage them to follow as an example. We are inspired by their morals and actions as we create our own lives. In this way, the Evening Schools teach that India produces many esteemed men and women, and the inspiring examples they show to be truly great in the world.

Silapathikaram Workshop

We brought the children to The Tamil Heritage Center in Auroville to partake in Silapathikaram workshops, conducted by Meenakshi Akka. More than 100 of our children participated in these workshops every day. It is the perfect occasion to learn from the Silapathikaram, a very important and old historical story in our country. The children were very happy to have participated in these workshops. They learned very much from it, and they would like to participate in more of these workshops in the future.

Manavar Moorasu

We are very happy to announce that the students are making a newspaper, called “MANAVAR MOORASU” (STUDENT NEWSPAPER). In all eleven schools, the students are collecting the information themselves: some of it they read from different books, and some children submit stories they have invented themselves. Poetry composition, question-and-answer, quiz programs, and stories. Sometimes it’s a factual story, some stories are creatively written, and some stories are favorites, like folklore. All of these writings, entirely in Tamil, are sent from all 11 schools to the editing teacher. After the material has been edited, he publishes it into the newspaper “MANAVAR MOORASU” and sends it out to all the schools.

The children are amazed to see their own work published, and to see their own names and schools alongside their articles. They are reading their newspapers out loud in the classroom itself, which they then take home to read and share. They are very happy and are also proud to show their parents the newspaper. Now the teachers in the village public schools are receiving our newspaper. This greatly encourages the children to collect new material and continue to write and publish. Because of this, the children are learning the value of information and creativity. They are also seeing tangible results of
their own work and developing skills in writing, information gathering and publishing which will be useful for their future.

**Yoga Asanas**

For three years now, yoga teachers are visiting all of the Evening Schools to teach the children Yoga Asanas. When Yoga is taught to young people, it benefits many areas of their entire lives, for the rest of their lives. The children are very happy for this training, and they benefit from the experience as it improves their posture and flexibility.

In many cases, when the teacher needs to facilitate yoga at another school, children who already know the Yoga Asanas come forward to teach the other children. This has clearly taught them to take responsibility to continue the education of their peers, while they develop self-confidence in implementing their learning to the class. The children are able to feel proud of them and capable, trusting in their own ability to teach. The Mother often spoke about the importance of yoga in physical, spiritual and mental development.

**The responsibility of cleanliness**

This year, some of the Evening School students are taking the initiative with teachers and friends in cleaning up their school areas. We help them out with providing snacks and some guidance when they require it. They are cutting away the thorny plants and creepers, and also cleaning up the garbage. Another thing they are doing is leveling the ground around and behind the schools. Wherever there is a pothole, they fill it with the soil so the rainwater doesn’t collect as a breeding ground for mosquitoes. This greatly reduces the mosquito issue. From all this, the children develop a real awareness of applying environmental education. Evening School is also one of the few schools teaching about plastic awareness, a growing problem in India.

The children are learning about plastic waste and its harmful effects. The children are being taught to reuse plastic, and if that’s not possible, how to dispose of it. We are teaching them, as a starting point, how to use and clean up their own waste. This teaches that change begins with the self. The children learn to empower themselves by taking land stewardship and pride in their immediate environment.

We also invite the Social Welfare people to teach the children and their parents about
health and hygiene, and how to implement it in the home. They teach not only how to keep the home clean and healthy, but why it is so important for the whole family. The Social Welfare people are very happy to come in and help, and excited that they can teach the benefits to whole families. The children and their parents are very, very happy with this opportunity.

**Outing Program for Afforestation**

For this program, we selected children from each Evening School based on their interest in nature and afforestation, and took them to a place in Auroville called Aranya Sanctuary. Aranya is an example of a recovering portion of the Tropical Dry Evergreen Forest, the rare native environment. The person managing the forest project showed the children around, explaining to the children what kinds of trees and medicinal plants grew there. He also explained how some trees petrify, or turn into stone. The children also learned about canyons, and how when it rains to control erosion. The children were very excited about their stay for two days. They all wrote about what they learned of nature, and the benefits of it, in the student newspaper.

**Teachers’ Seminars and Training**

Every first Sunday of month, we have a Teachers Seminar which is conducted by Prof. Veerasamy. He is well known in Children’s Education, and has even been awarded for his teaching excellence by the Government. He helps the teachers to think, grow their knowledge and develop their teaching methodology. The teachers then implement their training in the Evening Schools. This makes the teachers, children and parents happy, showing the good results of the added training our teachers receive.

**Requirement of Speaking English**

Starting from last year, the children in the higher studies requested more advanced English lessons during the summer holidays, so they could improve their English knowledge. This is because the Medium School students, who were up to this point only taught in Tamil, could not understand the English lessons in the Higher Studies, which are in English only.

In 2010, from April to June, we had English lessons provided to the children who were in need of it. Auroville volunteers and other teachers, who were English specialists, were brought in for this purpose. We are very happy to see the progress of the children’s standard. We got great support from the parents, and also with the government. The public school teachers also appreciate our special English Class program. We are also in the process of proposing to build a computer lab on the lands of Kottakari Farm, so the children can continue their English computer lessons. These will be available each evening, plus Saturday and Sunday for those who have to travel very far.

**Community Service**

From time to time, when there is a need, parents sometimes ask if their children can receive some assistance with their homework and studying. Because we are there to provide a full learning atmosphere and improve the education of all children, we do what we can to provide help when there is a need.
LIFE EDUCATION CENTRE

Goal/Objective/Outcome

The aim of the Life Education Centre (LEC) is to provide access to value-oriented education and vocational training for disadvantaged village teenage girls, and to improve their socio-economic conditions through capacity building and personal empowerment.

The Life Education Centre’s objectives are to:
- provide increased training opportunities for 15+, appropriate to their specific needs, in order to gain a greater range of vocational skills and improve their income-generating capacity;
- through core-quality empowerment sessions, discussions and counselling, build capacities of students to be able to decide what they would like to do in their future.

Program/Activity details

This specific project consists of a 2-year training programme for teenage girls, who have dropped out of school, giving them training in functional skills like English, vocational skills like tailoring, crochet, typing, and social awareness and human interactive skills using group discussions, personal counselling, diary writing, study tours, and culture-related open sessions. From last year we have started extended our activities to include also non-full time students as part of regular students - these include children with special needs as part-time students.

Outputs

Physical outputs like building construction (toilet) was not done this year - because funds which were expected for this, was made available in the last week of this financial year (March 2011); this toilet will hence be executed in the first quarter of this financial year; the heavy winter monsoons of 2010 made the toilets usage extremely unpleasant during the months of November-February (until the soil got dry once again).

While LEC decided not to buy 2 more sewing machines, as the number of students were getting lesser, it was happy to get a computer at the end of this financial year (March 2011) which has made emailing facilities much better; besides being able to work at a much faster speed and capacity especially downloading educative power point presentations and watching DVD’s related to environmental hazards and solid waste management in the last one month.

Outcome

Vocational skills. Regular ongoing classes in tailoring (250 for regular students and 275 for skill management students), in crochet and embroidery (100). The special classes in tailoring are taught by the fashion designer (40) every Friday. From March 2010 onwards, 2 students had opted to learn typing and an instructor had been hired for them for 2 days a week for 3 months (165 instructor-led classes and 150 self-practice classes). Both
86

students passed their Lower level exams and they are already preparing to go for Higher level this year.

Functional skills. One English class per week was given by the main English teacher (40) and 2 pairs visiting intern-students gave 18 classes each.

Social skills and awareness. 30 group discussions were organized by our coordinator focusing on meditation, role play and visualization techniques; extra sessions along with the overseas students/teachers/interns were held on gender issues, anger, suicide, environmental degradation, arranged marriage, and problems associated with the dowry system.

Core-quality empowerment (CQE) and Education Project

The general concept of empowerment we are using is a practical one: to help the students empowering themselves to use their biggest talent to create possibilities in life. This is by becoming intensely aware of their own Core-Quality, finding proof for it in their past and present and to enable them to solve (some of) their actual problems.

In the last 3 years, we saw the emergence of a new education project: this allows those girls who have identified what they need to do in their immediate future to realize the next step of their goals through either completing incomplete education, going for further additional education, or purchasing their own sewing machines. We encourage them by providing them time at LEC for self-study, taking assistance of teachers and tutoring if needed, convincing their parents and also counseling the girls.

- 6 girls who appeared through TNOU (5 girls for B.Com, 1 girl for BA History.) 3 girls passed all their subjects while 3 failed in 1 subject each; All the 6 will appear for their second year exams in Jun/July 2011.
- Of the 3 students who had joined the Tamil Nadu Open University system of distance education for studying their Bachelor’s degree - all of them failed, in one subject respectively
- One more student has enrolled for her first year of TNOU
- One student this year has bought her own sewing machine
OUTREACH SCHOOLS

Core-quality empowerment (CQE) and Mothers and Daughters Project

The Mother-Daughter program is an innovative new project designed to expand support mechanisms for LEC’s young women.

The aim of the Life Education Centre’s new Mother-Daughter program is to bring together generations of women whose communication or mutual support is usually limited in an attempt to break the cycle of gender discrimination.

- First, the students of L.E.C. participated in group discussions about their relationships with their mothers. After this discussion, the mothers and daughters met to talk about education, home life, and a bit into such deeper topics as gender discrimination and abuse. These discussions facilitated better communication and the development of closer relationships between the mothers and daughters. The discussions gave the daughters insight into how they would like to raise their own children. Like this, L.E.C. students could learn from their own mothers, coming closer to achieving the goal of gender equality. We brought in female professionals to speak to the women about opportunities and rights. Seeing a female professional and listening to her story proved to be very useful and a kind of proof that with work, one's own dreams can come true. This program did create awareness about the social change necessary in the community we serve. Trying to provide for these girls a support system at home they learned how communication and understanding positively can affect relationships. These daughters became more conscious of this realization, especially when they will become mothers and in turn, they can provide their own daughters this support system of communication and understanding. This is a cycle that can and will be repeated and that is how social change is made. While, Life Education Centre is not able to show immediate results, we do know that we did plant the seeds for social change.

- We took the mothers (and their daughters) on an educational exposure program for one day trip to Kanchipuram where we visited a Kattaikuttu Gurukulam (Performing Art School) - this art is a traditional street theatre form that is taught in a residential school for young disadvantaged but aspiring rural children - the mothers were fascinated at the concept of learning this ‘dying’ art form, with which they were so familiar in their childhood, but which they have not seen for years (except on rare festival occasions). They were explained how the school is generating its funds through donations and with performances by the senior students who have made themselves into a young professional group. When they saw a small sample of the different ages of children performing small acts, they were spell bound and immediately expressed their gratitude and happiness to see this. Accepting the invitation to go together with the students and the staff to visit temples in this famous temple town of Kanchipuram, they were impressed and touched to being able to travel with us, treated with respect and concern. All of these mothers had never been anywhere besides local places.

- Counseling sessions. 280 individual counseling sessions were held. While these sessions were individual interactions between the student and the
coordinator/counselor, sometimes it involved the presence of the other staff. From last year onwards, more and more old students are coming to the Centre, when they are in acute need of counseling; often it is regarding alcoholic husbands and marital problems. Besides the above counseling session, counseling sessions were given to old students and mothers of our students.
  o The funds necessary to support the Mother-Daughter-program came from Stichting De Zaaier.

**Laboratory for Learning**
- Aurovilian JV - conducted a 7 day Pranayama Workshop for the students and staff of LEC - his method of instruction with examples and explanation about the interconnectedness of the physical, emotional, spiritual aspects of the being, was not only well understood, but also the students have started practising Pranayama every day in a group.

**Visits to students’ families**

Not many house visits this year because all the mothers came for Mother Daughter project - only 2 visits to Kottakarai and Morattandi were done for 2 festive occasions where all the old students of that village met each other.

**Special classes, events and workshops**
- 1 student (Januchandra) from Deepam (Centre for the Physically Challenged) attended LEC from March 2010 - Nov 2010; due to family and village issues, she and her mother have had to shift their residence away from Bommayapalayam - due to this Janchandra has not been able to attend.
- 2 weeks film workshop conducted by Sasi Somu was held in LEC in Feb 2011 - this was attended by 6 students; 1 staff actually participated; another staff was facilitating & documenting only. The best among these movies shall be selected to be screened in this year’s AV film festival to be held sometime in August. The girls selected the theme, story and wrote script and screen play for their one-shot movies and a collective movie. A different kind of experience for the girls who could otherwise never hope to hold an actual movie-camera let alone work on iMac to edit and put the credits to their movies. It gave them a new appreciation of the craft of film-making.
- Visiting Art therapist Krupa conducted 7 sessions - Through visualization they went to different safe places and paint these places on a paper and explained about their dreams. Each one made a doll with cloth and put a positive message inside it. They learned how to make beads with waste paper and with these beads to make necklaces, bracelets and ear rings.
- Aurovilian Lisa did a one-day introduction workshop to Hypnosis - where she explained what is hypnosis and how it can used as a therapy with patients and some simple demonstrations
- AVAG staff conducted a one-day session on women’s hygiene and the use of cloth based sanitary napkins
- Werner Gabriel brought the visiting exhibition of Piece of Art to Auroville in December 2010. LEC made a big Laadli* doll and this was the centrepiece of this exhibition in Bharat Nivas, it was a wonderful occasion for all the students
to attend the opening event of this exhibition and see the pictures of the various forms of art that have been done so creatively by people from different parts of the world and also to watch the video documentary, about who, how and where these various forms had originated. Health check of all the students in June-July 2010 at the Auroville Health Centre - checking their blood type, Hb, stool and urine tests and advise from the physician for better nutrition and parasite control.

* This small symbol is called **LEC laadli** - the word Laadli in Hindi means cherished daughter; when the girls of LEC were asked to make or create an art form that most represents themselves, they all-together did this little stuffed toy from waste fabric and created a beautiful young woman in prayer form asking that life gives her what she truly deserves. You can see that this is part of large moving project connecting people from all over the world! [www.ksw-ev.de](http://www.ksw-ev.de) (piece of art - number 53).

Now laadli travelled to India, Auroville along with a geisha from Japan and a falmenco dancer from Germany - this is a moving exhibition, that came to Auroville in Dec 2011. The organiser Werner Garbriel had invited all our girls and staff who were behind the idea of Laadli to attend this opening event. Our girls were able to produce a super-size laadli for this show (shown at the end of this document)!

**Daily nutritious snacks.** Provision of daily nutritious snacks continued throughout the period. We have supplemented their nutrition with eggs and curd starting once a week each.

Enrolments, graduations and dropouts
- Existing students in end March 2010: 12 full time + 1 part time student from Deepam in LEC at the end of March 2010.
- New enrolments: 6 students (3 months or more duration)
- Drop-out of students: 9 students (1 got married, 8 of them are working due to family pressure).
- Existing students in end March 2011: 10 full time

1. **To what extent did these activities contribute to the realization of the objectives? What has been the impact of the activities undertaken?**
   - From our current batch of students, 2 of them who are our skill management students will soon join a good production unit that will give them remuneration of Rs 3000 per month.
   - Another regular student will stop to join a job to support her family, but after she completes her typing and second year TNOU exams in July/August
   - LEC has already got a drop-out student from Udavi school - this girl who came to us a few months ago with very difficult personality disorder has adapted herself well in LEC, and will soon get 2 more such students from Aikyam school
   - Skill management and Livelihood project which was started last year as a trial to see how a few senior students can be trained well
2. Difficulties

- The school LEC has been functioning since 20 years - it has done much work, at a small level (not mass scale) and it has helped deeply about 300 students. However in the last 3-4 years, the supplementary education that we offer for school drop outs is not really much needed in this area - villagers want to take up regular full-time education and hence girls today are studying further in the normal education (and take loans to study higher) and hence we have fewer and fewer drop-outs - which by itself, is great - so the students that we have more or less represent the last generations of real drop-outs.
- This is the reason why we have many new students who come during the first few months of the academic year (April, just after they have completed their school exams) and they come to LEC for 3-4 months either till their results are declared and / or they have obtained admission into a college. This interrupts our yearly plan, although the girls who come even for these short periods acquire the basics of a few skills.
- Hence fund raising from external donors has not been our major priority in the last 2 years, besides that for the routine running expenses of LEC.
- One of the suggested strategies is that LEC start offering resource centre facilities, which do not become dependent exclusively on the number of regular students, but those educative processes that can be availed by any local person.

Future plans

The funding made available by the GOI non plan grant for the toilet construction for LEC will now get utilised for this construction (however, on a smaller scale) in the next 2-3 months.

LEC would like offer its services as a resource centre along the following lines:

- We are thinking of gradually converting LEC from a vocational training centre into a training centre for training bedside care givers. We will use the coming year (2011-12) to actually see how this plan will materialise - by sourcing different resource persons within Auroville, training methodologies, soliciting students, fund raising. During this year, the vocational skill aspects will still continue, but towards starting the new project, we have started a small health training module with our existing students of LEC in April- May 2011.
- Offer local youth who are studying in schools, colleges, higher education guidance facilities - to allow them to know what are all the possibilities available in different types and streams of education after the basic 10th grade; if this information is made available at the LEC, any youth or parent can avail this information - this means we have to source the different possibilities in and around our area (Pondy, Tindivanam, Chennai).
- Offer spoken English classes, as tutorial sessions every Saturday; after every 4 such sessions, a personality development workshop can be offered on the 5th session; this facility will be open to all people desirous of
speaking English with confidence and clarity, especially when they attend interviews, join workplaces where knowledge of English becomes a factor in career building.

- Offer LEC facilities for more health related well-being workshops for the local people (e.g., somatics, pranayama).

- The possibility of LEC to remain as a counseling centre for women will always be available.
NEW CREATION SPORTS

Objective/Outcome
To train the children of New Creation School in sports activities

Outputs
1 hour and 15 minutes training daily

Outcomes
The children are much fitter, their physical activities have improved...

Process/Timelines
During the whole school year of 2010-2011.
CENTRE OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

PROJECTS
THE LOOK OF INTEGRAL EDUCATION

Aim

The aim of this project is to produce video documentation on Integral Education. Auroville teachers and educators inside and outside Auroville have a keen interest in the research carried on in the schools of Auroville. Integral education is a living, evolving form that is being practiced in many different ways throughout the Auroville schools. It is not, as yet, being widely shared in effective ways.

In 2009 Margo MacLeod filmed activities in the Kindergarten, Deepanam, Transition, Udavi, Aikiyam and the sports ground as potential examples of integral education in Auroville. The full project request is for funding to edit the videos, in close collaboration with teachers, so that it can be used for different purposes: as examples of integral education on the Education Portal; as a way of interpreting exceptional educational practices and sharing them; and as material for training teachers and volunteers.

There is growing interest in alternative forms of education from all corners of the globe. Integral education is not yet well known and practiced. Increasing the amount of good visual information on the web via the Unending Education Portal is one very effective way of beginning to rectify this deficiency.

Team

Christoph Pohl is a professional video editor. He studied Media Technology Engineering at the HAW Hamburg, and worked in the field of film- and video-postproduction for more than 10 years. Christoph has been living in Auroville since 2008 and has since then worked on a series of video and multimedia productions for the community.

Heidi Watts has been working with the schools and teachers of Auroville for 19 years as advisor and teacher trainer. She is Professor Emeritus at Antioch University New England, USA.

Margo MacLeod has been working in the field of progressive and integral education for 30 years. During that time she has come to Auroville regularly, most recently to film integral education in practice. She is particularly interested in helping educators outside Auroville come to an understanding of integral education. She holds a PhD from Yale.

Process

April 2011
Preparing the entire video footage. 24 hours of video material were watched, selected and edited down to 21 raw material sequences with a total length of around 6 hours. Each sequence contains footage of a different project as part of Integral Education in Auroville.

6 of these projects have been further prepared. The raw material sequences have been rendered as reference videos with the Time code visible in frame, so everybody involved in the project can refer to any part of the footage with exact precision. Then these
reference raw material videos were encoded to the MPEG-2 code and customized raw material DVDs were created and sent out to the project holders and the contact persons of each project. These are the 5 DVDs created so far:

1.

[Image of a raw material & rough cut DVD]

Project: The Look of Integral Education
Location part: Kindergarten - Choices
Raw material + 2 edits
Total duration: 1h03'18"

2.

[Image of a raw material DVD]

Project: The Look of Integral Education
Location part: Kindergarten part 1 - 13
Total duration: 43'52"

3.

[Image of a raw material DVD]

Project: The Look of Integral Education
Location part: Play of Painting parts 1-3
Total duration: 27'55"

4.

[Image of a raw material DVD]

Project: The Look of Integral Education
Location part: Transition - Sandbox parts 1-6
Total duration: 22'31"
PROJECTS

5.

Current status

The above listed 5 raw material DVDs are being sent out. Find below a list of all documented projects and the lengths of raw material accordingly.

1. Kindergarten  
   total duration: 48'52"
2. Play of Painting  
   total duration: 27'55"
3. Transition - Making a Globe  
   total duration: 12'15"
4. Transition - Portfolios  
   total duration: 20'11"
5. Transition - Sandbox  
   total duration: 22'31"
6. Awareness Through the Body  
   total duration: 33'07"
7. Deepanam  
   total duration: 22'57"
8. Heidi Watts - Teaching Teachers  
   total duration: 12'42"
9. Lycee  
   total duration: 9'16"
10. Make a Balance NC  
    total duration: 7'30"
11. NC Garden  
    total duration: 1'19"
12. NC science fair  
    total duration: 10'08"
13. New Creation  
    total duration: 27'40"
14. Robotic FS  
    total duration: 10'01"
15. Science fair prep NESS  
    total duration: 8'10"
16. Sports  
    total duration: 3'22"
17. Teaching Teachers  
    total duration: 5'06"
18. Udavi 2/21  
    total duration: 2'26"
19. Udavi Choice  
    total duration: 8'58"
20. Udavi Selvi's class  
    total duration: 15'21"
21. Walls  
    total duration: 7'10"

Next steps

Assuming further funding of the project, we will work next on creating complete video clips (including voice over, final stereo sound mix, title, credits, and other graphic animations etc.) of the different projects. We intend to do 3 different lengths of each, e.g. 12 min, 6 min and 3 min. Furthermore we will create 3 different quality versions, full HD for maximum quality, MPEG-2 for DVD and MPEG-4 h.264 for web purposes.
SUMMER CAMP - MAY 2010

Objective/Outcome: “Inner and outer growth from near to far”

To connect the inner and the outer and explore how young students fare by a combination of inner means and scientific approach. The objective of the summer camp is to try on a small scale to connect the inner and the outer and to explore how young students fare through inner means which is psychological and the outer means which is rational and scientific, a mental approach. As it is the inmost which is trying to explore and flower in the outer mind, life and body, there is no actual dichotomy between the inner and the outer. The one helps the other.

Two important ingredients are necessary for this experience to grow and fruitful, even to know and feel that this experience is possible. Mother said that “no one is too young to be given freedom. The only important thing is to create the right atmosphere.”

Some of the guidelines given in the workshop on 'Nurturing the psychic being’ (Saiier publication) were of great utility in this camp. For example:

(1) to have events or programmes that are out of the regular programmes and evoke a sense of wonder in the children.
(2) visits to places like Matrimandir and Samadhi evoke in children a sense of awe, something special or sacred, which also nurtures the inner being.
(3) the psychic can be seized in its projection on the instrumental nature as a soul of knowledge, of courage, of harmony and of perfection. The elements cited above cover these dimensions where an awakening can happen”.

The children attending this camp go to outside schools and they do not have the opportunity to freely express themselves. While a moral or a religious teaching has a temporary effect, the psychic experience, the aspiration which rises up in flame to know and experience in freedom the natural phenomena leaves a life-long healthy imprint.

During the camp, the children learned about patriots, sang national integration songs, drew pictures, went to have a look at the working of a railway station, did gardening in the camp site, enacted scenes from Savitri, and practiced new games.

They have simple exercise to know the different parts of their being, mental, vital and physical. The resource persons and the campers felt as one family with the same objective, helping one another. Their faculty of scientific curiosity was stimulated by the visit to Birla Planetarium, zoological park, in Chennai and shore temple in Mahabalipuram. From what they have seen in the sky, flora and fauna in their environment, near to them they journeyed far into the galaxy in the planetarium, lion safari in the zoo and the cultural and artistic heritage from their village temple to the shore temple.

About 50 students benefited from this camp held between 5th May, 2010 and 30th May, 2010 for 22 days. The outcome was an exhilarating experience.
SCHOLARSHIP & EDUCATIONAL FUND

Aims and objectives

The Scholarship & Educational Fund (SEF) serves the following purposes:
- To fund-raise and operate as a fund for education of Auroville youth inside and outside of Auroville.
- To help in creating educational and training opportunities inside and out-side 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.

Executives & Support Group & Administration

The team of SEF consists of Auralice Mira Graft (Aurodam), Kumar N. (Djaima), and Lucas Dengel (Grace) as executives, and of the following Aurovilians as support group members: Bobby Patel (Prarthna), Danaselvy Palani (Prarthna), Jean-Michel Argouin (Grace), Martina Ljunquist (Gaia), Palani K. (Prarthna), Satyen Tait (Centrefield), and Suryagandhi (Djaima).

Administration services are extended by the team members, and minor material expenses are covered by the commercial units of the executives and support group members.

Activities and mode of operating

Students applying for financial support from SEF, have to fill an application form giving information on their educational background and their study plans, and of the financial background of their parents.

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 are discussed in the SEF meetings conducted about once a month; in the financial year 2010/11, 13 meetings were conducted. Decisions on financial support require the agreement of at least two out of three executives and the absence of a disagreement to a decision. All decisions in the previous year were made unanimously.

Further, the application form for Auroville students and a form for commercial units of Auroville expressing agreement to the conditions for student-specific contributions were developed and submitted.

In October 2010, in collaboration with Future School a three-day interaction with an experienced career counselor was organized; 25 students used her services.
Funding

Aurovilians and Auroville unit executives are being contacted individually with requests for funding support. Till date this helps SEF to a very small extent.

In 2010/11 SEF was supported by Stichting De Zaaier (SDZ) with Rs303,384; by Foundation of World Education (FWE) with Rs106,778; and by Auroville's Budget Coordination Council (BCC) / City Budget with Rs 5 lakhs.

In communication with AVI USA, AVI Netherlands and AVI Germany, fund-raising in the respective countries was explored and is being followed up.

Applications assessed / students supported

In the financial year 2010/11 nine Auroville students were supported for their studies in colleges and universities in India. (These were Auromeera N., Bala T., Gayathri K., Karthikeyan A., Kowsalya S., Meena M., Muthukumari M., Ezhumalai B. alias Raj, and Sundar R.)

Another nine students of Future School were supported for being able to sit for British exams. (These were Abirami A., Rosy S., Satya Damian, Savitri Kanehl, Shembagam N., Subhasri S., Suhasini Damian, Vanitha N., and Wanja Grigorashenko.)

Four students received financial support from Auroville commercial units or from individuals via student-specific contributions. (These were Mira Kanehl for studies abroad, Merlin Fellensiek and Vasanthi Argouin for exams, and Gurudev I. for studies in India.)

Accounts FY 2010/11

Opening balance with SAIER as per 01.04.2010 Rs. 41,028
Received Rs. 1,045,591
(Including donations from SDZ, from FWE, from BCC/Auroville, and from within and outside of Auroville)
Total: Rs. 1,086,619
Spent: Rs. 965,910
Closing balance: Rs. 120,709
AIKIYAM SCHOOL MICRO PROJECTS

Goal/Objective/Outcome

Aikiyam School, Auroville conducts class room Micro Projects every year in order to develop an understanding of the underlying dynamics of integral education. The processes intrinsic to the Project Approach are realized when the teacher begins to encourage children to (1) develop their own questions about the topic under investigation, (2) make predictions about possible answers, (3) think of ways to test their assumptions, (4) negotiate with the teacher various ways they might represent their findings, and (5) take time to solve their own problems through trial and error.

Program/Activity details

Each class has followed its own methodology according to the topic and method of approach chosen. The younger classes (Crèche, L.K.G., U.K.G., 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades) in their report mentioned the following common activities: Taking children on field trips, making collage, drawings, doing colouring, painting and making models. Writing songs and singing, writing plays and enacting to other children and parents.

L.K.G. reported:

“Every day children did activities with colours. They painted the flower with red colour crayon, cut yellow coloured papers and pasted them as fruits, the sun, lemon; used dried leaves and fingers to make press painting. We included shape worksheets in the activities.”

Special Need Project

(i) Awareness Through the Body:
This program was introduced by Stephania who has been working as a support therapist with the Special Needs students. Children benefit from the activities in both their learning processes and personal development. The activities assist in the child's need for body movement and self-expression. It is imperative during these foundational ages for children to develop sensory integration and body awareness through listening for meaning, self control, attention, coordination and motor-skills exercises. These are prerequisites and foundations for further learning development. The activities are in a game-like form so the children easily enter into them. With a play approach, using fantasy, curiosity and creativity, they discover experience and practice new skills which will help them with their further developmental stages. As Tamil is the student's first language, there was some concern they would have difficulty to understand instructions, however it was discovered that they quickly pick up new words and get used to the English words because they are learning them through games.

The children’s other teachers report how they are full of enthusiasm, and look forward to the next Awareness Through the Body session. They have also noticed the benefits in their own classrooms. The children are more able to listen for meaning; their attention span is increasing as well as their capacity to interact in a harmonious way with the group.

(ii) Aikiyam students participate in the Children’s Land Project at Sadhana Forest every Friday for 2.5 hours. After going for only one month, it was natural to consider and
decide to keep this program running for the students. Special Needs children from standards 5, 6, 7 and 8 were especially eager participants. Indeed, all the children enjoyed and learned through the wide-variety of engaging and interesting activities. One student from the 8th grade, who had always been difficult to manage, was suddenly in “full bloom” expressing himself and contributing to all the activities. The transportation was shared between Aikiyam and Sadhana Forest.

Activities in Children's Land Project:
1. Learning songs in different languages
2. Planning and brain-storming about Children's Land
3. Making a circle garden
4. Playing orientation games
5. Having a mud bath in the end
6. Sharing our children's work with a school in London through painting and drawing
7. Volcano method planting (a very good technique for all types of soil).
8. Caring, loving and respecting nature

Some outcomes from the Children's Land programme:
1. Skills in organizing work
2. Sharing and helping each other
3. Learning life skills
4. Responsibility
5. Mingling with people of different nationalities

All the outings have been a great success!

Outputs

When children did classroom projects of a topic the worth of their time, span of attention and their energy input increased in many fold. Teachers who wished to offer their children meaningful opportunities to apply the skills and knowledge they acquire through direct instructions chose to incorporate project work as part of their classroom activity. Including project work in the classroom promoted children’s intellectual development by engaging their minds in observation and investigation of selected aspects of their experience and environment.

A further advantage of the classroom project (team work) is that the project work helped the children to develop desirable dispositions, or habits of mind, toward learning, toward themselves, and toward others.

Outcome

223 children participated in the project work. Some comments by class teachers:
Crèche and L.K.G.: One day we showed a rainbow on the wall with the help of water and waste CDs by reflecting the sunlight. This was like a magic show to our class and all children stood around the teacher with their dropped jaws.

U.K.G: Our story reader, Rajan brought many books related to colours and read very nicely to the children introducing the names of colours and singing songs about colours. Children made collage, drawing, colouring and painting. Children used various materials like straws, cotton, their own fingers and feet. They invented new colours by mixing
colours.

2\textsuperscript{nd} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} Grades: Our children’s work was posted on the wall and displayed in the classrooms. For example, picture puzzles, chart work, a view on Dino’s living place, clay models, booklets and model of Dino’s fossil findings were praised by visitors.

5\textsuperscript{th} Grade: Children climbed 800 feet height of Gingee Fort and exclaimed about the man power used in those days to create gigantic citadels, halls and temples.

6\textsuperscript{th} Grade: After learning ‘Tenses’, children came up with new games, poems and activities and included them as part of their presentation which made the project more lively.

8\textsuperscript{th} Grade: Collected some details through internet on the school constitution, framed quiz questions and conducted a quiz programme on the constitution. The students divided themselves into small groups and gathered more information about specific questions like what is a constitution, who are the people involved in framing constitutions, history of constitution and the present state of constitutions etc.

\textbf{Process Timelines}

The project was carried out for 5 months from November 2011 to March 2011.
AUROVILLE RAINBOW CHILD PROGRAM

Objective / Outcome
The aim of the project is to offer to Auroville children opportunities to discover themselves and acquire new skills additional to a formal school education.

Outputs

“Rainbow Child Program” weekly class schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day &amp; Time</th>
<th>Class Name &amp; Duration</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Instructor &amp; helper</th>
<th>No. of participants</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saturday 10am</td>
<td>Yoga for children 1h</td>
<td>Pitanga</td>
<td>Gala</td>
<td>7-12</td>
<td>5-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday 11am</td>
<td>Energetic Games..1h</td>
<td>Pitanga</td>
<td>Gala</td>
<td>7-12</td>
<td>5-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday 8am</td>
<td>Sports...2h</td>
<td>Certitude Sports Ground</td>
<td>Gala &amp; Usha</td>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>8-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 3pm</td>
<td>Introduction to Energetic Games 2h</td>
<td>Pavilion of Tibetan Culture</td>
<td>Gala, Viktor</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>4.5-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 3pm</td>
<td>Introduction to Energetic Games 2h</td>
<td>Pavilion of Tibetan Culture</td>
<td>Gala, Viktor</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>4.5-7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Around 30 children, aged from 5 to 13, from different schools participate regularly...
PROJECTS

Outcomes

Up to now some children have participated for four years in this program. They have easily absorbed advanced information given in class and helped new children to integrate smoothly. Small children of 7 years of age in their second year showed a considerable leap in their ability to concentrate on work.

Through “Energetic games” they continued to explore their emotions in a fun and joyous way, observed the body reaction and were directed to discover ways of dealing with their emotions constructively. Children spontaneously started to create new games which are more subtle and leading to a deeper level of discovery.

Children matured in their artistic expression and asked to learn advanced drawing techniques and wanted to experience new materials.

At the beginning of the last school year children expressed the wish to organize an exhibition of their artistic work. During this year the whole group worked consciously toward this goal. On April 15th an exhibition was opened in the Pavilion of Tibetan Culture for two weeks. Children enthusiastically prepared and designed this exhibition. This first exhibition has given a valuable learning experience to students, instructors and volunteers alike. Positive feedback was received from all visitors who were amazed by the children’s creative capacity.

Process / Timelines

The classes have started in April 2007. The program is ongoing.

Remarks

We intend to continue the program and implement changes and adjustments according to the children’s needs and interests. Through constant research and exchange between instructors and students we aspire to get attuned to the reality of dawning Unity.

After many years of working at different locations we wish to have a permanent place.
Objective / Outcome

- To create a space for exploration of creativity through clay work
- To build and maintain a community spirit between a group of people randomly gathered by their passion for creative arts and crafts
- To build more confidence and a sense of peace through self realization
- To encourage children and adults to develop their artistic skills to allow the artist within to emerge
- To provide an opportunity for learning after school/work time and weekends
- To help young children develop and improve their fine motor skills.

Outputs

- Six clay sessions weekly 2-3 hours each
- Class preparation, research on materials, firing (weekly - 8 hours)
- Open House, exhibitions, master-classes, individual classes

An average of 40-50 children and adults aged from 3 to 99 - mostly Aurovilians and Newcomers - participated in these classes regularly.

Two part-time instructors - project holders (minimum 20 hours per week each), one administrative and research support plus one helper (volunteer) worked on our project throughout the year.

Outcomes

Clay work gives an opportunity for students to freely express something deep within themselves and to come in contact with one’s Psychic Being.

Working with clay demands a lot of concentration and patience along with the ability to visualize. Children demonstrated increasing levels of skills (fine motor and artistic skills). All of the participants (including trainers) enjoyed the special atmosphere (i.e. relaxed, camaraderie, supportive, and harmonious) which nourished their creative capacities.
Murals made by all the students collectively were fixed in public places, beautifying the existing buildings.

Our project was attended by visiting groups of students from India and abroad during their Auroville introduction program. The “White Peacock” team offered special workshops according to students’ age and interests.

This year all the students of ‘White Peacock’ had the opportunity to explore the pottery wheel during Sunday classes. Students of different ages enjoyed the process a lot and found the experience extremely creative, calming and enriching.

Sunday classes became extremely popular by families with young children. The youngest clay artist was just 3 years old.

**Process / Timelines**

This project started in the month of March 2008 and is ongoing.

**Remarks**

Through the generous grant from PCG we were able to purchase a new smaller kiln for higher temperature glaze firing. The old tiled roof was renovated and reinforced thanks to an unexpected grant. This improved the working conditions enormously by creating a mosquito and rat proof space.
**SAIER ANNUAL REPORT 2010-2011**

### AWARENESS THROUGH THE BODY

#### The Goal of Awareness through the Body

Awareness through the Body is a comprehensive curriculum of activities and exercises that aims to raise awareness and enable both children and adults to become conscious of their own perceptions and abilities, so that they may become more self-aware, self-directed individuals.

By discovering and exploring the body, Awareness through the Body (ATB) offers individuals tools to expand their consciousness, explore the different parts of their being (mind, emotions, physical body, energetic body), and discover their inner selves, and eventually enter in contact with their psychic being (soul). By refining and internalising the senses we can become more aware of our own perceptions. By using the senses in a more complete way, free from judgement and preconceived ideas, we are more able to better manage our mind and emotions, and thus determine how to steer our own life.

#### 2010-2011 programme

This year I (Aloka) have been giving two regular sessions a week with two different groups of adult Aurovilians and one session a week to a group of high school children.

One of the adults’ sessions is on Yoga nidra. This is an open session for whoever wants to attend and lasts for about 1 hour. The attendance to this session fluctuates from 14 to 20 people.

In this deep relaxation technique the participant is guided inwards. By placing the attention into the physical and subtle sensations she/he is experiencing during the session, and through the use of visualisation, the participant is able to journey to the depths of her/his consciousness expanding it, and able to contact higher transforming energies. Yoga nidra as we practice it in ATB allows the individual to travel in, explore and work in the physical body sensing it from the inside. Yoga nidra is a tool as well to explore and quiet the mind and the emotional being.

The second group of adults is formed by 12 people who work on Sensory Awareness, the session lasts for 2 hours.

Because we have been working together with these people since the last three years, we can explore freely new themes which allow us to enter in new regions of our being.

During the explorations we use the five senses internalising them. We consider as a sense the kinaesthetic sense (the sense that without the use of other senses tells us that we have a body and how it is placed in space) and the mind. Sometimes the session addresses only one of the senses, at other times several senses are explored together.

During this last year we have dedicated much time to the exploration of the subtle physical body: the cocoon of energy that envelops our physical body and in which the nadis run. These explorations were new territory for all of us, and brought many discoveries and new understandings. The outcome of these sessions has been very
rewarding and it has created a bond between all the participants and a sense of care and respect.

The work with the adolescents is outside the program of their school and the students who come to the sessions come out of their free choice. The attendance fluctuates from two to four participants and the sessions are focused on enhancing the ability for concentration and relaxation.

In the ATB practice we learn to “listen” to one’s own being. It is interesting to observe how the work on one of the parts of the being has a very clear effect on all the other parts. The more we work with awareness in each of these parts the more we integrate them and have the possibility to become whole.

**General Awareness through the Body outcome**

About 340 Aurovilians, children and adults, and about 60 children from the outreach schools, have been working regularly this year with this program, attending weekly classes in one of the following groups:

**Kindergarten (Centre Field):** classes conducted by Patrizia, Stefania and Francesco  
**Nandanam Kindergarten:** classes conducted by Patrizia, Stefania and Francesco  
**Transition School:** four first grades, classes conducted by Patrizia and Amir  
**Transition School:** four last grades, classes conducted by Joan and Rosa  
**Deepanam School:** two groups guided by Rosa and two groups by Yoffi  
**Udavi School:** classes conducted by Partha and Suzie  
**New Creation:** classes conducted by Stefania and Francesco  
**The Learning Community:** classes guided by Amir  
**Future School:** classes guided by Aloka  
**Adult classes:** conducted by Aloka and Joan

Several workshops have been offered which were conducted by Aloka and Joan:

**Intensive workshop** in which the advanced training of ATB was given and which lasted for 8 days (about 60 hours) with 22 participants. The workshop has been an enriching experience that has fostered in the participants, as well as in ourselves, inner centring and growth.

**ATB 1:** introduction to Awareness Through the Body, a two day workshop (about 12 hours) with 20 participants.

**ATB 2:** going deeper in the themes offered in ATB 1 and exposure to new themes; a three day workshop (about 18 hours) with 20 participants.

**Several short 2 hour workshops** with a total of about 120 participants.

We share ATB with the world through the web sites we have created. To see the English site google [www.awarenessthroughthebody.com](http://www.awarenessthroughthebody.com) Coming June will see the publication of the Spanish translation of the book Awareness Through the Body with the title **Despertar de la conciencia a través del cuerpo.**
Here are some pictures of children and adults working on some of the themes of ATB.

Sensory exploration of the Element water

**Breathing exercise two by two**
By placing a gentle hand on the back of his partner, the child on the back is helping the other child to direct her breath towards her back, creating thus an expansion in the tissues where the hand is placed.

**Concentration exercise two by two**
Both persons have the eyes closed and at the start of the exercise their hands are resting on their knees. We play music as a background support and when the music begins both partners initiate a movement which will bring their hands together. They move their hands in such a way as to be aware of each and every small movement that is taking place and the sensations that accompany this movement. The exercise (bringing the hands together and going back to one’s own knees) is done only once and normally last between 30 to 45 minutes.
SCIENCE FAIR 2010-11

Aim
The aim of the project is to develop a complete education system in the spirit and ideals (nothing can be taught, from near to far, from known to unknown) of The Mother and Sri Aurobindo. The project intends to work in collaboration with classroom teachers to fulfill the needs of students in Auroville Schools and to an extent the students from outreach schools in Auroville and neighboring villages.

Objectives

Science Exhibition
Conducting exhibition with the help of students and science teachers and inviting other school children to participate.

Students’ Museum
Display the collected materials by the students during the field trips, students’ creative works and specimens.

Overview and purpose of project
- To make children feel that science is all around us and we can gain knowledge as well as solve many problems also by relating the learning process to the physical and social environment.
- To provide a forum for children to pursue their natural curiosity and inventiveness to quench their thirst for creativity.
- To apply mathematics to visualize and solve problems pertaining to everyday life.

Partners in the Project
The Auroville Schools Science Educational Training (ASSET) Centre has organized this exhibition with the financial help of SAIER. (Sri Aurobindo International Institute of Educational Research)
Other partners are
- Auroville Schools Science Educational Training Centre Team & students
- Aikiyam School,
- Udavi Gentillesse School
- Isai Ambalam School
- Future School
- Govt High School, Alankuppam
- Kuilapalayam Trust School
- Tamil Ulagam Evening School - Rayapudupakkam
- White Angels school - Puducherry
- Bharathidasan English School- Puducherry
- Vidyanikethan School - Pondicherry
- Pavendar English School - Alan Kuppam

Exhibits
The exhibit encompasses three main topics that integrate display/learning modules. The learning modules will be designed for portability to the formal education curriculum. The following outline is provided to summarize the content of the exhibit.

- Biology in Human Welfare
- How it works?
- Maths in Everyday life.

Output

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Product/Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biology in Human welfare</td>
<td>Photos &amp; Text materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green House</td>
<td>models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PROJECTS

How it works?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Models</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solar dish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solar system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nervous system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wind mill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solar charger</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Maths in Everyday life

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Models</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Magic square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probability Box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magic lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance the weight</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students’ Museum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collected Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specimen - shells</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Field trip

Biology

Outcome

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arulvazhi Education Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isai Ambalam School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AV Industrial School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aikiyam School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pudhu Ulagam Evening School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil Ulagam Evening School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Udavi School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eco Club - Aranya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust School Kulapalayam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Angels school - Pondicherry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Govt. High School - Alankuppam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vidyanikethan School - Pondicherry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pavendar English School - Alankuppam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Govt. School-Moratandy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher trainees - Vanur block</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul’s Teacher training school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manaveli Govt Primary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alumni of AV schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bharathidasan English school - Pondicherry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Community Participation

Aurovilians (Parents), Educationists, Guests
Mr. Ashok Chatterjee (Director, SAIER, Auroville)
Mr. Krishnamurthy, Head Master, Alankuppam School.
Mr. Subash, Coordinator - Isai Ambalam School
Mr. Vincent Raja (Senior Teacher Aikiyam School, Auroville)
Mr. Sri Ram Bharathidasan School, Pondicherry  
Mr. Manibalan, Pavendar School-Alankuppam  
Tmt. Chithra, Headmistress, White Angels School, Pondicherry  
Tmt. Devi, Vice Principal, VidyaNikethan School, Pondicherry.  
Mr. Popo - Yantra, Auoville  
Mr. Sundara Nayagam, Coordinator, Night School

**Schedule of Completion: Project Year 2010-2011**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Action Item</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 2010</td>
<td>Project planning meeting</td>
<td>Purpose of exhibition, incl target students, teachers and public.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Listing out the possible exhibits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Identify project resources (e.g. personnel, hours, material needs).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Coordination of exhibition work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Communication/documentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Follow-up activities after completion of the exhibition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August/</td>
<td>Discussion with students and teachers</td>
<td>Discussing the possible number of exhibits related to the topics and list</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td></td>
<td>out the same. Prepare a procedure key aid for those exhibits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct-Nov.</td>
<td>Collection of materials</td>
<td>As per the exhibit list, collecting the required materials. (carried out by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>students, teachers and ASSET Centre team)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec.</td>
<td>Design and develop exhibits</td>
<td>Using the materials and key aid, design and develop the exhibits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(ASSET Centre team, students and teachers were involved in doing this work.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Preparation of text materials related to the exhibits. (for the background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>display, done by ASSET Centre team)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan-Feb 2011</td>
<td>Pilot testing and Display in the Exhibition place.</td>
<td>Pilot testing of exhibits done by the ASSET Centre team with the help of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>students and teachers involved. After successful completion of this testing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>final display at the exhibition hall. (Isai Ambalam School)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Evaluation &amp; Documentation</td>
<td>Feedback from educationists, teachers, students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PROJECTS

April end. Reporting Submission of project report to SAILER.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>K. Anbu</td>
<td>Coordinator ASSET Centre</td>
<td>BSc (Chemistry) D. Text. Tech (Textiles) M.S (Education Management) BEd (Education)</td>
<td>Auroville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sanjeev Rajagopal</td>
<td>Scientist M.S. Swaminathan Research Found.</td>
<td>MSc (Agriculture)</td>
<td>Puducherry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>E. Perumal</td>
<td>Teacher New Creation School</td>
<td>BSc (Maths) BA (Tamil)</td>
<td>Auroville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sri Ram</td>
<td>Teacher Alankuppam Govt. School</td>
<td>MSc., BEd (Physics)</td>
<td>Puducherry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Gopinathan</td>
<td>Teacher, Night School</td>
<td>MA (History), Diploma in Archeology</td>
<td>Auroville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Karhikeyan</td>
<td>Program Coordinator</td>
<td>BCA</td>
<td>Chennai</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evaluation
We got feedback from educationists, teachers, students & guests who visited the exhibition and we kept their comments as our asset for the next exhibition. We invited educationists from Auroville and outside to receive their valuable comments. This year two educationists from Pondicherry Govt had come and they gave the participation certificates to the students.

Documentation and Follow-up
ASSET Centre has documented the exhibition and kept it for reference. We give these exhibits to the participating schools to help in their classroom teaching.

ASSET Centre Team
UNENDING EDUCATIONAL PORTAL

Even though excellent work is being done at Auroville, many people devote less time and effort for communicating the results either due to lack of resources or simply awareness or modesty. Therefore, there is a critical need to integrate our research results in thematic areas and communicate them through digital media and Internet.

The communication between educators and teachers of Auroville’s schools and learning centres is most informal and mostly none when putting out a message to the world.

The Unending Education Portal is part of an initiative to create knowledge portals in key areas of Auroville know-how and experiences. It is the result of 6 months (September 2010-February 2011) of intensive efforts by a dedicated core team and a big number of educators from various Auroville Schools and Learning Centers that contributed content.

The Unending Education Portal is an online teacher center, with the aim to provide a platform for exchange of teaching material, experience, expertise and resources for educators engaged in Integral Education. The objective is not to replace interpersonal communication between educators but to facilitate more face-to-face communication by providing information that will nurture exchange and sharing.

The Unending Education Portal is made possible through sponsorship of Sri Aurobindo International Institute of Educational Research (SAIER) and Stichting de Zaaier, Netherlands. It is also supported by: Auroville Consulting and Auroville Radio.

Unending Education Portal is a project under Auroville Collaborative, a service activity that was founded by Raghu Koli, Chandresh Patel and Martin Scherfler in 2009. Its focus is to find innovative solutions for the needs of the community in areas such as transportation, communication, housing and other areas.

Auroville Collaborative aims at bringing internal and external experts and students together in order to facilitate a co-creative working process.

Objectives

The Unending Education Portal was created to serve as a resource platform for educators and learners aspiring towards Integral Education in the light of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. The goal is to assimilate innovative educational experiences within the context of Auroville and to publish them in an accessible manner. We expect this pool of hands-on knowledge to serve as an inspiration to those looking for alternative ways of learning, should they be teachers, students, researchers or simply individuals striving towards personal growth.

We identified a critical need to integrate Auroville’s research results in education and communicate them through a web based platform. The objectives are:

- Synthesize and communicate Auroville’s educational expertise to the world at large
- Create a platform where educators of Integral Education share their experience
PROJECTS

• Create a platform for Auroville Schools to share resources (books, teaching material, human resource etc.)

Process/Timelines

September 2010
Team recruitment
Research phase: Visit of about 45 schools and learning centers at Auroville, collecting of content, identifying the needs of the schools, learning centres and educators at Auroville.

October 2010
Continuing Research phase: Visit of about 45 schools and learning centers at Auroville, Collecting of content, identifying the needs of the schools and learning centers.
1st Presentation: presentation of findings and web concept to schools and learning centers at Deepanam School
Collection of feedback and suggestions
Content production
Communication Design

November 2010
Production phase: content production, graphic and web design, photo shooting

December 2010
Production phase: content production, graphic and web design, photo shooting
Editing phase: content editing and proofreading, video and audio editing
2nd Presentation: presentation of web concept and design, collection of feedback and further suggestions

January 2011
Content generation, photo shooting
Final editing,
Video editing of new content
Presentation to SAIER

February 2011
Update and finalizing web programming
Announcement of the Unending Education Portal in News and Notes

Results:
By today Unending Education Portal provides about 150 articles on various subjects and activities for all ages and in diverse fields like languages, science and mathematics, life science, humanities, creativity, body, pedagogy and assessment. Profiles of Auroville schools and learning centers are listed. An online library provides Auroville educators with a data base of books available in most of the Auroville schools and a forum enables discussions and exchange of information.
www.edu.aurovilleportal.ort
Team Members

**Eli Abela:** Eli is a one-year volunteer from the Philippines who fully embraces the lifestyle, culture, and industry in Auroville. Prior to her arrival, she was working with IT infrastructure companies in Vancouver, Canada and Beverly Hills, California. Her educational and part of her professional background is in Hospitality Management and attended schools in Europe and the United States and has worked in hotels in Switzerland, Boston, and the Philippines. Eli is pursuing a Master’s Degree in International and Community Development from Deakin University and believes that her experience in Auroville will give her excellent perspective in her studies.

**Dinesh Gupta:** Dinesh has been living in Auroville since the year 2006. After graduating from The Sri Aurobindo International Center of Education in Pondicherry, he has been engaged with organizing & conducting tourism projects in India for over 4 years. He is currently engaged with the Dehashakti Sports Program in Auroville as a sports instructor and also gives a few science-oriented classes in some Auroville schools.

**Martin Scherfler:** Martin is living in Auroville since 2006. Before coming to Auroville he worked with Nishta Rural Health, Education and Environment Centre based in Dharamsala. For the last two years, he has been coordinating the Living Routes Auroville, an educational program that brings students from USA to Auroville to study different aspects of sustainability. He holds a Master degree in Sociology and has several years of experience in research.

**Oliver Wiebelt:** Oliver has been volunteering at Auroville for over a year and has become a newcomer a while ago. He is an experienced IT specialist with 11 years of experience in Germany. He has been setting up servers and software for small and medium sized companies for 4 years and worked with mobile operator clients in deployment of networks for 7 years. Previously, he worked in New York city in import export business as VP and CFO and in an investment bank in Germany.

**Raghu Kolli:** Raghu is living in Auroville since 2008. Previously, he was a Visiting Professor at the Industrial Design Dept, Korean Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (one year), Founder and CEO of Meru Research b.v., Netherlands (10 years) and Assistant Professor at Faculty of Industrial Design, Delft University of Technology, Netherlands (5 years). He holds a Masters degree in Visual Communications from IIT Bombay (India) and trained in management at INSEAD (France). As a design and management consultant, he worked with several clients and managed
large and complex projects related to on-line services, consumer electronics and business applications.

**Soumya Menon:** Soumya is an animation film design graduate student at National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad. She has illustrated for children’s magazines and for books of the ‘Looking at Art’ Series. She has also worked on a range of short animation film projects that include classical hand-drawn animation as well as clay and paper cutout animation.

**Vimal Bhujraj:** Vimal is a young professional living in Auroville since 2004. He has a diploma in Fashion Technology from NIFT-TEA in India and worked for knitwear company CENTWIN for a year. At Auroville, he worked at Upasana Design Studio for five years where he was involved in coordination of several social responsibility projects - Tsunamika, Small Steps and Varanasi Weavers. He shares a passion for photography and was a member of the team that produced communication materials - brochures, presentations, books and web site at Upasana. Project Report Unending Education Portal.
TRENDS IN INTERACTIVE TOOLS FOR EDUCATION

Objective / Outcome

To undergo training in Agastya International Foundation for educating the rural children by means of simple but effective experiments and training.

Outputs

Two resource persons 1. Mr. S. Srinivasan from Arulvazhi education centre 2. Mr. A.Vinoth Kumar from Auroville village action group underwent training for three days from 01.03.11 to 04.03.11. They were guided and trained by Dr. Shibu Shankaran and his assistant in various aspects of educational tools. They brought with them the educational materials from the Agastya International Foundation and conducted a workshop for two days on 30th and 31st March’11 for about 40 children.

Outcomes / Process

First of all, it was a good educational experience for Mr. Srinivasan and Mr. A. Vinoth Kumar. It was felt that if their stay in Agastya foundation had been for a longer period, it would have been much more fruitful. Also it was felt that if 3 or more persons were trained in future in the Agastya foundation, who have done a lot of practical research the benefits could be extended to a wider number of rural children in Auroville. In these experiments, language is not a barrier.

Timelines

As stated in earlier columns.

Remarks

This training programme can be continued for next year also. It may be for a little longer period for about 6 days and for 4 more teachers. Whatever knowledge gained will be transmitted to other teachers in the school who will become good resource persons.
Aim

Transition School, founded in 1984, provides a learning environment for children from 6 to 14 years of age (grades 1 through 8). Right now we have about 160 students representing about 20 different countries, several states of India and a variety of cultures. This multi-cultural environment is challenging and offers stimulating opportunities for dynamic, creative teaching and learning experiences. It also exposes teachers and children to humanity's rich cultural heritage and diversity.

We aim to create a learning environment that nurtures the inner development of the children and at the same time help each child to develop and refine the physical, vital and mental faculties according to his/her stage of development. Practices and methods that heighten observation, concentration, self-awareness and creativity are used, and themes such as truth, fraternity, freedom, and progress are introduced so that our children can develop and really explore a sense of values. This is reflected in our program and the methodology and materials used in the school. There is a commitment to developing the whole child and the uniqueness of each child at Transition, and different learning styles are addressed through the implementation of different methods such as individual work, class projects and outings.

Each child is unique: has his/her own learning style, strengths and weaknesses, and interests. This year many Transition School group teachers introduced more individualized personal learning techniques in the classroom to complement the project and class work.

Personalized learning focuses on key concepts and skills as well as the development of self discipline, organization skills and offers many opportunities for self-knowledge. As children progress, concepts and skills become increasingly more complex, so the structure and methods vary.

Groups in Transition School are organized by age, but within any group children have a wide range of strengths, weaknesses and interests. In order to meet the needs of all of
this we need to develop more learning material. The classroom should have a wide range of material that fits the needs of different learning styles, needs and aspirations. A variety of material for all subjects should be available to include possibilities that help reach the individual learning styles and needs of the children, teachers worked to create material for the classroom. Material can help reinforce and practice learned skills and concepts, teach a new skill, and develop creativity.

Much of the material is for independent work. However, some of it is meant to be done with another person(s) (e.g. games)

**Program/Activity details**

As teachers observed the students throughout the school year, they planned and worked to develop and classify classroom material that could meet the particular needs of their students. Material that is appropriate for the learning styles, abilities and interests of the individual students. The resources that were built on came from our library of teaching and learning material, computer internet sites and teachers’ creativity. Games, worksheets, DVD’s, puzzles, compilations in various subject areas and other resources were developed, and some were laminated (for future use).

Another aspect of this work was that the students were given more freedom to organize their schedules. At the beginning of a particular time period (usually one week for the younger children and 2 weeks for the older children) the students are told what is needed to be accomplished in all of the subject areas. Students are either given a typed sheep or are asked to copy their weekly work plan. Every day, there were lessons, discussions, and/or review in a certain subject area. After this whole class instruction, students were able to go to their desk and continue with this work, or choose to do something else on their work plan. At the end of the week, students highlighted all of the work completed. The majority of the class was able to be focused during the week and completed the week’s goals.

**Outputs**

Personalized learning gave many opportunities for children to learn independently and together.

Here are some of the activities that we were able to provide:

- Create a school newspaper
- Create maps and timelines for each cultural/historical period.
- Write and perform songs
- Learn math through music
- Theater-children choose their roles and extra participation
- Art for History - Music of the period, use of Poetry, Historical Fiction(Biographies),
- Science - models, posters and power point presentations
- Writing and illustrating books (also writing and illustrating books for struggling readers)
- Technology, Internet Research (PowerPoint Presentations, etc.)
**Outcome**

We saw an increased enthusiasm in the classes. The children were happy to have the freedom of choice in their schedules and have some choice regarding the material that they used. We observed that with a choice of material students will work independently and generally persist at their work.

Overall, individualized learning has helped empower the students and encouraged them to take responsibility for themselves. Many teachers reported that the students were more motivated, and this has been acknowledged by the students themselves. The grade eight students were asked if they thought that we should continue with individualized work plans, and they all responded in the affirmative.

**Process Timelines**

This was an ongoing process with regular assessment throughout the school year.
FRESH WATER AQUACULTURE
By Life Science Center at Deepanam School

Objective / Goal

Our aim is to build a fresh water indigenous aquaculture program. This would support / encourage the awareness of local fresh water fish species that are fast getting extinct. This helps children understand the delicate balance in Nature and urge them to respect this balance.

Program/Activity details

Here in Auroville Sri Aurobindo’s and Mother’s principles of Education teach us to live a simple and beautiful life. For this what better way to start than by learning about our own environment. The beauty in Nature is most perfect and to study it and respect it deeply is the essence of our education. Further we encouraged the students to build activities:

- Exhibition as a resulting process
- Maintaining a live collection of ponds / aquariums to study and to observe and learn more about fresh water indigenous fish & plants.
- Create Eco-clubs and carry out relevant activities & educational tours to learn more.

Process Timelines

This was over 10 months; wherein students gradually discovered the ecology of the local water bodies around Auroville and the poor condition they were in.

Outcome

There were several interesting lessons learnt during this project:

- Few students were even aware of the local water bodies surrounding them - so this survey made it possible for them to actually visit them.
- This survey involved observing the water bodies over several months - in monsoon & during the drier months - so the seasonal changes were very educative.
- Lastly the amount of garbage & pollution caused by humans was alarming and this really disturbed the students most.
- This was also a successful vital education, one of the important developments for the children here.

Two classes were involved in this program - totally there were 26 students.

A lot of time and energy was spent in cleaning up the places we visited and bringing back the garbage to be disposed off at the Eco-Service.
This was a vital part of the project!
ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS PROJECT AT TRANSITION SCHOOL

Goal / Objective / Outcome

The main goal of this work is to support environmental awareness, education, responsibility and action amongst the students and the teachers. Teachers and students of the various classes will choose real-world project based environmental topics to explore through research project and activities. Children are given the opportunity to develop and apply skills while learning about the universe, its natural resources and real world environmental topics.

Today’s young people are aware of and concerned about environmental issues. They are eager to learn more and take action, but some of the information they receive makes them feel fearful and powerless. We would like to develop these studies in a way that we can all learn about our beautiful universe and experience that we can help make meaningful changes that can lead to a healthier environment.

Auroville itself offers so many opportunities to learn as so much work is being done in Auroville: technologies for low energy housing, water harvesting, renewable energy, afforestation, organic farming, waste water recycling and transportation…. Students and teachers can meet experts in all of these fields, participate and learn with them.

Program/Activity details

Environmental studies are an important part of our program. An interdisciplinary approach: Geography, Ecology, Chemistry, Biology as well as History and Current Events stress the interconnectedness of life on Earth. Some of the projects that the various groups participated in this year include:

- Children participated in clean-ups in the school and surrounding areas.
- Viewing and discussion of various DVD series. One particularly inspiring series is “Planet Earth” with David Attenborough. Here we were able to see and learn about the different biomes of our planet and the results of interaction with humankind and development. After viewing these, time was given for discussion and reflection.
- Study and experiments in science classes that demonstrate things like acid rain, greenhouse gasses, the effects of oil spills, global warming and other commonly studied phenomena.
- The grade 8 class worked to learn about waste water treatment and then promoted the building of a waste water treatment plant on the school campus. We were able to successfully complete this plant.
- Students of different groups visited many places within Auroville and outside of Auroville and learned about the environmental issues that were being worked on. Here are just a few of the many outings:
  - Pondicherry—study of beach erosion
  - Adyar Poonga—wetlands revival in Chennai
  - Pitchandikulum Forest, Sadhaka Forest and other gardens and orchards in Auroville
  - CSR Auroville—wastewater treatment, biogas, alternative building technology
Children were able to interview people and see and learn about the work that is going on. This gave a great feeling of hope and participation. Children often shared their findings with others. Here is an example of part of the report from the grade 8 students regarding the waste water treatment plant project:

Our school, Transition School, is set on the greenbelt in Auroville. This year we did a project on Environmental Science, and we became much more aware of environmental issues and problems. Some of the topics that we looked at were water scarcity, wastage and waste water treatment. We observed that a lot of water is being used in the garden, kitchen and bathrooms. The water that goes down the drain when we wash our dishes, our hands and flush the toilet should be recycled so that we can use it to water the trees and plants in the school. We thought that we could help do something to help recycle water, save water, in our school. In class we spoke, and with our teacher, thought that we could put energy into building a waste water treatment plant on our campus. This will improve the environment in Transition School, and also could be an influence and inspire other schools and communities in Auroville.

Students were encouraged to investigate topics of their interest through
- Internet or book research
- Field trips to observe examples of the topic being studied
- Experts in the field may volunteer their time to share knowledge with the children.
- Documentaries
- Interviews

Students will be expected to demonstrate what they have learned and to share their knowledge and observations with other students through presentations, posters, power point presentations or other ways that they may develop.

There should be a continuous assessment and evaluation. Students’ output as well as their attitude, participation and cooperation will be assessed by the teacher, fellow students and by themselves.

**Outputs**
We were able to build the DEWATTS waste water treatment plant. Additionally, students demonstrated what they had learned and shared their observations and feelings through:
- Presentations
- Discussions
- Power point presentations
- Open Houses and Exhibitions
- Personal narrative writing
- Personal journals
- School newspaper articles
- All School Events: “The Go-Green Adventure”

**Outcome**
Through teacher and student discussions and assessment, we concluded that this emphasis on Environmental Awareness had awakened more awareness in our environment and exposed them to the positive actions that are being taken that can help us all make
our planet a healthier, safer place to live. Children spoke about what they could do and participated in activities in and outside of school. Additionally we observed evidence that led us to believe that this work:
- Stimulated a sense of wonder
- Stimulated a sense of responsibility
- Helped the children develop research, thinking and learning skills
- Gave the opportunity for children to learn more about things that they were particularly interested in.
- Gave the opportunity for children to learn to assess.
- Gave the opportunity for children to share their work through presentations or informal discussion.
- Allowed children the practice of cooperative learning skills.
Children of all ages were enthusiastic and sincere in their work and made plans to continue the project in the next school year.

**Process Timelines**
This is an ongoing project and we would like to continue it in the next school year.
PAINTING WITH CHILDREN

Goal / Objective / Outcome

The objectives are:
- Personality development of children: self-knowledge, self-confidence, creativity, autonomy, respect, to raise the level of consciousness, equilibrium in relationship with others.
- To inform people, especially parents and teachers, about the existence of the “Formulation”: “Organic Memory” which exists in everybody and universal phenomenon.
- To reach a deeper part of the Being through meditation and to give this part the possibility to express itself through painting.

Program/Activity details

Eight to fifteen children of mixed age groups are painting freely together with a few adults in a safe space enclosed in big vertical panels that shelters the inner necessity of expression from influences and distractions, without any judgment, but with the stimulating presence of the “Practitioner” who “is not an instructor or task master: he is a helper and a guide” as told by Sri Aurobindo in the First Principle of Education. No subject or theme is imposed. In the center of the room is a Table-Palette with eighteen pots of paint of different colors and special brushes. Arno Stern discovered that it is only in these specific conditions that the inner language of the organic memory can manifest itself as a set of 70 signs that he calls “Formulation”. Through this essential process, a transformation of the being can start whatever the age, nationality or cultural background of the person.

Outputs

Poster paint and papers were ordered for the five schools participating in our project.

Outcome

A. Development of the children:
The essential is to stay connected to the principles of education of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. The specific conditions help the children to discover and develop their whole Being, especially:
- The Physical: development of the consciousness of the eyes and the hands, good body posture in front of the panels and the table-palette.
- The Vital: development of the sensitivity for harmony and beauty, creativity, discipline of cleanliness and order, learning to be patient, concentrated and to respect others and their work, increase of self-respect and self-confidence.
- The Psychic: the meditation strengthens the contact with the Psychic Being and helps the children to become conscious that it is the most precious thing in life. In the painting sessions, the child is going deeper and deeper in the discovery of her own true being. It will help her to find the purpose of her life and for us, teachers and parents, to know better the child and her abilities, her interests.
B. The activity in Auroville schools:
The activity continues to be offered to children of the following schools: Kindergarten, Deepanam, Nandanam, Udavi, and Transition.

In Claire's and Sandrine's ateliers, the children of the educational project “the Learning Community” continue to paint in mixed ages groups with the Kindergarten children. Some children who are not in schools also joined.

This year 2 groups of teenagers from “Petit School” (Delhi) came with their teachers on 13.10.2010 to experiment sessions of painting in Claire’s atelier.

During the Christmas holidays one session of Play of painting and one session of meditative painting with Geetanjali (Partho’s assistant) were offered to children and students.

C. Training:
Four people were trained as practitioners: Natascha (who is also attending training in ATB and Yoga) and Marlenka (who is coming to paint since 2 years in the Kindergarten atelier) with Claire, as well as Clara and Efrat with Sandrine.

D. Distribution of the book on the research work:
The book distribution continued:
Books were offered to the practitioners of the play of painting.

Books are being sold at the Visitors Center and Freeland Bookshops, the income is put on a SAIER account for future publications. Books were sent and sold in France.

In general a good feedback is expressed about this book, especially by people involved in education.