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PREFACE

Within the overall organization of Auroville, SAIIER is one group of activities and Institutions that are primarily concerned with Educational Research. These units and Institutions include all the Auroville Schools and most of the Outreach schools of Auroville. Also included are the Cultural Pavilion of India, the Savitri Bhavan, the Auroville Library, the Centre of Human Unity – the Laboratory of Evolution, Pitanga, Arka, all the sports facilities under Dehashakthi programme, other outreach sports facilities, Mitra Hostel, Kailash Hostel.

All these activities and Institutions run autonomously and come together in smaller clusters like the Auroville School Board, all the Outreach School Board where they discuss issues of common concern.

SAIER is supported by grants from Govt of India, by contributions from Auroville and by donations.

All the units under SAIER make a report of their work during the financial year. Also projects that have been financed particularly for that year give their reports. These reports are descriptive of the work that has been carried out and do not necessarily follow a rigorous scientific research format. We expect and hope that these reports will be a valuable resource material for anybody in the future who wants to see how the educational environment of Auroville developed into what we believe we are consciously striving towards - namely the ideals enshrined in our Charter, of an unending education, of constant progress, of youth that never ages.
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AUROVILLE PRE-CRÈCHE

The AV Pre-Crèche offers the small kids of Auroville a safe and harmonious atmosphere for being, exploring and learning. The parents can find here a supportive place to meet and share their experience about raising children.

With the new building in place and being close to the Matrimandir the AV Pre-Crèche has entered its next phase of development, focusing on building its specific atmosphere in the improved physical environment. It is on a never ending process of evolution as different teachers and parents contribute, sharing their various sensibilities and concerns. Our growth since the beginning has been very much according to the needs and the attitude expressed by the community for childcare and with the aspiration to be in tune with what Mother has said about bringing up children.

The AV Pre-Crèche offers 2 groups – a toddler’s group and a baby’s group.

**TODDLER’S GROUP:**

This is the group of children who come every morning and stay without their parents.

We take great care to help the children settle-in gently, feel safe and cared for, get used to the team and the place and gradually learn to be separated, in a harmonious way, from their parents. Due to their tender age, we 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 encouraged to learn to follow some basic discipline and simple rules. The atmosphere is stimulating their interest and helps to balance their energies. We try to nurture their active involvement in the play and their interaction with each other. It is very important for us to give space to kids to develop their concentration and focus. Gradually they are flowering joyfully and make a big progress.

**BABY’S GROUP:**

This group gathers three times a week and the number varies, as not all the children come all the days. The baby’s group is a very nice enriching and supportive environment where babies can share the facilities and experience the collective atmosphere. Here we put a lot of effort on the interaction not only with children, but with their parents too. Our work with parents is of big importance and even though it is delicate and hard, we try to listen to them and suggest positive lines of bringing up children. Parents are happily observing changes in the way their children are.

**Plans for the coming year:** the objectives are the same and we are very happy that we are in our new building. We have now a better space to organize our work with children. The most important aspect of our work remains the atmosphere we create for the kids and that is why we focus a lot on the teacher’s work. At this age the kids are most receptive so we take care to work constantly on ourselves and on our relations in the team. Our primary care is that we ourselves grow more centered, loving, vigilant and responsive to the needs of the situation while
being with the kids. And so in the process of our individual progress we keep discovering ways to improve our organization and the way we are with ourselves, with each other, with kids and with parents.
At Aha Kindergarten, we work in a mixed age group from the age of 3 to 7 yrs old where we consciously create an environment to show the beauty of life – admiring nature, exposure to various art forms (dance, music, painting) and various fields of work (farming, work places) by inviting artists/experts in those fields. This year's main focus was on the overall development of each child (physical, vital, mental, psychic) through various activities and they are detailed below.

1, Physical:

This aims at developing the motor skills (gross and fine), overall general energy, stamina, flexibility etc...

This year, they learnt and explored new games like Frisbee, relay races, high jump and long nature walks...

Frisbee: The children were taken to Certitude football field and they enjoyed the vastness of the place which made them to explore the game in a deeper way like throwing the Frisbee to their maximum limit and passing to their friends.

Long nature walks: The children were taken for a walk to Aurodam football field when initially some wanted us to carry them but gradually they developed the stamina and made it to the place themselves and even after reaching the place, they enjoyed playing games and running around.

Long jumps: The children enjoyed learning the game and each one gradually increased their own capacity to jump higher and higher and everyone was happy with their progress.

Relay races: This helped them improve their alertness, listening ability and different skills through different ways of running – sideways, back ways, hopping, running by imitating animals, birds, vehicles...This helped them to develop their large motor skills and at the same time learning through fun.

Habits: The children learnt hygienic habits and to take care of their own basic needs, estimation of quantity of food intake, to respect all the different tastes, using toilets and able to wear clothes on their own, comb hair themselves, able to keep their personal things in proper place, putting back things in proper places.

2. Vital:

This aims at sensorial development, socialization, communication, interaction skills...

This was achieved through storytelling, creating their own story books, playing together in the sandpit, Water play games:

Creating their own story books: We had children who were exposed to reading and writing and it started with their wish to create their own story books with different topics like, Mermaid, Whale, Spiderman etc...They not created their own stories but also ended up designing their own books right from the cover page with different materials. Each child had its unique way of making the book depending on their ability and understanding. They also narrated their stories to
other children by showing their book and came up with different stories each time they glanced through it and also involved their friends in the story.

Playing together in the sandpit: The co-operation among the children was at its peak during the play time in the sand pit where they get together spontaneously for doing various jobs and assigning it themselves for example celebrating their friends birthday where each one is busy doing their own things like arranging and decorating the place, using papers, flowers and other materials, baking cakes and soup and organizing things in a detailed way like arranging the cushions, inviting people as in a real situation.

Water play games: They enjoyed blowing bubbles but initially the coordination was lacking and slowly they gained control over their movements, also learnt to hold the bubbles without popping off by making their hands wet and producing more bubbles making it bigger and bigger each time.

3. Mental:

This aims at developing the span of concentration, imagination, observation and will power.

This was achieved through letting the children choose their own interested activity and time span of concentration increased from 45 min to even half a day and they were able to complete the work taken up to their maximum limit.

For ex. Building blocks, exploring painting, doing collage works, playing with Lego.

Observation capacity was increased during our nature walks when the children noticed even the minute details—different shades of leaves, stones, seeds.

4. Psychic:

This aims at developing their individuality and uniqueness of the child.

This was achieved by creating an environment where the child was let to immerse in the work that he has taken up, to play on their own with their inner stimulation as well as to be with others.
KINDERGARTEN

On a Saturday morning in April, a two-hour class was held for the Kindergarten teachers at the swimming pool on the safety of the small children in the water. The focus of the class, given by a professional swimming instructor, was on prevention of accidents in and around the swimming pool. The class was very much appreciated by all of us. What we have learnt is valuable for our work and it is also a reminder that we are not here to teach the children how to swim (because that is the job of a swimming instructor) but to watch them closely so as to prevent any accidents.

This year in the Orange Group (ages 3 to 5) we introduced two long-term projects, the first on the FIVE SENSES and the second on the FOUR ELEMENTS.

PROJECT ON THE FIVE SENSES

The project on the five senses (taste, hearing, touch, sight, smell) was done during five weeks before the Christmas holidays. Each week was dedicated to a specific “sense”, introducing every sense through the respective organ of reference. We had a helper represented by a funny elf who from time to time had a big nose, big eyes, wide eyes, big ears and a very large mouth. Every time we did different feeling games, with eyes closed or open, depending on the case, we asked the children to share experiences and ask questions. Finally, for each sense the kids did a collective craft work.

Examples

With regard to Taste, the blindfolded children first tasted different foods to recognize them and then they learned to distinguish sweet, salty, bitter and sour.

For Touch the children again blindfolded had to recognize different materials and then to recognize one of their friends, exploring his face with their fingertips.

To explore Sight we gave the kids a digital camera, and asked them to choose first a color and then to look in the garden to photograph something that had the same color. The results were amazing, both for the interesting choice of subjects and for the quality of the frame.

The collective craft for Smell was to create a landscape with different fragrant or scented items, such as incense, flower petals, spices and scented candles.

The kids had a lot of fun with the elf facilitator and with the feeling games. It was more difficult to engage them in the collective craft. Learning about the sense organs and their functions was great and easy.

FOUR ELEMENTS PROJECT

The project on the four elements (earth, water, fire, air) developed by dedicating each item two weeks during the last two months of school.

First we spoke to the children about our planet earth and showed them through different photographs all elements present on it.
Then we focused on each element (the earth was the first) introducing it to the children through questions, examples and sharing their own experiences and knowledge. In the following days we had several activities and games associated with the “element” in question, did small experiments, went on outings, and read and told stories related to the topic. We introduced animals that live in certain element as well (insects, reptiles, rodents, amphibians and fish, flying insects and birds) using memory games to recognize them and teaching the correct name in English. Finally the children made a collective / individual work of craft.

Examples

For the Earth element the children went around on our playground searching where this element was present. They found and brought to the class stones, pebbles, different types of soil and sand, pieces of bricks and tiles. We teachers added different minerals and crystals. The concept of earth as an element present in different forms on our planet became gradually clear through observation and touch. As a craft work we made available a large variety of materials coming from the ground (pebbles, bark, different seeds, sand, sticks). Then we let the children choose what they wanted to use to create a collage by gluing these materials on paper.

To introduce the element of Fire, we started with the observation of a candle flame, and in the following days we built together with the children a clay volcano, which was really working with fire and smoke. After a long observation, questions and answers children painted the erupting volcano.

For the Water element, we organized several team games with colored water, bottles to be filled by small containers or by squeezing a sponge and of course we organized games in the swimming pool.

Children have shown great interest, curiosity and speed at learning both theoretical and practical information. After two months we have done a “trip back” to see if the children had really assimilated the concepts and found that the information had been internalized and that there was no confusion between the different elements but full clarity.

Green Group Circus Project (age 5 to 7)

At the beginning of the school year 2013 to 2014 we were only 11 students. We were 4 girls and 7 boys. Then in January 3 girls and 1 boy joined, so we became 15 with 7 girls and 8 boys.

We started Circus sessions in August on a one morning weekly basis. we always began with a warm up led by Kalou. We did a lot of stretches and some strengthening exercises. She would keep changing the format inviting input from the children. Some of them were very stiff and others weak, especially in the arms. Then we would practice different skills using props if necessary. We practiced: clowning; acting; dancing; hula hoops; bouncing/rolling rubber balls; juggling soft balls; trapeze; silk; floor- exercises( cartwheels, forward and backward rolls, bridge); ribbons; clubs and more. In this group were two children with special needs. One boy was deaf on one ear and another did not speak .Therefore we were two teachers and one volunteer to assist Kalou in these sessions.
The variety of activities was amazing and the children really got a taste of many things. Sometimes there were guest artists for an hour or so. For example for a couple of sessions a professional clown worked with us. He also gave several performances, which most of the children could attend. There were acrobats, jugglers and even a dancer who gave of their time and skill to help the children learn.

In March we began to zone in on which child could do what. We also started working twice weekly. Working from their strengths we came up with a character/role for each of them.

In the end we were only 13 as 2 children had to leave early for vacation. Kalou came up with a story-line to bind all these characters together coherently. She selected suitable music and together with Shanthi and Shamba organised costumes and props. Jo and Amrita agreed to help us with face painting to complete their disguises. We also got a professional sound technician. The coherency of the story made it easy for the children to remember the sequence of their entrances. On the day of the performance the flow was excellent and act after act flowed smoothly. The music kept the atmosphere full of anticipation and joy. The children had fun too. The costumes were amazing and brought out the characters perfectly aided by the wonderful make-up. The two performances were a great success.

Apart from the physical skills these are some other things which the children developed: cooperation; concentration; respecting each other; joy of effort; sense of rhythm; perseverance; self-confidence; trust and plasticity. Each child went through a big learning process. Individual children made great progress. The announcer for example was shy and soft spoken, but suddenly he could come out on stage first and welcome everyone ! One of the clowns was often negative and stubborn, but he became a radiant entertainer. One of the ballerinas was insecure, and became confident. Like this each one grew in one way or another.

Also a team spirit emerged which for everyone was a precious gift to be part off. Every day despite of its routine and challenges had a feeling of adventure and unexpected magic.
NANDANAM KINDERGARTEN

JALAM group. (2 and a half to 3 years)

Since this year we had more than our usual number of children; our task was doubly challenging trying to settle in seventeen children to their new environment. It took longer for us to help all the children find their comfort-zone within the school. Once the children were settled, right from the beginning of school-year children were encouraged to be independent, depending on their individual capability. We focused on developing skills like: serving themselves at the snack/lunch table, eating without help; asking for help; using the toilet independently, removing and wearing their clothes, taking care of their bags and shoes and handling school materials with respect etc.

Children became more independent and could take better care of their personal needs. They improved their social skills and their fine and gross motor skills. Their creativity, imagination and curiosity were stimulated. They developed a greater sense of order, harmony and beauty and learnt to respect the people and the environment better. They learnt to overcome their fear of water and find a level of comfort in it. They explored colors and shapes and became familiar with them.

Vayu Group (Age: 4 and a half to 5 and half years)

This school year we had three girls and 9 boys in the class. We noticed straight away that the children in general were very energetic and had difficulty focusing on activities. As we worked with them we observed that most of them had a very keen interest in transport. Specially land transport – cars, buses, trucks, trains etc… thus we decided to take transport as a topic to work upon, so that children could develop their overall faculties and skills through it.

we displayed cut outs of different transports on the white boards and made available various transports that children could play with in small groups. Throughout the project we played several sensorial games with the children – identifying different transports by touch, noting the differences by observation and recalling the transport that had been removed from the set. At the end of the project with the children, we created a landscape (water, roads, mountains) in the classroom and placed all the transport related craft work in it. Then parents were invited to enjoy and celebrate the children’s creativity.

Children discovered the joy of being engaged in activities. They were more centered and grounded. They related to each other and the classroom material more respectfully. Their creativity was stimulated. They improved their fine and gross motor skills. They developed a greater capacity to think and to express their thoughts clearly. Their curiosity for the ‘why’ of things was stimulated. They became more aware of community around them especially in relations to the roads and the road rules. They mastered better the English language. They fine tuned their sensory awareness and through constant interactions with other children, they learnt to handle their emotions better. They also developed greater confidence in themselves.

Agni Group (Age: 5 and a half to 6 years)
Agni Space was a many layered project. It began because children were taken up with the ideas on space travel reading a book “All you need to know if you want to travel to the moon”. It took up their imagination and they dramatized and created many stories. They created a moon man and travelled to the moon in their imaginary spaceship and met aliens who were friendly and hostile.

Children understood better the world around them, both near (their house, community and Auroville) and far (fuller understanding of the earth, exposure to the solar system and the galaxy). Children improved their language and gained greater confidence in expressing themselves. Their creativity and imagination were stimulated as well as their reasoning and questioning mind. Children improved their fine and gross motor skills. They experienced the joy of engaging themselves fully in a project. They improved their social skills of cooperation and caring and learnt to handle their emotions.

We worked on the project for 3 months while all regular activities like playground time, relaxation time, free time upon arrival, awareness through the body, play of painting etc went on parallel, as usual.

**Collective Project involving all the classes of Nandanam – Exploring cultures of France**

Auroville is an international township and we wanted the children to experience the richness of the cultures present in Auroville so that they feel oneness towards every culture from the time when they are so young and the uniqueness of each specific culture and thus the uniqueness of Auroville. The aim was to expose the children to the smell, sights, tastes, and sounds of a culture – in this case, France - all on a sensorial level of the children so that they can feel the culture from their heart space.

An ambiance was created first to present the concept of culture to the children in the living room. A colourless map of the world, Flags of the countries/nationalities present in the school, a big earth hanging from the ceiling, Different dolls of the world, An aeroplane with photos of all in Nandanam, a passport office, puzzles of the world and many different flowers were used to prepare the living room. We looked at the globe and saw that it was made of land and water. On land lived people, flowers, animals etc. It was demonstrated to the children that like different flowers which have different colours, shape, fragrances people also have different coloured skin, speak different languages, eat different foods etc which make up a culture and then the different dolls from different parts of the world came alive to songs from their countries.

Children were told that we were all going on an imaginary journey to different countries to see different cultures and the first one was France. We needed passports to go in our imaginary plane so then all the children explored going to the passport office to prepare their passports, making the flag of France, making a chart of The people of the world, exploring the puzzles and dolls and placing their photos on Auroville symbol and seeing people of the world being represented in Auroville for Human unity! The next day different areas in the foyer exhibited different topics of France like nature, transport, landmarks, flowers, animals, clothes, seasons, heroes, food etc. to bring a feel of France in the school. French music (Jack Breal) welcomed the children into the school. We played at boarding the aeroplane, landing in France, showing our passport and visa (a stamp of the Eiffel tower) to the French official (a parent), and welcome to France with a roll-on French perfume and gathering in the courtyard near the French flag. All the children were greeted in French and listened to some conversations in French and then different groups presented French songs. A table was set specially to show how the table is laid in France. French breakfast of croissants with grape jam and grapes was served to the children and thereafter they explored making perfumes, glass painting, making snowflakes, and diadems. Each activity helped bring something of France in a sensorial way to the children and at the same time focused on certain skills.
Outcome:

- Children were exposed to the sounds of the French language.
- They grew more aware of the world around them.
- Children were concentrated learning specific skills in the specific activities.
- All the children of Agni group children developed a greater self confidence by performing a play 'The Grey Palfrey' and transported the whole school to the world of castles, knights and princesses- The middle ages in France.
- Working in mixed age groups, children learnt from each other build stronger connection with all.
- The aim of exploring French culture mainly at the sensorial level - through, fragrances, pictures, music, dance, tastes, art and craft, story and drama was accomplished. Children enjoyed it and through it gain a lot of experience at various levels.
TRANSITION SCHOOL

Transition School is a primary and middle school that serves the Auroville community. There are now about 160 students, ranging in age from 6-14 (grades 1 through 8). These students, and the adults that work with them, come from over 19 different countries and several states of India. This creates an interesting multi-cultural environment that offers thought-provoking opportunities for dynamic, creative teaching and learning experiences. It also exposes teachers and children to humanity’s rich cultural heritage and diversity. These children from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds grow together in an atmosphere of protected freedom and harmony, which fosters an aspiration for human unity.

Our program initiates what will hopefully be a life-long process of individual development towards a balance of body, mind, and spirit. The program includes reading, writing, maths, sciences, computer, environmental and social studies, French, Tamil, Awareness through the Body, arts, crafts and music. The children also participate in a regular sports program. Each subject is viewed as a tool for self-discovery, as well as an instrument for children to learn to express themselves and gain knowledge.

Some Highlights of the year

A value oriented program is the foundation of all of our work, and is integrated throughout the program and in the physical and psychological environment of the school. This year the theme that the school chose to study together was “The interconnectedness of all living things”. It was explored by all the classes and in different ways through: poetry, art, music, literature, science, history and our everyday experiences. Here is a report from the Awareness through the Body team on their observations with the students.

Awareness through the body (ATB) at Grades 5-8

The school theme for this year was: Unity of all life/Connectedness-Interconnectedness.

In ATB classes we approached the theme at an experiential level. We focused on Life as something that we can feel, experience and sense, both in our bodies and around us. Our aim was to assist children to sense how Life speaks to them, to find their own way into listening to Life. When we open up to Life we automatically enter in resonance with a sense of unity, the sense of interconnectedness of all Life.

Our project consisted of:

Listening to the sense of life in the body and with the body

Sensing Life in: Oneself, Another human being, A rock, A tree, The Earth

We built up on the self-sensing ability children had been developing over the years as part of the ATB program in the school. We spread the project throughout the year. We started by working on sensations so that children would clearly know what to pay attention to. We made a list of basic sensations and divided them in categories that children could easily understand and remember. After explaining the list and clarifying the words that children did not understand, we proposed different types of exercises where children could experience sensations and had to name them. For instance, touching different types of materials and giving a name for each touch sensation.

From here we moved onto sensing Life in one’s own body and again use the list of sensations to accurately name the sensations one would feel. They listened to the sensations of Life in their bodies and then shared 2 or 3 with the group. This was done often at the end of the class as a conclusion.
When children were familiar with this way of listening to the sensations in and around their bodies, we explored listening to another person’s body and been listened to by another person. For instance one child would lie down and another would softly place his hand at the sides of the head and both would be guided by us into listening to the sensation/s of Life.

To conclude the project we guided the children into exploring Life in the ATB garden. The children, once tuned to their sensations, were asked to come out to the garden blindfolded and listen to Life outdoors, giving special attention to trees, rocks, and the Earth itself.

After some of the sessions children took a moment to write about their experience. They did that in a brainstorm-like way. Here follow some examples of what they wrote; the following quotes are literal transcriptions from the ATB journals of children from 7th and 8th grade:

**Sensing Life in oneself and in another person’s body**

- I saw an image of black ink splashed on a grey surface. Life feels like a tingling vibration of many tiny moving things. Life feels like movement: twitching all the muscles of the body, the eyes and the jaw. I feel warmth, a presence or force. I felt and saw waving movement. 13 year old boy
- I feel like his left brain is only working because I could feel movement, but in the right I felt no movement. Life feels like it moves everywhere and it breathes. Listening to life makes me think who I am and how I got this life. 13 year old boy
- When I placed my hands on her head I felt really warm. On the left side I felt something knocking, on the right side everything felt really quiet inside. The left side felt much bigger or filled with something, the right felt empty and much smaller. At one point everything inside felt so quiet and empty. 14 year old girl
- I felt waves. First they were slow and big but then they started become fast and small. These waves came one after the other. They went through my hands. When I was lying I could feel them in my head

**Sensing Life on the Earth, rocks and trees (outdoors blindfolded)**

- When I touched one of my friends body I felt the heart beat, and some type of waves like the ocean, like the tide. When I went outside at first I wasn’t sure what to feel, but I made my body soft and somehow connected to the Earth. I felt all the living around me. When I went to the rock I could feel how dense it was, it also felt very still and peaceful. I sat and leaned against a tree and it felt like a cocoon, and all my thought and emotions were with the tree. It felt very nice, I could feel ants on my legs and a leaf fell on my hand, it all felt very different without the eyes. 14 year old boy
- For me life feels amazing. Everything has a beat, trees, rocks and the Earth. For me the most interesting part was the tree. I sat in the middle of two branches and felt little animals inside the trunk, and in that moment I felt happy, no worries in my head, just happiness. 13 year old girl
- When I felt the tree I felt its protection. When I touched the Earth, ground, I could feel how huge the Earth is, and how far it extends. Rocks gave me a soothing feeling, a relaxing one. 13 year old girl
I felt life talking to me with new and different words and voices. I felt life draw a picture with different colors and shapes. I felt that there is so much about life that we don’t see in our daily life because we don’t pay attention. 14 year old girl

I sat on a rock and I almost felt like it was living. It is like it was some creature stack with one emotion. When I was seating on the rock all my senses kind of became better, it is like I could feel better the wind, and the birds seemed louder. When I was leaning against the tree I also felt life but in a kind of different way. I felt that if the tree could speak and listen to other people, it would be the tree everybody came to for help; a wise tree. Somehow the tree was moving up and down, kind of breathing. When I was seating on the ground I felt its solidity. 14 year old girl

I laid on a rock and I felt: me and the rock as the same body but two different voices. 14 year old boy

When I was leaning against the tree and then lying down on the small rocks, I felt like I could just stay and relax there forever! It’s a really nice feeling having the rocks underneath you or the tree against your back, with the warm sun shining in my face. It’s as if these things can protect me, so I feel safe. 14 year old girl.

An endless movement, even in the stones a soft low rush of vibration. In people, life is clear and strong, loudly beating hearts, strong breathing and endless change of tiny movements. In the Earth and stones life is harder to find, maybe because it’s a slower life, less clear. Life is warmth and movement. In the Earth life feels like a low hum, maybe if we took one breath in 1000 years it would sound like the life of the Earth. 14 year old girl.

We have seen that with this project, children felt more connected not only to Life around them but especially to a deeper sense of themselves. They also experienced that when one listens attentively to Life, something in oneself grows very calm and quiet.

Next year we plan to build upon the work of this year, to further develop the exploration into a more intimate connection with Life.

Learning from our Environment and Neighbors

There is a commitment to developing the whole child at Transition, and different learning styles are addressed through the implementation of different methods: cooperative learning, individual work, class projects and outings. This year the different classes participated in many different outings. Often these outings are linked with a project that the class has been working on in the classroom. There are many activities and areas of innovative work in Auroville and the surrounding area and we can all learn a lot from the people that we meet and the places that we go.

With meaningful lesson objectives and good planning, a field experience can engage students in learning and leave a lasting impression. Field trips and outings appeal to the students and offer many opportunities for learning.

Children were encouraged to write about the outings and put the writing in their portfolio. Teachers shared outcomes and learning experiences in discussion and have started to keep a file of people and places to visit and how to prepare for the visit.

The following brief reports demonstrate only some of the wide range of experiences that were offered to the children this year.

Grade 1: the White Tigers:

For their project on rain forests, the White Tigers (1st grade), visited the Auroville Botanical Garden. They saw many different kinds of plants in the Orchid Garden, the
Cactus Garden, and the Butterfly Garden. The highlight of their trip was playing the Web of Life Game which demonstrated how all things on earth are interconnected.

They also visited Pitchandikulum and saw the Medicinal Plants Garden. They saw many interesting things in the Nature Museum there, and looked at photos of Auroville from 40 years ago. They took a walk and saw how the barren area has changed to become a forest. They also saw artists at work painting sculptures and pictures of the local flora and fauna on granite.

**Grade 2 the Jaguars:**

This year the 2nd grade class did projects related to the Plant and Animal Kingdoms. As part of their study of plants, they planted a collective vegetable garden in which they grew a variety of vegetables. They also planted their own plants in individual pots. They maintained their garden themselves, and shared their harvest. They made mung bean sprouts which they offered at the school lunch to all students and teachers.

They went on a field trip to Revelation. Regina told them about the different kinds of trees and plants in Auroville. She also taught them the Mother’s rain song.

They went by bicycle on a field trip to Discipline Farm. Jeff and his workers told them about the organically grown fruits and vegetables on the farm. They had a chance to look around and learn about weeding, compost, and the use of cow urine in farming. They also got to taste some of the produce.

In their project on the Animal Kingdom, they chose their favorite animals to do research on. They created posters to share and present their report.

They went on an all-day field trip to Vandaloor Zoo, where they saw many different animals, some of which they had never seen before. During the following week the students wrote about their trip to the zoo in their English class.

**Report from Grade 3**

In order to enrich learning and get hands-on experience, we went on a number of outings and invited experts into our classroom when it was relevant to our projects.

When we were learning about Wellness, the class went on a trip to Pitanga to experience a Yoga class with Gala. The children were able to learn yoga asanas and breathing techniques. Some of the things children wrote after this session were: “I learned how to…. relax, stretch my body, get out of bed. I thought it would be easy but it was difficult. I loved yoga class!”

Another outing was to the Pour Tous Distribution Centre where we made pesto with Pierre. The children started from washing basil and squeezing lemons, all the way to bottling the finished product. Finally we sampled the result. For the first time, many children experienced food preparation from start to completion following a recipe. They also got a sense of how healthy food can taste great. After this outing some children wrote: It was fun making pesto. I loved eating it and I'd like to make it again. I thought it would be hard to make, but it was easy.

These exposures helped children further connect to what they learned in class about wellness. At the end of the term we had a party and everyone brought something to eat. The only criterion was it had to be healthy. There were fruits, hummus, vegetables, whole grain breads, etc. Everyone had fun and noted that they felt good because they enjoyed all the food, there was no junk and no one overate.

Another project this year was: All About Rocks. The project began with Jeff, an Aurovillian geologist, presenting the 3 main types of rocks and how they are formed. Each student brought
3 of their own stones and was helped to identify and classify them. We went on a trip to the Petrified Forest and a Granite mine in Tiruvakkarai accompanied by a knowledgeable parent and Jeff. Children were able to look at many different types of stones. When they understood how long wood took to petrify and rocks to form, they began to touch them with reverence. They collected some samples of rocks (identified with the help of the geologist) to take home and display in the classroom.

Another activity related to the project was making fossilized casts with plaster of paris. Unfortunately the plaster did not set properly and just cracked. However, one parent regularly makes dental impressions and came to our rescue. He brought professional dental plaster and made the fossilized casts with the kids two at a time. The kids were very engaged, liked to see the steps involved, and were delighted with the end result. Hopefully the children learned that when something goes wrong we (even teachers) can get help to try to turn a failure into a successful outcome.

All of these outings and experts to our classroom helped children connect to what they learned in class. It supported an awakening towards a joy for learning, stimulated interest in the subject area, and enhanced cooperative learning skills.

**Grade 4: Garbology and Field Trips**

The grade 4 class had regular classes centered on: A Solid Waste curriculum designed in Auroville by Waste-Less. It looks at waste generation in the world and around us and how we can learn to be conscious. It is a wonderful tool which can be used in many social studies - and science activities. We looked at the waste we generate in our households and in Auroville and how this gets disposed of (there is no 'away'!), we learned about mining minerals, oil manufacturing, industry, production, the goods we buy, the things we eat, their packaging and their various waste streams. We looked how different societies dispose of their waste, and many other aspects of waste and waste disposal. We made sure there were boxes in each classroom to collect waste paper (which goes to Auro papers, which in turn gave us a notebook made of that wastepaper!)

Aranya is a forest and sanctuary in Auroville, a bio-diversity conservation project, watershed model and educational center close to Usteri lake; a wetland that attracts thousands of migratory waterfowl. It encompasses 45 acres of plateau, pebble land and ravines and gullies. At one point of time the whole area was severely eroded and without any vegetative cover. In 1994 the IDRC (Int. Dev. Research Center) started a project to restore the TDEF (Tropical Dry Evergreen Forest) and restored the indigenous flora and fauna species to this land. Rain fed afforestation using saplings and genetic stock was undertaken and slowly the land recovered. Aranya receives many students and schools and has established Eco clubs for the nearby village children. The student learned from Saravana and Kundhavi; biologists working and living at Aranya, they walked the land, discovered the gullies and ravines, saw indigenous thorn bushes blooming and found fossil corals, and played the web of life game and observed the shy toddy cat baby. Aryany cooked us an amazing lunch of organic healthy food and the students were invited to come and stay overnight in the next school year!

**Grade 5 The Golden Dragons: Arikamedu Field Trip**

In 5th grade the subject of history is introduced to the students. About seven kilometers south of Pondicherry, there is an archaeological site, Virampatnam-Arikamedu, situated on the banks of
the Ariankuppam River. This is the ideal location to give students an idea of archaeology. Arikamedu was a thriving centre for maritime trade during the Sangam Era (3rd century B.C. to 3rd century A.D.), named after the Tamil Sangams, legendary assemblies of scholars and poets. The port served as a trading centre between the East and West. Excavations have unearthed Roman amphorae, jewellery and coins. The ruins of an ancient, broken-down wall and tiny beads in the soil are the only remains of this ancient town.

Before the field trip, a slide show presentation was given to the children. It included Google earth maps of the area we would be visiting and photographs of archaeological artifacts that have been discovered at the site. The students also had an introduction to Sangam poetry, which reveals details of how ordinary people lived at the time, including children.

Three teachers and nineteen students travelled by bus to Arikamedu. First, we explored the area, discovering the ancient wall and measuring the bricks that are still lying on the ground. A walk along the river led to the field where the beads were made. The children dug in the soil and discovered the beads.

After this, we had snack, and then we found a tree where the children could relax in the shade. One teacher led the students through a visualization of how life would have been for a child in the Sangam Era. As a follow-up activity, the students completed a quiz on Arikamedu, and they created illustrated poems.

**Grade 6: The Phoenix Firebirds Vandaloor Zoo Field Trip:**

On 6th March 2014, we took the Phoenix Firebirds on an all day field trip to the Vandaloor Zoo in Chennai. We left in the early morning on the school bus and arrived at the zoo by mid morning, after stopping for breakfast on the way.

The children were very thrilled to see all these new animals they had never seen in real life before, such as the white tigers, the gorilla, the giraffes, the hippos and the bears.

In parallel to the field trip, the children had carried out their own internet research on the animals of their choice from a list of all the animals present at the zoo. This involved Science, as they learned about the animal's behavior and habits as well as Geography, as they had to find out the animal's natural habitat and world distribution and fill in that information on a map.

During the field trip the Phoenix Firebirds really bonded as a group. During our long walk around the zoo they always looked out for each other, waiting for one another, making sure nobody fell behind. The boys felt very responsible for the girls and always made sure everything was going well. They all had a great time on the way there and back, on the bus, listening to music, chatting and laughing. They shared all the food and snacks they had brought amongst each other. The field trip was a great success.

**Grade 8: Eagles Bio-Char Solar Energy and Adyar Ponga**

This year the Grade 8 class went on several outings that were related to our study of science. Education and progress are central to the Auroville society and there are many activities and areas of research and innovative work, and this offers many opportunities to extend learning beyond the walls of the classroom.
The eighth grade students (Eagles) worked on a project on Biochar during Jan-Feb 2014. The project was conducted by Deoyani Sarkhot.

First they had a power point presentation on Biochar, its benefits, applications and its manufacture. The students were also introduced to the use of charcoal in Auroville and the comparative data on the yields with and without charcoal on two AV farms (Annapoorna and Discipline).

Also, they watched a film on the discovery of the "Terra Prata" - the black earth in Central Amazonia built over hundreds of years by the pre-European native Indians. Then they were taken on a field trip to Discipline farm where they saw the kiln that was being used to make charcoal and vermi-composting with charcoal. Deoyani and the volunteers at Discipline farm explained the functioning of the 30 kg capacity kiln. We then went to the large Cuppa Chai kiln across the road and saw the large 750 kg capacity kiln. In another class, the students spent two hours working with small stoves to make charcoal in Transition School and collected data about the mass of wood used and the mass of charcoal produced to get a sense of the efficiency of the stove.

Finally they had a one-page questionnaire to answer questions about biochar, its manufacture and advantages.

This unit was part of the Science study of the Environment and it proved to be an inspiring one. The students seemed inspired and we have had a preliminary talk with Deoyani about doing it again with the next year's eighth grade.

**Solar Energy:** We were also introduced to solar energy through a visit to the AV Foundation building roof. The building is powered by solar panels. We were lucky to have the expertise of a young volunteer to AV who taught the students a lot.

**Adyar Eco Park** Additionally we had the opportunity to go to Adyar Eco Park (also known as Adyar Poonga) an ecological park set up by the Government of Tamil Nadu in the Adyar estuary area of Chennai. I have taken several grade 8 classes to the park, and it is a very inspiring example of how an ecologically damaged area can be restored to vibrant life. They can see how with hard work, dedication and the knowledge of science what can be done. This is important as sometimes children of this age feel overwhelmed with all of the news about ecological problems and disasters. After this trip they all wrote a personal narrative telling about the day, what they learned and how they felt about it.

Field trips and outings can be designed to effectively support student learning experiences in the classroom and offer new opportunities to explore and understand the topics. They also help children acquire skills such as cooperation, collaboration, communication and independent learning; this helps to prepare them for lifelong learning.

**Highlight: Progress in the Mathematics program**

Every year at the end of the school year, the Transition Team sets aside time to discuss and evaluate the work of the school year. Many issues are approached, those issues that the members of the team are concerned about. Some years ago our mathematics program was a topic that we decided needed work. We had many meetings with teachers of mathematics, offered some workshops on hands on mathematics, explored new material and restructured
some of the classes into flexible learning groups. This meant that we needed more people to help. This year the feedback that we got indicates there is improvement in the general mathematics level of our graduating students. This is an ongoing effort and we will continue. Here are two reports that demonstrate different ways that we have been working:

**Mathematics Projects:**

Math projects in 5th grade

Building three-dimensional geometric shapes.

This very popular activity is a great way for students to learn to measure accurately and use the tools in their geometry boxes. Additionally, students learned to calculate angles. We started by building a tetrahedron, then a cube, an octahedron, and finally, a dodecahedron. The children learned how to use a protractor, ruler and a pair of compasses. The shapes make beautiful hanging decorations in the classroom. Each student created their own colourful designs on the faces of the different shapes.

Presenting data in graphs

Having studied different ways of presenting data, the students chose survey questions. In small groups, they visited all the classes in Transition and collected information. They then used this information to work in groups and create bar graphs, line graphs, pie charts and pictographs to share with the rest of the school. This exercise included the questions: How many siblings do you have? Which is your favourite lunch day? Which nationality are you? Which languages do you speak? Which community do you live in?

The children found out that there are students from 18 different countries studying at Transition School.

This data was shared with the community at the all school open house, and then it was presented to the whole school in assembly.

**Individualized learning of Mathematics through Khan Academy at Transition School's computer lab.**

During the school year July 2013 – May 2014 individualized beginners Mathematics was offered in our computer lab to 5th and 6th grade students. For this experiment the Maths section of the free website [www.khanacademy.org](http://www.khanacademy.org) was used as it received good reviews. The site offers hints and also videos to explain the level at hand. It builds up from 1st grade to college level in small incremental steps and allows users to go backwards or forwards at will, though it also makes suggestions for the next step. Five answers are to be given 100% correct in a row for a level to be ticked off as finished by the software. The repetition options of a website are important for a subject like Math. It generates different questions each time so thinking is stimulated over memorizing or copying.

It is very useful to let students align to their own level as a group of 20 in our context easily contains 3 to 4 different clusters with 1 or 2 students as extreme outliers. The fact that Khan Academy kept changing its layout to “improve” was not helpful.
The hampering factor for individualized Math learning at these levels is more perseverance than Mathematical intelligence. Those with the most self motivation/perseverance advanced furthest. Many an intelligent student balked at seeing a new level that looked slightly difficult. Only after the teacher “answered” an example they saw that it was easy and continued. Therefore a teacher is necessary to persuade many students to continue, not so much to explain any new Mathematical operation. We should encourage perseverance and self reliance more. Physically present “teachers” still have a role to play in the informatics age.

**Outputs throughout the school:**

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

- Posters
- Power Point presentations
- Photographs
- Work for the student portfolio
- Essays
- Theatre presentations and props
- Music and Poetry presentation
- Student written books
- Open house presentations
- Drawings
- Artwork: Art Exhibition
- Teachers’ study days

**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 curiosity and wonder: the desire to keep learning.
- The chance to recognize and use our knowledge and special talents
- The ability to work and progress-perseverance
- Self-knowledge
- Cooperative learning and teamwork skills
- Self-esteem and self discipline
- A sense of independent learning
- A sense of well-being

**Challenges:**

Our main challenges continue to be finding, training and keeping committed teachers who understand the aims of integral education. 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 support values and human unity, especially in the areas of science and social studies.
2) We plan to have more opportunities for teachers to study together. We will plan a minimum of three teachers’ study sessions.
3) We will continue to develop individualized learning methods for Integral Education
4) 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.
THE LEARNING COMMUNITY

The Learning Community has completed its fifth year of operation. This year we worked with 23 children.

LEARNING SPACES

This past year has embraced a significant change for the learning community as we moved into the old pre-crèche campus and established our ‘Base Camp’. Much energy has been invested in creating a space in keeping with our outlook and approach to education, using limited funds, but amazing energy and resourcefulness from involved children and adults.

We have created a new space for next year to house the academic materials to be used in classes.

In addition to the communities of Fertile and Evergreen, which have always hosted TLC’s activities, we have extended our community outreach to two new community projects – Solitude where the children have been very involved in the farm and related projects, and Pitchandikulam where they have been facilitated in forest-related activities.

Following is an overview of the activities in the 4 communities:

- **Fertile**

  Fertile is one of Auroville’s oldest forest communities. It's founder, Johnny, has been a patriarchal figure in TLC since the beginning. Johnny facilitates the children in individual sessions, teaches small groups of children geometry, project work, theatre, among others, and opens the space to a larger group of children once a week for a morning of free exploration. Fertile is a rambling plethora of carpentry tools, makeshift furniture, chests of miscellaneous treasures, chickens, homemade toys and Johnny at the forefront and background of it all, enabling the children through his unique and somewhat eccentric approach to education, a space where they can follow their own directions, materialize the focus of their imaginations, facilitated, but not led, allowing maximum freedom wherever possible.

- **Evergreen**

  Evergreen is one of Auroville’s communities which offers a space for lots of TLC activities. It is a forest community which also hosts a horse project, a bakery and a guest house for the young volunteers. During the 5 years since TLC’s establishment, the children have spent a lot of time in evergreen, making it a kind of ‘second home’ for many. It’s young forest and varied activities provide many opportunities for the children to get involved in different learning processes, according to their interests. Currently, several of the children participate in a weekly horse class (riding and horse care) under the 'evergreen horses' project, others attend a class called 'Baking English' (where the children learn English through the medium of baking) and several are facilitated in smaller groups through forest explorations and ‘unstructured’ time in the community and forest.
**Solitude**

Solitude farm is a very dynamic farm of Auroville located near the Visitors Center. During the last academic year Krishna and his volunteers have welcomed the learning community twice a week. Almost all TLC children have gardening on their schedule. The activities are:

i. being involved in farming tasks like transplanting rice or harvesting tomatoes
ii. creating our own permaculture garden with vegetables and herbs. Taking care of it, observing the evolution and enjoying our harvest.

**Pitchandikulam**

Pitchandikulam is a natural tropical dry evergreen forest near Kuilapalayam. It's a research center for forestry and traditional plant medicine. During the past academic year the children have been coming here twice a week. Once a week they experience the space in a largely unstructured framework. They explore the forest and are exposed to small workshops in crafts and learn about the benefits of plants.

**BUILDING A CLASSROOM WITH JOHNNY**

After moving into the old pre-crèche compound, we realized that the campus serves us well as a base, but the buildings were not able to provide a classroom set-up for the children. We decided to approach SAIIER to fund a new classroom. At the same time we wanted to fund ourselves for the coming school year.

We held a fundraising dinner in February, which involved over 100 people. In order to make the event educational, we worked together with children and parents from the planning stages, to post dinner clean-up. All worked together smoothly and with a great enthusiasm and there was much support from the wider community, from food to performances. As a result we raised a substantial amount and there was very positive feedback from community. Children and parents recall the evening as a wonderful bonding time and a special occasion in which we shared TLC spirit with the wider community.

With money from the dinner, we decided to build a capsule which could keep our materials safe and provide a better classroom set-up. With much help from Johnny and Fertile community, both in workforce and finances, we built an approximately 4mx4m de-mountable capsule. The process of building became an educational process, which offered a rare opportunity to children to understand a building process and to learn practical skills - for example carpentry work, mud wall fixing and etc.

The building itself is environment-friendly and perfectly fits our campus. We have learnt that the process of building a capsule was a unique and creative educational experience.

**FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips and wilderness experiences play an important part of TLC's educational framework. We believe that wilderness experiences embody the values of tenacity, responsibility, judgement, self-discipline, and compassion. These experiences strengthen self-confidence, improve relationships and encourage good judgement, 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.

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. 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.

This last year we split up the group for the main outing of the year – half going to Kavunji nature camp in Kodaikanal and the other half to Varanashi organic farm in Karnataka.

A report on the Kavunji trip:

Fourteen children (ages 6 – 9) and six adults went on a one-week trip to Kavunji. The learning for the adults began with the planning for the trip; for the children, it began as we left AV in a bus at 4.30 am on a cool October morning.

Through all the convenience of having one’s own transport and the fun of travelling with friends in a moving vehicle all day, the actual drive up and down was an exercise in patience (through a 11-hour drive ; “When will we be there?”), tolerance (towards others in a small space with lots of people and all their things) and self-control (some children chose to not eat most of the way because of travelling sickness).

While we were there, the children and adults were involved in these sorts of activities:

Hauling our things from the bus to the camp and back,

Food preparation and associated activities (including setting up the oven and making and eating fresh hot pizza on a cold night and a barbecue night),

Sitting around the fire, talking and sorting out misunderstandings,

Performing songs, skits, magic shows etc,

Walking to Kavunji village and back,

Exploring the camp area,

Waking up at 5.30 in the morning to go watch bison,

Walking to the lake and back down a steep terraced-field slope with an amazing sense of crawling down the slope through this spectacular scenery,

Working on the camp itself (painting the bathroom doors, reinforcing the sandbags behind the bathrooms, moving a huge pile of firewood),

Bringing the stream below to life – by building dams and rafts and playing in it for hours.
It was an empowering experience for many of the children to manage themselves, their belongings and their friends in the absence of their parents. The quiet, cool, clear air, the isolation, the spectacular view of these green terraced fields all around, and the need to generate each meal from scratch for the whole group – these factors came together to generate a comforting warmth and camaraderie among adults and children alike.

**GARDENING AT SOLITUDE**

This year, TLC was invited by Krishna to experience Solitude farm and how our food is growing. We went to the farm 2 mornings a week and the children were divided in different mixed aged groups for each 1 hour slot (some bigger children had 2 hours). During the first term, the focus was on being involved in the farm work, following the rhythm of the growing seasons. We learned about crop rotation and local millets. Highlights were: transplanting ragi and rice, also ploughing the field with the bullock.

During the 2nd term, we were allotted a small area were we could create our own permaculture garden. Each group participated in the making of a big circle garden, step by step from clearing the area, digging trenches around the bed, preparing the soil, mulching, sowing and planting seedlings and watering. We observed the insects and small animals, which had settled down in our garden and the growth (or lack of growth) of the vegetables, fruits and herbs. We also spent some time in the nursery, filling up pots, sowing and transplanting.

The last term was a great time for harvest and for tasting our produce, we made salads with the green leaves, tomato and cucumber. We also cooked tapioca. As some of the children expressed the wish to have their own small patch, we created some new gardens and the children in small groups of 2-3 took responsibility for the care of these patches. Highlight of the farming work was to harvest the rice from the field, as we did the ploughing.

Other classes like creative writing, Tamil and French took also place in Solitude as Krishna has allocated us use a small roofed area. The content and creativity of these classes was highlighted and enriched by the context of being in a living, growing environment. Gardening and farming in Solitude has been a great experience, we are looking forward to continuing next school year, experimenting with a slightly different approach, aiming to enhance a deeper understanding about the connection between us, the food we grow and our impact on the environment.

**MAP PROJECT**

Five children (age 9-10) were engaged in a project on maps for one term. The aim of the class was to introduce the children not just to maps themselves, but to gain an understanding of the motivations behind map-making and mapping techniques, to read maps as texts with a context. To gain a most comprehensive understanding of the subject, the project aimed to be as interdisciplinarian as possible. The project extended historically to ancient and old maps, and highlighted European exploration, trade and colonialism, and the problems faced by map-makers. In terms of maths and science, we made sextants, compasses and learned about angles and degrees, as well as planetary constellations. Art and craft had its place in the children’s individual map collages, the joint map of our Pondicherry experience, and the paper globes. The trip into Pondicherry also enabled children to engage with the subject in a personal, concrete, sensual...
and more holistic way, which allowed for an experiential understanding, very different from merely studying in the classroom.

To begin with the focus was on how maps as we know them are an extension of the mental mapping that gives a person the sense of his/her surrounding and his/her place within it. We further investigated the power of maps and those who make them, the implication of naming places, and how maps always have a purpose, though not always an explicit one. The second part centred on the ongoing dilemma of how to project a spherical earth onto a flat, rectangular paper, and the children explored this practically by cutting up oranges and making paper models. We discussed the various advantages and disadvantages of different projections, and their political motivations. Continuing from there, the children learnt about the importance of longitude and latitude, the connection to time zones, and how to read maps in terms of their scale and key. The third component explored how one would use a map to find ones’ way, i.e. navigation on land and at sea. In a geographical treasure hunt in Pondicherry, the children experienced the importance of the cardinal directions, how to use a map, but also how the map is not the territory, since the reality far exceeds the mere spatial dimensions represented on the map. The difficulties of navigating at sea start with establishing your own position before you can decide which direction leads to your destination. We made our own sextants to establish our latitude by measuring the elevation of the North Star. Understanding how a chronometer was used to determine ones’ longitude, we next made compasses which are the third instrument needed for navigation, to establish the direction of travel. As a counter balance to this kind of mapping and navigation, which stems from a European, scientific tradition, we briefly glimpsed other ways in which space has been and is imagined. Way-finding, as practiced by the Polynesians, and the Australian Aborigines’ song-lines, showed us very different ways of looking at ones’ surroundings and reaching ones’ destination. Non-human ways of reaching a location, added yet another dimension; echo location, sensing the earth’s magnetic field, as well as the sense of smell and sound is used by a number of animals as they navigate their way around daily or for migration. Finally, we brought the project back to the kids themselves, the ‘TLC tangle’ shows the trajectories for each child and their parents on a world map.

**BAKING ENGLISH**

The Baking English programme, which began two years ago, uses baking as a medium for developing skills related to English language development. This year 11 of the older children participated in the classes.

The classes took on an additional angle this year, and included the element of photography. Giorgio kindly donated a camera to the project and he attended the classes and instructed the children on its use. Each class had one designated photographer, who would document the baking process.

Toward the end of the year the children sat with Giorgio and he showed them how to combine their selected photographs with the recipe texts to create the pages of the baking English recipe book.

It has become a tradition that the baking English students provide the refreshments for TLC’s annual open house. This year Tamar was out of station at the time and therefore not able to facilitate the process, but the children decided to go ahead with the task notwithstanding. Sowmya kindly offered her presiding presence at the baking sessions prior to the open house, and the children managed with minimal assistance to produce an array of patisserie that was enjoyed by all at the open house!
DEEPANAM SCHOOL

Deepanam School aims to provide this precious gift - "joy of learning" as proposed by The Mother; to give the possibilities to children to develop the necessary qualities for "Free Progress education" and the joy of learning for its own sake.

Our ultimate objective is to help identify in each child their full potential and bring out their best. This leads us to create an educational environment that is plastic and flexible but at the same time methodical. Guiding them with the sense of freedom & discipline where certain values are nurtured organically.

This academic year Deepanam school started with mixed age group class rooms:

Group-1 -- Light --- 7, 8 and 9 years = 14 students  
Group-2 – Peace --- 10, 11, and 12 years = 14 students  
Group-3 – Faith --- 13 and 14 years = 10 students  
Gr. 4 - Welcome group ---- mixed age for new / guests students = 6 students

MIX AGE GROUPS

By working with mix age groups, our team of teachers soon realized that this approach creates a family model where everyone, teachers and students, learn to appreciate the differences in each other. Children of different levels of maturity and with different levels of capacities offered richness to the learning environment.

Children were guided to learn to value and respect these differences in each person. Mixed age group encourages cooperation instead of competition and comparison. Children support each other in their learning process.

In this model of working a student continues for 3 years with the same group & the same teachers. Having the same teachers for 3 years gives lots of support and confidence to a child and also the teachers build a deep relationship and can follow the development of each child over a longer period, and thereby has greater possibilities of seeing and meeting the needs of each child.

This academic year the emphasis was in building a process to cultivate values in our students. The result was that we saw them growing as a team /family of progressive, successful learners who supported and cared for each other. Their level of independence and competence raised. The sense of responsibility, sharing and leadership gave them the joy of learning as one unit.

Light group (7, 8, 9 years)

Our first group did a variety of activities in their regular subjects; the children were invited to take charge of their learning, by them choosing their own work-plans. In order to meet the needs of different learning styles we try to offer a variety of activities and progressive learning materials in
the classroom where each one does his/her work according to their level. This sense of "ownership" and self-direction is the foundation for lifelong learning.

Apart from regular subjects each term had a project to work on and a responsibility to present it in the form of songs and dramas to the friends and parents.

Every Friday we went on a Field study class to Dehashakti School sports complex to work with the horses. These field work experiences empower children to be more responsible and build self confidence as well.

**Peace group (10, 11, 12 years)**

At Deepanam the schedule is made to allow the children to work for longer periods without being interrupted. This gives the children the possibility to develop their ability to concentrate on their work, and to complete what they are doing at their own pace.

In this group the children were interested and concentrated enough to go out in the nature to study the common birds of Auroville and also showed keen interest for the study of the reptiles & amphibians.

Basic physics was carried out through various short experiments to better understand the natural laws in science.

Project India was one major study carried out by the class - students were encouraged to have a deeper understanding of their local surrounding and of the larger country they are in. This included discovering the vast differences in people & culture of India with their festivals & food, clothing & languages too. This is an important step for children to learn about themselves from near to far.

Visiting various Auroville units and learning about the different aspect of the community - to be connected to the ideals of Auroville & its aims were part of this program.

**Faith group (13, 14 years )**

This group used the broad spectrum of work in Auroville as a base for their curriculum. Having Auroville as their resource for exploration and learning, by inviting Aurovillians to interact and share their knowledge with children in the school and by reaching out to different units / workshops in Auroville - where the children participate in the work throughout the year.

Here are brief details of some projects undertaken:

1. Waste management and Garbology ---- Discussions on impact on environment due to pollution and waste were often done in classes.
2. Electronics: They were actively involved in creating a gadget which measured speed and distance traveled by the bicycle by using Arduino. It helped develop computational skill and math as they developed the software for the same along with set up of hardware.
3. Theater was done on Fridays ------ This year the class decided to perform a bigger play 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory'. Children prepared Props and painted backgrounds which was a joyous experience. Preparing for the performance helped build self-confidence and cooperation. It was a challenging effort by all to achieve a common goal.
4. Radio & recording - was also explored as a medium for creativity and imagination. Skits, stories, poems, interviews and songs were done on radio. It was a wonderful experience as they listened to their own voice on radio.
5. Film making - ‘Power of knowledge’ Children did the story, dialogue writing, editing, sound and camera work.
6. Survey project on Sustainable mobility with L’avenir (Auroville’s Town Planning team) - was done to learn statistics practically. The students did a survey by observing the traffic at crucial points in Auroville to know about mode of transport and the reason they prefer the same. Brainstorming was done after entering the data of seven days.

COMMON PROGRAMS AT DEEPANAM SCHOOL

Clay, Crafts and Art
Our team of teachers was very keen on providing the students with the integral approach in Art, which is a very vast area. Children were guided to perfect their skills, bring forth the latent skills and establish beauty and perfection in their products.
- The oldest class has lived their learning process by making their own costumes and props for the play – ‘Charlie and The Chocolate Factory’.
- The freedom of exploring the world of colors with different mediums and tools gave our students the sense of satisfaction and beauty.
- The younger ones were busy working with all their senses to bring their imagination into the world of clay and crafts and getting supported by the adults around to bring the perfection too.

Life Science Lab & Eco Trips
Life Science & Ecology have been an integral part of Deepanam. To learn about the local wildlife of our bio region and realize the need of conservation in our own backyard is most needed today.
Children are spontaneously fascinated and intrigued by nature; it is to nurture this fascination into a deeper understanding & respect that must be part of an Integral Education.
At the Life Science Lab we have over 12 aquariums and children interested have taken up responsibilities to monitor and feed daily the fish. Both fresh water & sea water aquariums are maintained here. Students are taken along the local coastal areas to learn & study marine life. During the year there were several field trips to explore and learn about nature for all the classes as part of their study programs. Topics like reptiles and birds were most sought out by most students. This awareness ensures automatically in our children dynamic conservation of nature.

Languages through Theater

The Mother had suggested 4 languages for the schools of Auroville – Tamil, Sanskrit, French and English. To make the learning process more effective and at the same time lively & fruitful - our team of language teachers worked at creating practical & interactive sessions through games & stories.

Sanskrit:
At Deepanam the morning starts with chanting of shlokas which helps us to start our day and connect to our centers. The particular quality and energy of the shlokas guides us to a kind of meditation. This creates calm and peaceful atmosphere and creates the environment and the
inner beauty for our psychic to grow.

**Tamil & French:**
Our team of teachers used last 2 terms to encourage the children to come up with their own stories and prepare a play which connected them to the language and they started exploring the world of Tamil & French through play & dramatics. They worked on culture, vocabulary, pronunciations and memory to present their work to their friends and family. On 23rd of April we had our **Language Day** where children presented dramas, songs, dance in Sanskrit, French and Tamil.
FUTURE SCHOOL

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 72 adolescents/young adults from 14 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 who 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
- self-assessment by staff
- 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
  7. External exams (UK IGCSE’s and A-levels), if requested by students

Activities 2013-2014
All School Activities

- **Weekly Seminars** – These have been an ongoing feature of our school for many years and is open to all students and teachers. This year we had many very interesting people and topics presented, such as: Rom Whitaker screening his new documentary (made for a BBC nature program) on *Indian Leopards*; Geography students giving presentations on *Alternative Energy*; alumni students speaking about their experiences after *Future School*; presentation by students about their understanding of what education, including *Integral Education*, should be; presentation of movies made by students in a film-project course; *refugee camps in Jordan and Syria* (Jean-Francois); *Ecological Hygiene* (Dr. Lucas); *Copenhagen, Denmark and Anthropology* (visiting university students); *Violence in Indian Society* (Dr. Usha, invited by Tapas B); *Creativity in Education* (Sasi); *Women in Society – A Speech* followed by wider discussion (led by Yaelle, student); *Capoeira --History and demonstrations* (Sam, Jeremy and students); *Turning Waste Into Wonder* (Martijn); and Vrata continued his popular series of presentations on *Cosmology, The Universe, Quantum Mechanics, and Consciousness*.

- **Graduation** – This year saw the successful completion of the program by 10 students, 8 Aurovilians, 1 Guest and 1 Outreach student. Once again, for the eleventh year, on the last day of school an event took place to honor the accomplishments of these students with the presence and participation of fellow students, teachers and staff members, and parents of the graduates. There were music performances by students, speeches, poetry readings, a powerpoint presentation with photos of each student at different stages of their lives, and a gift of a ‘Goodbye Book’ to each student. This event has become a very important one in our school and is always filled with laughter and tears, joy and some sadness; it reminds us that we are a family.

Field Trips

Field trips are very important educational activities to include in any school program. They expose students to new real-world experiences that are often closely connected to topics they are learning about in courses in school; they create an opportunity for closer bonding within the school ‘family’; and they provide what is often a much-needed break from routine. This past school year several field trips took place:

- **Senior class trip** – During the term break at the end of September, our senior students plus 2 teachers went on a camping trip to Auroville’s Nature Camp in Kavunji (near Kodaikanal) for 10 days. There they organized and participated in activities such as treks, badminton and other games, scientific investigations of the plant life in the region, grounds clean-up, and firewood collection and storage. They also cooked and cleaned for themselves, and covered the majority of the costs, which were supplemented by a small donation. For many of them this was a first camping experience so it was a new learning opportunity.

- **Indian Culture and Gender Studies** – A group of 3 students and 1 teacher went for a 3-day trip to Kaniyakumari, “located at the southern-most tip of Tamil Nadu and known for its beautiful sunsets and sunrises where 3 different oceans meet, the Bay of Bengal, the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean.” (Yaelle, student) This field trip was primarily part of a course on Indian Culture: they stayed at the Vivekananda Ashram, visited the Vivekananda Rock Memorial, the local market place and beach, using public buses and auto-rickshaws or walking to get around. Additionally there was a visit to the Sita Temple there since these students are also part of a course on Gender Studies; they made observations about and discussed the role of gender in society as part of this trip as well.
- **Pichavaram Mangrove Forest** – This was an all-school field trip to Pichavaram Mangrove Forest located near Chidambaram on the Tamil Nadu coast. Boat rides were organized so the students and teachers could experience and observe the unique biotope that “supports the existence of many rare varieties of economically important shell and fin-fishes,” (Wikipedia) as well as a great variety of birds (177 species belonging to 15 orders and 41 families). This field trip was especially interesting to those studying Biology and Geography, but all the participants gained knowledge and enjoyed being together as a school ‘family’ during an educational outing.

**Workshops and Extra-curricular Activities**

- **Medical Clowning**: Fif and Hamish, 2 Newcomers to Auroville, shared their profession in a seminar and then offered a workshop/course for our students, meeting once a week. 5 students participated with great commitment and regularity.

  Medical clowning uses techniques such as magic, music, storytelling and other clowning skills to empower children (and adults) with doses of fun that help them deal with the range of emotions they may experience while in hospital: fear, anxiety, loneliness, and boredom.

  These visits to hospitals have been shown to help healing patients with the positive power of hope and humor. (Wikipedia)

- **Self-Defense Through Body Awareness**: Two batches of 10 students each worked with Hans, an Aurovilian, to learn some basic self-defense techniques through gentle, slow movements that also improve agility, change posture and help to handle relaxation and stress.

- **Thai Boxing**: A group of approximately 8-10 students participated in twice weekly training sessions in Thai Boxing before school. Although the emphasis was on techniques for this particular martial art, general fitness activities were also included regularly (such as jogging, stretching, etc). Also, the instructor made it very clear to the students that this and any other such martial art, should be learned for defensive and fitness purposes only and not for aggressive ones.

**Robotics Competition in Chennai**: Five students from Future School participated in a robotics competition on the IIT campus in Chennai, December 28th-30th. The objective was to assemble a pre-designed robot on stage that had been designed for a specific obstacle course; the details of the course were available on-line before the competition. The robot was made from a standard NXT kit that was supplied by Future School.

  The reward for winning the competition was a hydrogen fuel cell, android controlled remote car, but unfortunately we didn't win, mainly because our robot went rogue in the last section of the obstacle course where the participants had to control it over Bluetooth to pick up balls and drop them in hoops. We still had a lot of fun and adventure preparing for the competition, fixing last minute bugs in the program, and watching the wild life that was strolling around the campus!

This competition combined what we have been learning in Physics, Math and Programming, and also brought together what we learned in school with our interests. Some lessons we learned through this experience were not overestimate ourselves, not to rely solely on information given to us but rather to do our own research and discovery and be prepared for the unexpected. (Chandran, student)
Course spotlights

- **Program for Practical Lab Activities in Chemistry** - A program with a set of instructional materials was created by 2 of our science teachers, Evgenia and Sergei, as a supplement for the Chemistry courses that are offered at all levels. This set of materials includes 25 practical works with instructions, equipment and chemicals needed, and questions and problems to solve. Some of the topics included are titrations, analytic chemistry, preparation of salts and gases, kinetics, quantitative electrolysis, organic chemistry, Belousov-Zhabotinsky reaction, and many more. In addition, each student is required to keep a laboratory notebook to record details of each experiment, observations, conclusions, background information, graphs, etc. This has been successfully utilized several times with different ages and academic levels.

- **Alternative Living Spaces Project** – The advanced Geography class – comprised of 5 senior students – started a hands-on project aimed at creating a model for an alternative living space. This project came out of class discussions regarding the current state of the world and Auroville, which raised the issue of sustainable living. In fact, the main idea is to create a practical and comfortable living space using natural and local resources for the building, with a water conservation system, alternative energy system and garden with vegetables, medicinal plants and trees with various uses. The students first engaged with various experts and then put the ideas into practice. This project was funded through Stichting de Zaiier and is ongoing, with the completion date estimated for April 2015.

Follow-up on previous goals (for 2013 – 2014)

- Review and improve the balance between academic and non-academic aspects and activities: There are more electives available than ever before, and many workshops and extra-curricular activities were offered. In addition, with the help and initiative of a new Aurovillian, Vikram Mani, we have been exploring the possibilities of developing an apprenticeship/vocational training program for Auroville youth, starting with 4 students of Future School. These students are continuing with some academic courses in school but at the same time have been placed in various activities in Auroville, based on their interests, for skill-based learning experiences.

- The new building with a Multi-purpose Space and classrooms was put to use and has become an integral part of the school and its program. Some of the activities that took place in the Multi-purpose Space were a parent/teacher meeting, the Thai Boxing classes described above, the Capeira presentation and demonstration described in Seminars, and the Relaxation and Self-Defense through Body Awareness workshops.

- Refine documentation of our ex-students: where they are, what they are doing, what are their plans for the future (short and long term), etc. - This has not been taken up as planned because the alumni student mentioned took up teaching full-time along with a research project about vector-borne diseases, so did not have the time. Therefore, this remains as a goal for us.

Goals for 2014-2015

- Continue to develop the work/study, skill-based learning program that we started to explore with a few trial cases this school year.

- One of the primary and ongoing challenges that we face is a shortage of teachers with the necessary level of knowledge for high school education, who have the ability to teach courses in an organized yet creative and integral way, and who integrate well with
the existing team. Also, we are anticipating increasingly large incoming classes in the next few years. Therefore, the most important goal for the coming years will be to add individuals to our team who meet the above criteria so we can continue to meet the educational needs of Auroville’s teens with high standards and great diversity.

- Work with an alumni to continue to refine documentation of our ex-students: where they are, what they are doing, what are their plans for the future (short and long term), etc. with the intention of creating a support network for Auroville youth who are exploring the world.
- Extend and cover the outside dining and study area, and raise the funds to finance the work.

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.
LAST SCHOOL

Goal / Objective

A second Secondary & Higher Secondary level school facility, Last School is unique in following the “Free Progress” approach by inviting the students to define their own program of development. This approach has a demonstrable structuring effect on their personality and increases their autonomy, self-confidence and capacity of innovation. The school offers a curriculum designed to develop each child integrally their mental, vital, psychic & spiritual.

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

Inputs

We had 12 teachers, 10 were on maintenance, 5 fulltime and 4 part-time and 1 apprentice. After completion of our new building this year, our school is going to be relocated in the Cultural Area, from July 2014 onwards.

Outputs:

We had 23 full time students during the year and 3 apprentices. In addition, courses have been offered to young Aurovilians and adults on Indian Culture and Sri Aurobindo’s philosophy. Moreover, the Pyramids Art Center is being used by 50 students who are part of other Auroville schools’ programs as well as by adults.

Outcome:

Personality development

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. A lot of autonomy is given to the students to develop along their own line of progress as soon as it is possible.

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 analyse and summarize long articles followed by oral presentations on contemporaneous 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 realisation, 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: Sports program and dance, swimming, Aikido and others. 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. 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 as well as a sense of togetherness.

![Bar chart showing the number of students per age](chart.png)
SCHOLARSHIP & EDUCATIONAL FUND

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 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 outside of Auroville.
- To help in creating equality of opportunities for Auroville youth.
- To work towards finding optimal educational options in consideration of the needs and potential of the individual.

EXECUTIVES & SUPPORT GROUP & ADMINISTRATION

The team of SEF consists of Auralice Mira Graft (Aurodam) and Lucas Dengel (Grace) as executives and of the following support group members: Bobby Patel (Prarthna), Chali Grinnell (Madhuca), Davaselay Palani (Prarthna), Jean-Michel Argouin (Grace), Martina Ljungquist (Gaia), Palani K. (Prarthna), Satyen Tait (Centrefield), and Suryagandhi (Djaima); in January 2014 Satyen left Auroville for some longer-term assignment abroad.

All services are extended by the team free of costs to SEF, and minor material expenses are covered through individual support or by the commercial units of the team.

ACTIVITIES AND MODE OF OPERATING

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

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

Applications and other subjects are discussed in team meetings; in the FY 2013/14 ten meetings were conducted. All decisions on financial support were made unanimously.

In 2013 in collaboration with Future School, for a fourth time, Mrs. Pippa Mukherjee, an experienced career counselor, was hosted at Auroville to interact with students of Future School and students of NESS; this was organized twice, in September and October.

An accountant was employed to compile and update all loans given to students over the last four years; this was required in order to have an overview on outstanding loans that from now on can be reclaimed from former beneficiaries of the SEF.

FUNDING
In 2012/13 donations from Aurovilians and Auroville units have helped the SEF in meeting the financial needs. Besides the major contribution from Auroville’s Budget Coordination Council (BCC) / City Budget, the SEF received a substantial contribution from Foundation for World Education (FEW).

When funds were exhausted in late 2013, further support, also for British exams, was provided only in amounts much below the requested sums; applicants and their families were left to find their own means of additional support.

STUDENT APPLICANTS SUPPORTED

In the financial year 2013/14, 16 Auroville students received funds from SEF for Bachelor and Master studies; 7 students received support via student-specific donations; two Aurovilian adults received SEF support towards further studies resp. vocational training; 21 students of Future School received support for undergoing British exams that allow them to continue with higher studies.

In total 44 Aurovilians were supported in their education and schooling resp. vocational training. These 44 beneficiaries represented five nationalities: Germany, France, India, Netherlands, and Russia.
**KAILASH**

*Kailash* has been full throughout the year. There’s a long waiting list of people that want to move in next year, after some of the Kailashians graduate. It is still a successful and happening project.

The communal life is going well and we see through our weekly meeting that it is a great learning and growing experience for all of them.

We have extended our caretaker group when Vikram joined us during the year.

There has been a lot of small repairs done within the building (door, meshes, windows, plumbing, painting…). However, the building is in need of some serious renovation. It has been open for almost 14 years now.

Kailashians have participated in various activities within Auroville such as the AV Choir, Yoga classes in Pitanga, the AV Marathon.
SAIIER TRANSPORT SERVICE

The Saiier Transport Service was started in 1985-86. It works mainly for the Auroville Schools that need students to be picked up and dropped at specified bus stops, for transporting lunch from solar Kitchen to all the schools, makes special trips for the elderly and for all kinds of field trips and excursion tours. Occasionally the service provides transportation for people participating in dance programs, music shows and other Auroville related programs. Presently the service has 11 vehicles: 4 buses, 2 vans, 1 Jeep, 1 food van and a Honda Unicorn Bike. The Transport also has two buildings: an office cum caretaker's building and a workshop building. In total there are 13 sheds. The Saiier Transport Service has a new shed for vans, Jeep and food van. It was financed by Saiier. In future the Transport Service plans to get more vehicles according to the schools' growth and population. There are 12 people working in Transport Service including 5 Aurovilians.

We also take care of the vehicles belonging to Auroville Community Transport (two Mazda buses). ACT classifies its trips based on its regularity of operations. We essentially run two types of services: regular trips and special trips. Regular trips, as the name suggests, are run either on a daily or weekly basis throughout the year. Special trips are one-off trips organized for a specific event or for a group for a specific trip. ACT prioritizes its regular trips which are meant for the benefit of the community at large. ACT runs four regular trips: a Matrimandir trip, the Matrimandir shuttle service, morning trips to Pondicherry, evening trips to Pondicherry.

There are 3 drivers are working in the Auroville Community Transport Service. Together we are a team of 15 people dedicated to providing our passengers with safe and comfortable transportation inside and outside Auroville.
AIKIYAM SCHOOL

AN OVERVIEW OF SCHOOL HIGHLIGHTS

Kindergarten  We taught the children shapes, colours, the alphabet, vowels, numbers, family members, the names of fruits, flowers, vegetables, animals, birds, and transport. The children enjoyed hearing stories read by Simone. Also this year the children had integral art class with Tia. For field trips we visited an Auroville beach, the Fish Aquarium, Certitude, the Botanical Garden, the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, some temples and a boat house. We went on a one-day trip to Vandaloor to see animals. Weekly the children have ATB classes. The children enjoy free play every Wednesday. They have activities to choose from such as balls, bubbles, drawing, painting, memory games and puzzles, blocks, book reading. With this free play the children developed the ability to draw a clear picture, to play memory games and construct puzzles.

Standard 1  We taught the NCERT syllabus in English, Maths, Science and Social Science. Tamil language was taught by Jothi, who taught many Tamil songs to the children. This is a great way for them to learn their native language. Through many volunteers throughout the school year our children learned many new songs and dances, experienced new activities and drama, heard stories and improved their speaking skills, were introduced to basic English grammar. In art class, Ramalingam and Tia helped with imaginative and creative work. Through this, they are able to identify different colours and shapes. It also helps them to develop visual skills. The children have Free Play once a week. In clay class they receive good exercise for their hands. Their class project this year was 'My Village'. They had lots of fun while doing this project work: colouring, reading, writing, singing, dancing and had a chance to learn about the olden days of their village.

Standard 2  we tried to strengthen their basic skills, especially in reading and writing. After we read stories, the children were given work to train their understanding. Working with our volunteers with reading, stories, and drama, the children focused on speaking and writing in English. They learned some grammar. with the occasional help of books from our library. In Tamil we were able to cover all the lessons according to the term plan and they were assessed through worksheets, oral tests, drawing, writing, reading, etc. Compared to the beginning of the year, their level of reading and writing has improved quite a lot. One of the things we did in Maths this year was to focus on the connection of English with Math through the use of word problems. In Science and Social Science the subject was the human body with connected topics such as hygiene, healthy food and safety. A lot of playful activities were included: drawing, making posters, games, etc.

Standard 3  This year, we tried to focus on the children's academic. In English we focused on their reading, writing and speaking skills. We encouraged them to share their experiences, so they had a chance to develop their communication skills. During this year, we would say that some students who had difficulty earlier had improved a lot. Though Tamil is their mother tongue, we faced a lot of difficulties in Tamil writing, reading and speaking. Using more teaching
ideas and techniques we were able to solve those problems. They were given assessment to improve their vocabularies and home work exercises to develop their writing and reading skills. In math, we focused on improving their addition, subtraction and multiplication. We created word problems from their daily lives to support their learning. In Social Science, they learned about family, festivals, national leaders and symbols; in Science, they learned about food, water, air, birds, animals, etc. Additional activities included swimming, clay, games and drawing.

Standard 4: The fourth grade did a project called ‘Food and the Digestive System’ in which they made models of the stomach and teeth. They learned about other organs in the body. There were six groups, and each group learned about a different organ and shared it among the entire class. They also learned about eating a healthy diet. The Supportive Learning students did drawings of the small and large intestine, heart, lungs, etc. with the help of Tia. These children enjoyed doing carpentry, clay, drawing and painting. For the first two terms we had a buddy system for reading English story books in Fourth and Fifth Standard which helped the children develop their reading skills. In the first term we took the children to Sadhana Forest to plant trees and make compost where they learned about bunding and using water sustainability principles.

Standard 5 This year the students did a project on the Wonders of the World with the Sixth Graders, making a presentation to family and other students in March. They performed songs and dances, gave a speech, gave a puppet show and a drama. They did a small project on animals in their English class. This year Fifth Graders visited Sadhana Forest on 5th December, where they played games, watered the plants and had their faces painted. Along with the Sixth and Seventh Graders, the students visited four temples in Trichy. There the school principal explained the history of the temples and the students listened with great interest, enjoying the day.

Standards 6, 7th, and 8th From the beginning of this academic year the teacher arranged the students into different groups. Before starting a topic, they were given general information about the concepts. The students were lead in various activities whenever necessary. For the formative assessment, our students did various scholastic and co-scholastic activities such as: making working models, posters, taking seminars and quiz programs. A volunteer taught the Seventh and Eighth Grade students about compassion for animals. At the end of the class we went on a field trip to the Dayakara Community to visit the Animal Rescue Centre. On 26 January, Republic Day, we had an exhibition in the school. Our students showed their work – different types of cells, models of human anatomy and working models such as a working JCB and hydraulic lift, multiple power generators, etc. Our students also participated in the Science Fair Exhibition; they demonstrated reproduction in plants to Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Grade students. The Eighth Grade students did a project with Wendy, on leaders and pioneers of the world. The children learned about Abraham Lincoln, Elizabeth Blackwell and Sir C. V. Raman.

SUPPORTIVE LEARNING AT AIKIYAM SCHOOL

This year we had 12 children in our Supportive Learning class ranging from kindergarten to third standard. We added new activities this year and included play therapy methods to help the children explore further by themselves and to improve their skills by learning through play, with the help of several volunteers. The teacher was shown how to use play therapy with the children
on a one to one basis. A different and interesting way of assessing the child was introduced and explored. A volunteer helped in the classroom with proper English sentences and new materials like sentence puzzles and maths puzzles. Another volunteer, a professional therapist, worked with the teacher in assessing the child through their drawings.

THE AIKIYAM SCHOOL LIBRARY

This academic year, we created a readers club. Four students from Fourth to Eighth Grade per term were members for that term. All together, 60 students improved their reading and understanding, and then shared their progress in their assembly. In order to have continuous reading at home, children’s magazines like Chiruvar Malar and Bala Vihar were given. We provided needed printed resources to class teachers who did projects in their classrooms, for example this year’s projects were on ‘Air’, ‘Great personalities’ and ‘Our village’. Once a week during the lunch break students were invited to an optional class. Students from Fourth to Eighth Grade attend either the library or play educational games.

DEVELOPMENTAL ART THERAPY AT AIKIYAM SCHOOL

In the Developmental Art Therapy classes, Tia uses the knowledge of a child’s developmental stages to plan and implement art experiences.

Aikiyam’s Preschool and Kindergarten children combined art with literature to expand on a story. They exercised some beginning math skills by identifying shapes and counting. They also began their understanding of social studies and geography by exploring art forms and connecting them with pictures of people from around the globe.

The children worked on their visual sensitivity, body awareness, and spatial perception by doing collages. Very importantly, in the relationships between these young students during class, we strove to encourage personal self-expression through communication, developing a sense of self as a unique individual, confidence, and self-esteem. By working with their hands with paste, scissors or pencils, each child exercised fine and gross motor coordination and also developed eye to hand coordination. The children also did activities that explored personal boundaries; they worked on cooperation, collaboration and sharing, creative thinking and problem solving, decision making and personal responsibility, as well as care for the environment, materials, and the classroom, inside and outside.
ARULVAZHI EDUCATION CENTRE

Arulvazhi 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 age from the neighboring village in the light of the teachings of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. Over the years it has expanded its scope to serve as a platform for interaction with delegates from different parts of Tamilnadu and Auroville. The aim is to provide value based education in an atmosphere of simplicity, beauty and harmony wherein the children can develop naturally.

GROUPS AND ACTIVITIES:

- **Group I:** Kindergarten for 18 children aged 3 to 6 years. 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, harmonious and pure.
- **Group II:** Primary stage children group for 30 children. 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:** Special yoga asana classes in the morning from 6 to 7 a.m. in which about 40 children participate. Both boys and girls are given equal importance in all respects.
- **Group IV:** Special English Course for children to rectify their deficiencies in writing and speaking English.
- **Group V:** In collaboration with Savitri Bhavan: Savitri in Tamil classes are conducted by Shri Sudarshan every Saturday.

SPECIAL ANNUAL ACTIVITIES:

- From 2nd to 25th May, 2013, a summer camp was conducted for about 50 children on the theme 'Indian Culture'.
- On 24th April, the Anniversary of the final arrival of the Mother in Puducherry was celebrated.
- Shri M. Velmurugan, our Yoga Teacher, took 24 students on an educational and yoga tour from 20th to 25th May 2013.
- On 6th July, 2013, the staff and students went to Trivortiyur Temple, Pattinathar Samadhi, and Mahabalipuram to understand the expression of values of Indian culture in the light of Foundations of Indian Culture by Sri Aurobindo.
- On 15th August, 2013, India’s Independence Day and Sri Aurobindo’s birthday was celebrated with the hoisting of the National Flag.
The resource persons of the Centre went on an educational lecture and demonstration tour to Coimbatore centre and Isha Foundation from 17th to 19th August 2013.

On 5th September, 'Teacher's Day' was celebrated.

In September the students went to Adayar Ponga, Chennai, an ecological park, on the banks of Adayar River.

On 9th September, Ganesh Chaturthi and on 11th September Poet Subramania Bharathiyyar Day were celebrated.

In October Navarathri was celebrated in the school. The children visited the kolu in Ilaingnarkal Education Centre.

On 2nd November Deepavali was celebrated. While celebrating the religious festivals, the inner significance of these festivals was explained to the students.

On 24th November, the students went to Sri Aurobindo’s Room. The significance of the Siddhi Day was explained to them.

On 24th December, Christmas Eve was celebrated.

In January 2014, Pongal celebrations were held. On 20th Jan, Valalar Day was celebrated and his contributions to the spiritual growth of humanity was gratefully remembered.

The Mother’s birthday was celebrated on 21st February. On 28th Auroville’s Inauguration anniversary was celebrated.

The Centenary of the Mother’s first arrival and her meeting with Sri Aurobindo on 29th March was celebrated and its inner and outer benefits to the earth was explained.

The students and staff participated in the workshop/seminar organized by the Tamil Heritage Centre in November 2013 and March 2014 and the Tyagaraja Aradhana Festival on 26th January.

OUTCOMES:

Compared to last year, our yoga teacher took asanas classes in the Panchayat Union Primary School in the mornings for two days a week and in Arulvazhi for another two days. This center works in close collaboration with the existing governmental structure.

As two of the Aurovilian teachers had the benefit of personal guidance of the Mother and these programs were approved by the Mother, they are being continued with suitable modifications.
adapted to local conditions. The Mother herself told them that the goal must be clear and methods adopted to achieve the goal to suit the changing conditions. These children go to outside schools and have very little exposure to the psychic aspect of their personality. Here they have a chance to bring out this aspect.

This centre’s influence is felt in the family life of the students by greater harmony and quality of life. This is visible when their relatives and friends visit them from other rural areas.

When delegates to Auroville-Tamilnadu Seminars visit, these children give demonstrations and are invited to give such demonstrations in their places.
ILAIGNARKAL EDUCATION CENTRE

INTRODUCTION

Ilaignarkal education Centre in its 37 years of existence in Auroville dedicating itself to impart functional education to the first and second generation learners and their animators and educator have established itself a leader in the field of innovative education on Auroville and Pondicherry and Tamilnadu at large. Our centre is known for its Socio-Literary cultural Research in the light of Auroville and the Tamil Land of ancient civilization with classical language and rich heritage. Our alternative prototype school is imparting life education programmes and development of essential skills mainly to the workers of Auroville and their wards. We can accommodate a maximum of 50 learners with the available space, teaching materials and other facilities provided.

OUR VISION:

- To contribute in achieving the Dream of the Mother in this millennium.
- To help Auroville city and its neighbourhood to Co-evolve in achieving development goals.
- To include in our vision: learning, research, value – appreciation and leadership – working is close relationship with the Workers of Auroville.

GENERAL ACTIVITIES

Publication

- 12 issues of the monthly Tamil news letter ‘Auroville 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 worlds of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother; bilingual language programmes, literary letters, and biographies on great personalities; creative writing, research articles; Childrens’s corner, book reviews and Auroville regional special positive news etc, are other features.
- 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, life education, Tamil literature, culture and yoga. More than 50 publishers send their complementary copies to our library on exchange. It is on the increase every year. We are distributing printed copies to a large circle of friends all over Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry and Auroville region in particular. Approximately 6000 readers are benefitted through the circulation of 400 copies to various institutions and libraries. We receive feedbacks regularly.
- One on local Herbs another book on Children’s Songs in Tamil. We may publish them when we get more financial and technical support.
- We brought out a special number on Perumukkal – Petroglyphs rock drawings of Perumukkal hillock just 20 Kms nearer to Auroville in Vanur block.

Viyazha vattam (Thursday circle – weekly congregation) Every Thursday evening we read classical Tamil works. Listen to lectures by Tamil scholars and discuss. This year the study circle specialized in the classical literature of Tamil Sangam poetry (300 BC – 300 AD). Our
efforts of learning the Sangam poetry in 12 months gave us the strength to take up a project in Auroville with the backing of Tamil Heritage Centre for a full day seminar on selected sangam poems for students of Tamil literature, local youth and workers of Auroville, all age group of numbering 80 on 28th March 2014 guided by Dr. T. Rajagopalan, Head Department Tamil (Retd) Christian College, Chennai.

Children and parents-educare programme  Twice a month, child – parent “Educare” group numbering not less than 40 ( 20 Girls + Parents) hailing from Auroville workecore meet at our school and discusses health, education and social awareness programmes related to child care with particular reference to the needs of growing girls, adopted under Educare scheme supported by friends of Auroville through SEWA, Auroville.

Navarathri Kolu – Doll show  Festival of evolution was celebrated as usual in October – the annual feature of our school. This year the whole setting, decorations, ten days cultural events, sharing special sacred food were fully taken – care of by women students. They brought their family members too! The festival was dedicated to learning ancient tradition, hospitality, unity, creativity sharing, and collective prayers.

Annual book fair  This year we have started ten days book fair from 20th February. More than one lac books were brought from many publications, Every day more than 300 students plus parents visited our school campus. The children enjoyed to be in the midst of so many new books, good number of them could purchase books and other educational materials at a lower price. All of them had great fun in participating in workshops – handicrafts, group singing, quiz programme, theatre, social games, yogaasana, breathing exercises etc. Beneficiaries wanted to have more books on specific titles. They prefer to have the Fair in the middle of the academic year. Their feedback was published in our Seythimadal.

A new feather – mobile rural library  There was a suggestion brought to us for mobile reading library at their door steps. Ilaignarkal has started a mobile (bi-cycle) library for the benefit of Auroville workers and their children living in remote areas. It’s called BHARATHI Mobile Library with a wing of Readers Forum in hamlets, at the close proximity of Auroville city, taking advantage of existing Youth groups and night schools supported by SAIER.

Special Feature - alternative medicine Research  This year 2013-14 gave us lots of hope on healing in a simple way; Siddha medicine workshops on simple medicines for common ailments for teachers (of this region), parents, students selected from Auroville workers and from their children were conducted in a wonderful atmosphere. We got the inspiration from the writings of the Mother - Ideal parent, Ideal Teacher and Ideal student. All The three workshop were different for three group of beneficiaries; courses were conducted in Tamil by experts under the guidance of the President, Tamil Nadu Traditional Siddha Vaidhya Maha Sangam and his team. Identification of more than 45 common herbs and an exhibition of 120 herbs seen in our regionherbs were the highlight of these workshops. Participants learned to prepare nearby 5 herbal products with common green herbs, spices and condiments available at their reach.

Satellite classes  Besides campus classes, Ilaignarkal School offers satellite classes for Auroville workers. We teach spoken English and group of life skills for workers. In ‘well paper company’ Auroville Kottaikarai 20 women workers are attending the classes in their work place. It improves their communication skills and gives empowerment.
ISAI AMBALAM SCHOOL

AIM/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.

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

HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS YEAR

1) Learning of the children

- **Preschool Children (3-4 years old):** 34 children (22 boys and 12 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.

Learning programme could be completed by 80% for 10 children, 50% for 15 children, and 30% for the rest of the children. For this, 15 projects designed around 40 themes were used. Regarding their Cognitive Development under Word Flash Cards method, 11 children had learnt to read 400 and 550 words in English and Tamil respectively, 8 children learnt to read 350 and 450 words, and 150 and 250 words by 6 children. A lot of Montessori activities were given for all the children.

- **Primary Level (5-10 years):** 65 students (28 boys and 37 Girls).

Separate learning programmes were planned for all these students. Samacheer Textbooks (Tamil Nadu State government textbooks prepared under their Uniform Education For All Scheme) along with Activities-Based Learning Cards were used for implementing the programmes for the academic subjects. ABL Cards enabled them to acquire self-learning capacity. Apart from this, Phonics Method for Reading, computer educational CDs, and educational websites were used to implement these programmes.

Subject contents of the learning programmes were 65% completed for the 1st standard, 80% completed for 2nd standard, 60 to 75% for 3rd standard, 60% for the 4th standard. Skills content of the learning programmes was completed by 70% in the 1st and 2nd standards, 40 to 60% in the 3rd standard, and 50 to 65% in the 4th standards.

- **Middle Level (6th & 7th standards, 11-13 years old):** 11 students (4 boys & 7 girls)
Learning Programmes of the students in this group were completed by 70% in Tamil, 65 to 75% in English, 90% in Math, 70 to 80% in Science and Social Science. Skills part of the learning programme was completed by 85% with respect to problem-solving, leadership, communication, organisation and creative thinking skills.

2) Researchs and improvements in the educational methods used in the school

- Towards integrated mathematics education by Sanjeev Ranganathan

Sanjeev Ranganathan introduced a new dimension in Math learning by the 5th, 6th and 7th standard students. He took a step towards integrated approach to mathematics in grades 5th to 7th. The NCF 2005 document places the purpose of mathematics education primarily as Mathematization i.e. on developing the ability of children to think and reason mathematically, to be able to handle abstraction. It includes a way of doing things, and the ability and attitude to formulate and solve problems. This idea ties in with the idea of a more integral mathematics which is not a disjoint set of skills to be acquired, but to cultivate a patient problem solving approach to life.

They also made measurements in experiments e.g. the period of the pendulum and how these measurements can be made more accurately if they can deal with dividing decimal numbers. They also looked at relating it to the mass of the bob, amplitude of oscillation and length of the pendulum. They realized that not all quantities in life vary linearly and the need to learn more became stronger. With these as context they re-learnt the basics well including fractions and decimals. They used TLM like Dienes blocks, pizza party to do the same.

They continued doing some science experiments throughout the year (speed, momentum, sound, volume, density, electronics) providing context for mathematics and to see how the progress in mathematics helps us understand and learn about life accurately.

The masterstroke this year was a multi-grade classroom in the second and third term. As the 7th graders approached algebra we realized that understanding of even basic concepts of multiplication and its corresponding (two) division stories was weak. The same is true for addition and its two subtraction stories possible, but we focused on multiplication as these relate to many physical phenomenon (speed-distance-time, speed-momentum-mass, density-mass-volume, current-voltage-resistance, etc). In a multi grade classroom for children in lower grades started to tell stories of multiplication and division with baskets of mangoes and many baskets, while elder children told similar stories of multiplication and division with the speed of a car, time and distance. In a little time 5th graders got a hang of speed and distance (which they decided to demonstrate with a play for the school Annual day). The 7th graders in turn got a hang of abstractions needed for algebra. We moved to puzzles that needed to be abstracted into algebraic equations and they were not only able to create the equations, but also solve them. They were also able to pick up the connection between algebra and geometry and developed their intuition further with the use of Geogebra.

The girls in 7th grade also built a wind-chime that required them to saw and use a drilling machine. The exercise helped in getting the idea of approximations (holes need to be drilled at 22% of pipes with varying lengths), but also gave them a lot of confidence through the use
of power tools.

When the children made their final examination papers to demonstrate what they had learnt – word problems and algebra figured prominently in their tests. These two areas are good indicators of the progress of children in abstraction.

- **Applied for achieving International School Award (ISA)**

In this year we applied to The British Council at Chennai for achieving International School Award (ISA) for Isai Ambalam School. For this Award the school has to identify a minimum of 7 projects and its students have to acquire a sense of international sentiment and traits through doing these projects. We chose the following 7 projects: dresses, festivals, flowers, monuments, currency, plastic and energy. We have finished completing the first four projects. Dial Park Primary School of London is one of our Partnership Schools with whom we share our projects. Sandra, a teacher from this school in London, remarked to us in person during her recent visit here that her students learnt through skype about two of our projects, Dresses and Festivals, a lot about Indian customs and culture. They appreciated the contents of the projects. We will complete the remaining three projects before the end of June 2014.

- **Micro projects**

In the last term of 4 months of this academic year, 20+ micro projects were created with the intention of achieving specific learning and teaching objectives with a focussed, intensive and conscious effort. These micro projects each lasted from 3 to 10 working days, and one session of one and a half hour per day was spent for each of them. Out of these, 12 projects were completed achieving the intended learning objectives. The following are those micro projects:

1. **Types of Magnets** by Sanjeev and Gomathi. 5th – 7th standard students. 5 days. Learning about the properties of magnets and their uses in industry. Teaching objective is for the teachers to learn to provide the students with needed hands-on activities. These objectives were achieved.

2. **Learning art through things of nature.** 4th standard students. 8 days (once a week for 8 weeks.) Learning objective was to learn to design creatively using things of nature made available at Auroville Botanical Garden. Objective achieved very satisfactorily.

3. **Story Telling and Writing Workshop.** 3rd-5th standards students. 3 days (6 sessions). Learning Objectives: to create one’s own story and narrate it coherently; to create a hand-written story book in beautiful handwriting with hand-drawn pictures. Teaching objective is to learn to stimulate in the students a great desire to read many story books. Objective achieved satisfactorily in 15 out of 37 students.

4. **Drama writing and acting workshop.** 4th-7th standard. 20 students. Learning objectives: to write, on their own, appropriate dialogues fitting with the character’s role, speaking and acting it out well; to create finger puppets of the characters and act.; learning time management for the drama performance and for carrying out the workshop activities. Objectives achieved well.
5) Four bilingual stories, “Sweet Choco”, “The Farm”, “The Magic Chisel” and “Knowledge”, written both in English and Tamil and recorded and played. 2nd-7th standards, 50 students, Learning Objectives: to understand the meaning of English sentence texts; to learn the English sentence pattern by becoming familiar with the first and second words (subject and verb) in English sentences; to communicate in English appropriately. Learning objectives achieved considerably well.

6) GESE (General Examination for Spoken English) tests for the first two Grades out of a total of 12 Grades, learnt and conducted in the pattern of Cambridge Trinity College. 1st to 5th standard students. Learning Objective: to learn to communicate in simple English for 7 daily life contexts. Objective achieved well.

7) GESE tests for the first 3 Grades. 8 teachers. Learning to communicate easily and clearly in English for 10 topics. 6 teachers achieved the objective well.

8) Banking Activities. 3rd-5th standards. 40 students. Learning Objective: to learn to use arithmetical operations and activities fully correctly in a life context. Objective achieved sufficiently well.
LIFE EDUCATION CENTRE

GOAL / OBJECTIVE:

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.

OUTCOMES:

Besides our regular activities that take place all throughout the year – ie morning classes on English, Group Discussions, Art therapy, Body movement, Yoga Nidra, English through Drama, Counseling sessions, and afternoon skill training sessions, this report will give you a better idea about special events, activities and tours.

LEC has not taken any break this full year, and this means at least 2 teachers have all the time been present– we did not close for the period May 2013, because new students come for 2 -3 months till they obtain a college admission and parents want them to learn something useful at the Centre. Our classes are for 6 days a week – full days – for the period Aug-April; during the remaining 4 months we are open only for 5 days week – full days. Likewise for May 2014- June 2014 also. The number students vary from 12-15 and we are 5 women staff.

- For the second year consecutively, LEC hosted the information session of the Aravind Eye Clinic’s recruitment for Trainee Nurses,
- In November 2013, a pediatrician from Vellore (Dr Narmada) gave us a half day session on childhood illnesses and offered a question answer session on reproductive disorders.
- In November 2013, Guhakumari, a teacher and founder school in Madurai, based on the Mother;s philosophy, gave an half-day open session to the students on metaphysical concepts based on scriptures in the Sanatana Dharma.
- In December 2013, Dorothee a visiting art therapist from France gave series of sessions on stitching/embroidery to help develop the girls in telling stories through these media.
In January 2014, LEC’s new website is available at [www.life-education-centre.org](http://www.life-education-centre.org).

We have included Grace to be part of our team starting with a weekly class on Montessori education training for a small group of our LEC girls. Her classes have started in March 2014.

**SPECIAL EVENTS:**

- **Navarathri Celebrations** - LEC students and staff were invited by Auroville’s Deepam school, to see their Doll exhibition— not only to be introduced to all the Deepam staff and students, but also sing and chant verses on Gods like Ganesha, Saraswathi, Siva, Muruga, Krishna.

- **Living Routes intern and our herbal garden** Anna from USA, interned as part of the LR program at LEC. During this period, she helped LEC create a herbal garden, using traditional herbs and plants from the local region. She accompanied all the students of LEC to the Aranya forest of Auroville, where, we were given a lively and informative guided tour for half day.

- **Overbridge walls painted by LEC students** - Starting off as a weekly activity as part of the Art therapy classes, the students were happy to complete the painting of the inner walls of our newly constructed over-bridge at the entrance of LEC, over a 2 month period. A local Tamil daily had reported about these art sessions in their paper.

- **Ashram Program** –21-22-23 November- the Annual Women’s Council Seminar conducted by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, on the topic of Faith was attended by all the 12 students and 3 staff of LEC.

- **You flame up and triumph** The climax of the 3 day program was the LEC girls staging a small play in English on the topic of Faith – the story of big spiritual Guru visiting a small village and being humbled by the Faith of a very sincere village milkmaid. Besides this play the girls also took part in chanting some Sanskrit slokas taught by their teacher Buvanasundari.

- **Tiruvanamalai program** Since mid October 2013, the LEC students have been practising the Aksharamanamalai, The words are simple, packed in meaning, in old Tamil; easy to understand, the tone of song is uplifting and full of resonance.

- **Sivarathri Program** On 27th February, on the occasion of Mahasivarathri, the girls wanted to display their individual chanting talents – this had included girls who had practised long and difficult pieces, and also others who had difficulty in speech and learning abilities who wished to display their talents.

- **Madurai program** This program was organized to give a 3 day exposure to the girls on the beauty of the ancient Tamil land of this region. For each of the 10 temples we had visited over 3 days, every girl was explained the significance, the story and the meanings behind the symbolism. This could help them retain the context and story very vividly in their minds.
FUTURE PLANS:

- The regular daily skill training in tailoring; regular weekly classes of English, weekly counseling AVIVA body work with Yoga Nidra besides daily chanting and monthly group discussions will continue, besides special classes on Mother and Sri Aurobindo's yoga and on the work of ancient seers of Tamil Nadu.
- The possibility of LEC to remain as a counselling centre for any woman will always be available.
- We will start a training program for older girls based on principles of Montessori – so that they can use this training for better jobs in kindergartens and primary school level.
- This year 2014-15, will witness several one-day workshops, mostly based on health, well-being, sound and art for healing, This will be coordinated by Devi.
A PROGRAM TO ENCOURAGE CRITICAL THINKING IN CHILDREN

Introduction

- **About Udavi school**  Udavi school is an outreach school of Auroville that caters to village children primarily from Edayanchavadi village. Udavi school is committed to provide an integral education as per Mother and Sri Aurobindo’s vision.

- **Research Objective**  How to encourage critical thinking in children in a rural school.

- **Research Methodology**  In this project critical thinking will be addressed through a three-pronged approach – through puzzles and games, classroom intervention and classes in hands on electronics.

- **Intended Research Outputs**  Children will be capable of abstract thinking, mathematization, observation and reasoning. Children will be happier and more aware of what they are doing and why they are studying mathematics.

At the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year Udavi school started collaborating with Dr. Sanjeev Ranganathan. Sanjeev has a PhD in electronics and is a practicing engineer in analog and RF design. He is also passionate about cultivating critical thinking and self-awareness in children and has volunteered with Asha for Education for over 13 yrs, interacting with over 60 NGOs working in the field of science and mathematics. He partnered with our teachers for the entire year on various aspects of our math (and science) instruction and established an electronics laboratory in the school.

We have completed a successful year of many interesting experiments and felt that though we recognize him very much as a part of our team, we also recognize that he continues to be impartial in his assessment of what we accomplished through our attempts. We have volunteered him for the responsibility of preparing the report as the author. Below is his *brief personal experience* that summarizes various aspects of this research:

I spent a month with the Xth graders in June being part of their mathematics classes observing and towards the end of each class linking different concepts they learnt, e.g. similar triangles with trigonometry and coordinate geometry, geometry with algebra. I realized that many children struggled with abstract concepts they were introduced in 6th and 7th grade – fractions, algebra, word problems and a feel for what the result should look like.

I set up an electronics laboratory at Udavi to provide children an ‘exciting’ context to learn mathematics and as an exposure to a different discipline. I maintained connection with the Xth grade through a slot allocated for an electronics class, but focussed on addressing the source of their discomfort and worked with 6th and 7th grades in mathematics. I was fortunate to find teachers who not only let me take over the classes, but also support the initiative and fill gaps that I left.

I addressed fractions and number systems with use of hands on tools and games like pizza party and Denzel blocks. Together with the children we invented many games beyond the ones prescribed with the tools. We even looked at many abstract ideas like \( p^{2} - 1 = (p+1) \times (p-1) \) and how to visualize these through blocks.
Strategy games that are short yet intense like those made by the European company Gigamic were a huge hit and so were disentanglement puzzles. The 6th graders put up a stall at the school fair with these games to provide a challenge for children, teachers and visitors to play a game with them. The interest in development of strategy was high enough that each child spent over 2 hrs holding their stall before taking turns to go and participate in the fair. They even developed an idea of rewarding younger children who played well, even if they could not better them in the contest.

Children spent a lot more time with questions without being overly concerned with the right answers. Children spent time articulating questions and going between abstract and concrete. To take an example we talked about multiplication story (of 3x4: 3 bags with each 4 apples) and the fact that there are two corresponding division stories (12 apples in 3 bags and 12 apples in some bags such that each bag has 4 apples). We noticed how the first story came easily while we struggled with the other and learnt how to notice the quantities being asked and those missing to understand what kind of story was being told. This skill is fundamental to understanding algebra. We created a process of peer learning and children listened to each other. We started with simple exercises in repeating at random what the other said and later to processing what was said and converting one kind of story into another (multiplication into its division, etc). These listening exercises had an incredible impact on classroom participation, retention and being able to build on concepts of complexity.

This also led us to scientific phenomenon like speed, distance and time that have such a relationship. We also looked at density beyond a keyword and looked how we can make abstract ideas like mass and volume into more concrete seeing (volume) and lifting (weight).

I encouraged children to look at examinations as an opportunity to understand and grow. They were allowed to bring one sheet with any information they felt needed to be learnt by rote, allowing for exploration of understanding and application in the examinations. I also placed a score on meta-cognition of knowing if they got something right or wrong (and you would get a score if you were sure you got something wrong and it was). They even wrote the examinations again to see if they had a better understanding after a few weeks.

We spent a fair bit of time talking about being able to think of whether a result makes sense and catching common errors. We worked on EBD (Education By Design) and the 7th graders presentations on fractions, decimals, algebra, etc to highlight where they commonly made errors. The process of EBD of creating quality criteria before starting the project and using a new process (increase/decrease/retain) of feedback made inputs less personal and more constructive.

Being able to talk about algebraic expressions as stories and write stories into algebraic expressions was good, but it took a whole new perspective when we worked with Geogebra that linked geometry with algebra.

In the first term I also worked on English stories the children wrote to see if they were logical or were flowing from one context to the next.

The 10th graders made many small circuits on bread boards including LED oscillators, 555 timer circuits (which they also used for making musical notes), seven segment displays, counters, taking things apart and trying to repair them and programming micro-controllers. While in action
I also received support from AIAT and IITM who lent us oscilloscopes to help ‘see’ electronic waveforms and cultivate intuition of what AC/DC signals look like.

The electronics lab was also utilized by some children from Deepanam school and a couple of children from TLC. There were also some classes when we were able to have an interaction with these children and the 6th graders at Udavi. The innovations in mathematics and classroom instruction were complemented with similar experiments in Isai Ambalam school.

Teaching at Udavi school has been a growing experience as a teacher and I hope to continue working towards progressive and integral education here.
ART AND INTEGRAL EDUCATION

AIM OF PROJECT:

All students in Transition School participate in arts and crafts and music classes. Art education is an essential part of our Integral Education, and in the classes they learn skills, techniques and methods. Additionally, art education can have a broad range of benefits for children: the opportunity to nurture creativity, a sense of beauty and imagination as well as the development of thinking and problem solving skills. The children are guided to discover and progress individually and at the same time learn to appreciate the work of others.

In Transition School various forms of art are integrated throughout the program through work in class projects. The arts provide students many opportunities for demonstrating learning and competency. Students have the chance to express themselves and their thoughts and ideas through power point presentations, posters, drawings, poetry and other forms of creative activities. When they prepare a theater performance, they also work on the props. Additionally, in all school community events (party, graduation dinner, open houses…) they work together to make the scenery and the decorations. Children explore a variety of thinking processes, art forms, materials and techniques, through a wide range of activities.

ACTIVITIES:

Art in the Math and Geography Classes Building three-dimensional geometric shapes is a great way for students to learn to measure accurately and use the tools in their geometry boxes. Additionally, students learned to calculate angles. We started by building a tetrahedron, then a cube, an octahedron, and finally, a dodecahedron. The children learned how to use a protractor, ruler and a pair of compasses. The shapes make beautiful hanging decorations in the classroom. Each student created their own colorful designs on the faces of the different shapes.

Paper Mache Globes As part of our Geography Program, the Phoenix Firebirds (grade 6) made their own paper mache globes. Initially they worked on reproducing the world map to scale, and when they were ready they drew it on their globes, which they had covered with a white base coat. They then painted the oceans and the continents. Through this project, the children worked on their math skills, developing their sense of space and proportions and the capacity to reproduce in 2 Dimensions and 3 Dimensions. They also worked on Geography, learning about the world and locating its oceans, its continents and various natural landscapes. They developed their manual and visual arts and crafts skills through learning to make paper mache, drawing and painting.

Art can open new doors for the understanding of different cultures This year in 6th grade, we explored a new project looking at a different culture with different ways of relating to fellow humans, animals, nature, and spirituality: Native Americans. Two artistic projects helped to go deeper in the understanding of that diverse and spiritual people.

We made “dream-catchers” that are believed to let the good dreams pass on to you and catch the bad dreams in their web. We had been collecting feathers for a whole term before starting this project. It required manual skills, mathematics, an aesthetic sense, precision, concentration, use of natural elements, and developed interconnectedness. One child made a 3D spider with
thread and beads to decorate his web. Another brought beautiful beads from home to share with the class to decorate their dream-catchers. One child even brought a couple of dog’s teeth to hang on his web.

Another artistic activity was to draw one’s spirit animal. The whole class did a guided meditation to help them connect to an animal that had qualities that would help them in their everyday life. They had to draw their animal in a circle and only use black and white. The children enjoyed this activity and took a lot of time to make their spirit animal cards beautiful. It involved coloring and cutting, concentration, silence, and creativity. They loved working with feathers. The boys started transforming their pens into “feather pens”. The children inspired one another and helped one another.

Each activity was linked to a writing project, describing and assessing their work and progress, and the kids did a lot of research on different tribes and their rituals. They typed them on the computer and made printouts. The children learned poems and songs on the theme, and presented their work to their parents during the end of term open house. All the girls of the class wore feather earrings and made fringes on their t-shirts for that occasion.

In the same light, the grade 8 students studied the history and geography of Europe during the Renaissance period and later in the year the history and geography of India. Included in this was the study of art and artists, poetry and architecture. They ended the project by doing research on different subject areas (areas that they chose to study), designing posters and presenting their work to their parents.

Poetry, Photography and Music  On Monday mornings the whole school meets to start the week with a sharing and a concentration. At this time children often recite poems that they have learned. This is appreciated by all of the students and the teachers. Additionally, several groups recited poems for their parents. The grade 8 students had a poetry and music recital. The students chose poems written by classical poets to recite. These students had some fundamental photography classes and then took pictures at the Matrimandir Garden. They each chose a picture to express in the form of a haiku and presented a power point presentation to their parents. On the same day they presented music and songs that they had written.

Here is a report from the music teacher:

This year was the third time in the last ten years that we had carried out a major project on song writing in Transition School. Experience had taught us that without proper structure and planning, enthusiasm does not always lead to success. It needs careful preparation, or songs will be made that are either difficult to sing or impossible to add music to.

In order to avoid these pitfalls, students were given several preparatory projects. The first was to take a song of their own choice and to rewrite the lyrics, keeping a similar feeling to the song. The notion behind this was to familiarize students with the idea that lyrics have structure and meaning to them. Good songs make artistic sense on their own without music. They are like poetry, and have certain ways in which they are set, in order to make them both understandable and beautiful. Reworking existing songs was a quick and easy way to get students writing structured songs.
The second project was rhythmically based. Often if you allow students to freely write songs, they will compose lyrics with little or no rhythmic structure, which later on makes it very hard to add music to them. To avoid this, we asked students to take famous poems and tongue twisters and recite them using rhythmic patterns that they had chosen. Students who were good at this took these even further and added melodies to the poems.

The final stage of the project was to freely compose a song. Genre, language, style, and theme were left entirely up to them. They broke into groups, and were asked to make action plans based upon the previous work. They were also asked to choose the members of their groups based on what people could offer to the project, and not entirely based on friendship. We wanted to have balanced groups that included good singers, composers and instrumentalists.

The outcome was successful. The project was met with considerable enthusiasm, and songs were composed of a high standard. In some cases groups also integrated students that played other instruments such as piano, guitar and percussion, making it a very rounded project. Most of the songs were performed to teachers and guests outside class, and it is planned next year to do a further presentation for the public.

Report from Arts and Crafts team
Through an exposure to art, all forms of art, children get a chance to stimulate their imaginations, learn to express themselves and also work on their cognitive and problem-solving skills. These problem-solving skills enable them to think creatively in other situations, which can boost their academic results. The enjoyable nature of art projects engages most students. Because they enjoy the artwork, they are better able to concentrate on the task, sticking with it from beginning to end. Finishing the project gives the kids a sense of accomplishment and self confidence.

1st - 4th grade  ART out of the art classroom – Several art installation projects were proposed to the 3rd and 4th graders in order to understand “art in public”. Children were enthusiastic about the projects and they went through intense group work and discussions. As an outcome, murals on several school buildings, mobiles in the school garden and a school sign board were designed and created.

Learning for oneself through craft: During the last 3 months, a large proportion of the Arts and Crafts time of the 1st - 4th graders was dedicated to basic stitching and embroidery work. They started off from a very basic skill level but they quickly improved. Their fine-motor skills, self-control & concentration also improved through this work. Eventually most of them happily managed to finish a doll or a cushion with beautiful embroidery.

This is the second year that the school expanded the program to include 7th and 8th grade students who, for the past years, have been attending the Pyramids art program; the 5th and 6th graders have also joined this program.

The goal for this program for the older children was to explore art of all different types and work on different methods and skills.

Here are a few of the projects that we worked on this year:

5th Grade
Leaf Project  The kids explored and picked different leaves they liked. They then selected different colors of paint. They painted the leaves in solid colors or patterns, and used the leaves as stamps which they pressed on paper.

What animal are you?  All young children are fascinated by animals. In this project, we read the kids different books about animals and showed them pictures. Then we start asking them what animal they think they are? What animal do they feel like?

The kids drew fun animals in different colors and shapes with funny ears and spots. After creating these animals they turned them into large clay pieces upon which they drew or painted the animal.

Self portrait  Portrait and self portrait in art history: The students drew portraits of each other using black and white and shading. Then they made a self portrait on a big paper, split the image in four parts and colored each part with different techniques: collage, pencil shading, watercolor and acrylic paint. They created an installation for the annual art exhibition in Kala Kendra based on different expressions of eyes. The students really enjoyed this project and experimented with many different materials and techniques.

6th grade

Students focused on still life and black and white images  One project we worked on was having the kids choose a photocopy or photograph of an image of their choice, then draw an outline to simplify and separate the main areas of dark and light. They then traced and transferred the outline drawing onto a fresh sheet of paper and shaded in the dark areas of the drawing to re-establish the basic tones of the original portrait. After that, they filled in the new image with different tones, colors, patterns and textures. Here they learned about texture and shading. From this they went into color theory and pop art.

Pop Art  We showed the students pictures, videos, books, slide shows and other images. Then we moved into making one object from their Still Life drawings into basic Pop Art using paints, colored pencils, paper and markers.

Finally, they did a project on making silhouettes, using different techniques that they learned during the year.

7th and 8th grades

Art History Topics  With the 7th and 8th grade students, we started many classes by looking at books, photos, slideshows and movies for 20-30 minutes. We focused on contemporary art movements (pop art, murals, some paintings by Mexican artist Diego Rivera and expressionism). The students worked in small groups. They had four different main projects with different teachers. The classes were divided into Free Work Stations plus Nele’s studio in Kalabumi.

OUTPUTS:

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

- Art for History – The Renaissance Art, History of India, Native Americans
• Science – models, posters and power point presentations
• Choosing poems to study
• Research report
• Open house and other presentations
• Art and crafts displays
• Mathematics and Geography (shapes and globes)
• Music Poetry Recital
• Art exhibition at Kala Kendra
• Backdrops and decorations for annual school party
AUROVILLE TEACHER TRAINING WITH PARTHO

OBJECTIVE / OUTCOME:

The project aimed to support Auroville teachers by deepening the understanding and practices of integral education with an emphasis on faculty development.

OUTLAY 2013 -2014 :

We organized a teacher training program with Partho. Partho has spent more than twenty years in the field of integral education and has done extensive personal research in Sri Aurobindo’s educational philosophy and practice. He conducts seminars and workshops for teachers, parents and school administrators all over the country.

A 3days workshop was organised during October 11-13th in the Unity Pavilion by Bridget, Hedia, Jyoti and Martin. We hope to continue with further programs by Partho in collaboration with Auroville teachers and the core team for the development of integral education teacher training in 2014. Partho facilitates an annual week long retreat for Aurovilians that is also attended by many teachers.

OUTPUTS :

Our objective was to follow on from the very successful Integral Education workshop by Partho in 2010 attended by 28 teachers and out of which a new school, The Learning Community was born. This time we wanted to go deeper into the general subject of integral education with particular reference to faculty development.

OUTCOMES :

Forty eight teachers attended from 14 Auroville educational facilities, the list of teachers and a sample of evaluations are listed below. There was very positive feedback and calls for the continuation of training with Partho and future collaboration with the development of the ongoing teacher training program. An initial meeting has taken place with the organising team and the IETTP team (Integral Education Teachers Training Program) to begin to frame this future collaboration.

EVALUATION :

Following are feedback statements from some of the teachers who participated in the workshop.

“It helped clarify the simple purpose of education as I had never been able to come up with a satisfactory answer. It also gave some insight into the challenges faced by teachers in their progression towards integral education.”

“There were a lot of fruitful exchanges, and a lot of information has been imparted from Partho’s experience. This information is already an AWAKENING PERIOD for the facilitators.”
“This workshop gave me a lot of joy, enthusiasm, and hope confirming my aspiration for Lilaloka but also in general for the educational system in Auroville.

Confirmation, reassurance, reminders but also a lot of new opening, insights or ways to progress towards this new education have been shared through this question-answer format.”

“It brought me a deepening of many familiar notions and a widening of the practical possibilities.

It was excellent and incredibly inspiring. Reinforced my approach to Art, that how I resent the creative process is in direct correlation to the philosophy and practices of Integral Education.”
AUROVILLE RAINBOW CHILD

OBJECTIVE:

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:

Regular classes of Yoga and Energetic games for children are held in Pitanga on Saturdays and sports classes on Sundays on Certitude Sports ground.

Around 27 children from different schools participate regularly, aged from 5 to 13.

OUTCOMES:

This year there were a lot of new children joining the classes. The new children have learned and absorbed, the advanced information given in class, and with the help of the senior students the new children have managed to integrate smoothly. This year we also had a few long term teachers who participated in the classes as helpers. One of the teachers gave a few classes with singing bowls. The children had to tune their voices to the singing bowls’ pitch.

Through “Energetic games” they continued to explore their inner world in a fun and joyful way, observing the body reaction and directed to discover ways of dealing with their emotions constructively. Children with the help of teachers have created new games which are more subtle. These games are now part of our regular program and still new ones are invented on a regular basis by kids. Our reservoir of activities has grown this year.

Children have improved their artistic expression and have asked to learn advanced drawing techniques and were ready to experience new materials. Children have asked to do something new this year and we have had teachers from abroad (future Newcomers) who were interested to do a few of their classes with kids. This year we have also done a lot of arts and crafts such as: “geometric embroidery”, 3d modeling from paper, origami in a few different styles, work with stencils and, for small kids(5-7 years old) ,coloring mandalas.

The quality of their work increased through the year and creative expression was refined. The results of their improvements were shown in the exhibition we made from the 26th April till the 3rd May in Pitanga. The exhibition consisted of the favorite work the kids completed.

The Yoga classes this year were totally full and there were even, at times, more kids than could fit into the yoga room in Pitanga hall. We have moved to an advanced level of Yoga. Stretching and pranayama was a success. In our class every year we have a few students with Asthma and Asthmatic conditions and for such children we use special Pranayama techniques. Yoga practice increases children’s capacity to neutralize the stresses of modern life. We included flashcards with pictures of asanas and the kids had to show the asana that was on each card.

As a free choice students came on Sunday morning to play tennis, badminton and basketball.

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 help the students to progress. The only difficulty we had was that the place where the classes in Pitanga are held is getting too small due to the greater number of kids who are joining our classes. This year around 6 kids were added to our classes and if the amount continues to grow then in future we will have a problem with the size of the space we have for our classes.

If we would have our own constant place, we could have more activities that could be offered and the number of kids participating would not be limited. Also, other courses could be integrated and we still envision this place - “Rainbow Child’s Centre” - to manifest for the good of Auroville’s children.
AWARENESS THROUGH THE BODY

This is the first year we explore working with ATB in shared spaces with both parents and children. The aim has been focused on developing tools and spaces to train the ability to stay in the 'witness position'; to deepen the possibility to stay present in our lives; to be not only the thinker, doer and feeler but also the observer of what happens in the different parts of our being while we think, act or feel, and the interconnectedness between all these layers of our Being; to discover “the use of one's self”.

At the end of a session, after an exercise of relaxation, breathing back to back - sensing their own breath and the breath of the other through the movement of the breath on their connected backs - a mother said: “I felt it so short! I could have been there for much more. I think it was the first time we were really feeling each other...”

To stay in the witness attitude during concentration exercises is useful and can be very powerful; but it is even more powerful when we are able to make a bridge to stay in this witness position even while moving, acting or interacting. It is in this way that we have mostly been working - through triggering daily reactions, letting the most automatic patterns come to the surface, parents and children working together in a safe space, a space where they have the possibility to discover new aspects of their togetherness. A space of listening, beyond the fixed images we have of each other, a space to explore ourselves beyond right and wrong, a gentle invitation to go out of our habitual roles and open doors for surprises...

“For me to be part of your work with children is an important sharing with my son. He so much the activities with you, and to be involved in it, makes stronger our deep relationship to and knowledge of each other. As you see, he is growing very fast, his inner world is infinite and complex, to have a chance to be part of it, for me, is a big gift, and for him also. Each time we work together with you, a confirmation of our deep and respectful connection comes out for both... I think this is more than enough to be happy to participate.” (Feed back from one of the parents.)

In the same line, this year I have been offering regular individual sessions, to help individuals to raise awareness of patterns in their bodies, to develop further capacity to listen to the body, and to consciously stay there effortlessly, noticing changes. To actively change their relationship to their bodies, by discovering the deep effect that this conscious presence has in themselves, and how an attitude of openness and listening creates changes -not only in the body, but in the whole being- harmonizing it.

Group work with adults we did a journey from the most physical and gross to the more subtle. We started as usual, training attention and concentration - our two basic tools to work on anything -, developing an awareness of our physical structure, awareness on the patterns imprinted in it, and researching ways to free ourselves consciously from those patterns.

“Working with you has been a very big part of the change that has brought more peace and light into my being.”

Later on, for a period of time we placed our focus on exploring “Space” inside and outside, our individual space and the collective space - developing new perceptions of it as we were placing
different intentions in it. And from this exploration of space noticing again changes in us rippling in our whole being.

“After yesterday's session at CRIPA, my hips were moving freely and softly. Going home on the bicycle, I was aware of being wider, expanded in being, and hips much more comfortable on the cycle seat. It was a beautiful moment to be connected in the circle in that special way and to feel the separation and then the final re-connection. These sessions are really wonderful.”

To end the year, from the “space exploration” we moved on to explore the subtle physical layer. As adults, many of us grow up without having any possibility to develop the awareness of this layer of our being. As we tune into it, we realize how real and present this non-visible body is, how much information we receive through it.

“To whatever cause an illness may be due, material or mental, external or internal, it must, before it can affect the physical body, touch another layer of the being that surrounds and protects it. This subtler layer is called in different teachings by various names, … , All communications with the exterior world are made through this medium...

... This body is built up, on the one side, of a material basis, but rather of material conditions than of physical matter, on the other, of the vibrations of our psychological states. Peace and equanimity and confidence, faith in health, undisturbed repose and cheerfulness and bright gladness constitute this element in it and give it strength and substance. It is a very sensitive medium with facile and quick reactions; it readily takes in all kinds of suggestions and these can rapidly change and almost remold its condition... ”

*The Mother, Questions and Answers 1929 – 1931*
BAKING ENGLISH

OBJECTIVE:

Baking English is a project that aims to provide the opportunity for an innovative approach to the study of the English language. The project aims to provide children with an experience where the learning of English is alive, spontaneous and relevant to what they are directly experiencing through practical, hands-on work; to take the study of English out of textbooks and worksheets and into a real-life situation, providing children with an opportunity to learn from context, with joy, and allowing for content to flow from spontaneous, real-life situations, rather than from a prescribed order set out in textbooks and predetermined syllabi.

OUTPUTS:

Some essential equipment was procured using the grant allocated to the project. This equipment enabled the number of children participating in the classes to increase, and enabled better efficiency in guiding the classes.

OUTCOMES:

11 children attended the baking English classes during the last academic year. The children integrated well into the system of learning through a non-conventional medium. They covered the assigned English curriculum and attained a certain degree of proficiency in the area of baking.

They produced a very fine recipe book as their final project. In addition, they prepared the refreshments for the school’s open house this year. Two of the older students accompanied me on a baking training session in a hotel in Chennai where they served as apprentices and were very successful.

TIMELINES: The classes were held with 3 different groups, once a week, for the duration of the entire school year.
CHILD PROTECTION SERVICE

AIM OF THE PROJECT:

CPS wants to achieve general awareness building, acceptance of gender issues and opening of the eyes towards possible child abuse in Auroville and its surroundings. The particular approach is exercised by us from grass-roots onwards, and aims at protecting our children by creating awareness from a young age onwards.

ACTIVITIES:

We undertake one class per month in local area schools and cultural centers, which makes nine classes in a year. We reach altogether 196 individuals per month in the following establishments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>No. of students</th>
<th>Standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aikiyam School</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>6th &amp; 7th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Udavi School</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>7th &amp; 8th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ness School</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>9th, 10th, Plus 1, Plus 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edaiyanchavadi Government School</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuilapalayam Cultural Center</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>2nd to 8th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCEC -Kottakkarai</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Students of all standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>196</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We start the class by sharing about Human Anatomy with students, and then we ask them how we can protect ourselves. From there we take them through thinking about cleanliness, healthy food and various other issues related to our body, health and environment. With children from 10 to 12 years we follow the work book from ‘Tulir’, an organization in Chennai. With children from 13 to 18 years we follow the ‘Unicef’ books and information from the Internet.

OUTPUTS:

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

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

- We should be careful while getting a lift.
- There are good touches and bad touches. We should be aware of this.
- We will teach this information to others.

Regarding domestic violence the following points came out from the children:

- Girls need more freedom to express their ideas and to be independent.
- I will be aware of myself. I will make sure my friends and family are aware of this child abuse. I feel my culture protects us from this type of abuse.
- I feel sorry for the children who go through the abuse. I even would request the Government to create an awareness program for the public and for all schools. The disabled children also should be protected.
CLASSROOM LEVEL MICRO PROJECT

Goal / Objective:

Aikiyam School is conducting Class Level-Micro Projects in order to make class rooms into platforms where children can have time and space to equip themselves to solve highly complex problems. Micro project periods are when children can apply their acquired fundamental skills in reading, writing and arithmetic.

Since micro projects are conducted as team work, children will get chance to develop an attitude to work in a team, taking responsibility, understanding problems related to the facts they learn. Children also learn to synthesize information, and to use learned theories as tools to solve related problems. Children will become managers of their own work and therefore they understand time management.

Outcome:

- When children start the class level micro project, they learn to identify problems worthy of exploration. This activity includes skills like Critical Thinking, Reasoning, Planning.
- The activity oriented outcomes are: visualizing their actions, decision making, selecting appropriate tools and technologies to finish the tasks.
- Any parent or teacher who visits their class rooms and views their project presentations will observe the following skills in the children: personal and social responsibilities, strong communication skills and capacity

Teachers Feedback on Classroom level Micro Projects:

1. Upper Kindergarten – “Colours” Micro-Project

The project topic which we took was “Colours.” It was a one month project. They learned the colour names, primary colours, secondary colours and rainbow colours.

First we started the project with a short walk around the school. We asked the children to collect different color flowers and leaves, and then we asked them to draw and colour pictures which they saw. The pictures which the children drew were very colorful and nice.

We took the children to the Botanical Garden to see different kinds and colours of flowers, plants and trees. We also saw different colored butterflies in the garden. We also went to a fish aquarium to see different kinds and colours of fishes.

We read many books related to colours to the children. They also learned the colour names through songs. They made collages, drawings, paintings, prints; they did paper weaving, paper folding, mixing colours to create new colours, and they created paper lamps and colourful paper flowers. The children cut letters from magazines and pasted them. The children made their own book: “My Colours Book.” In clay work they made different kinds of things and painted them. They also made their own puzzles. Simone was very helpful in story reading. She came once a week for story reading and also practiced a play, “The Blue Jackal”, with the children. Tia also taught the names of the colors through integral art and helped with the project.
At last the children invited their parents and their friends for their project presentations. All the children sang nice songs about colours in Tamil and English. They acted out “Brown bear, Brown bear”, and they danced for a butterfly song. The parents and the other children enjoyed the performances of the upper kindergarten children.

3. First Standard - “My Village” Micro-Project

The children chose to do their project on the village of Kuilapalyam. We went several times on field trips around the village and asked many of the older villagers questions about the olden days. We found out that the village name came from the many Kuil birds that lived here in those days. We learned about the crops they used to grow such as ragi, varagu and peanuts, and what utensils were used, such as clay pots, for storing grain. There was no electricity or proper roads or piped water and people had to walk far to collect firewood. The children learned about the beginning of Auroville and what a big change it made to the lives of the villagers. There were many improvements. The children drew pictures of the village and coloured them in. They created a model village inside the classroom. Outside they planted a garden showing all the crops that used to be grown locally, including millet and peanuts. A well was made and a pond and a hut with a keet roof. In the hut were grinding tools and clay pots, sieves, coconut ladders and kerosene lamps. The children learned songs about the village, they did dances and wrote about their village. They had lots of fun while doing this project work and they were very enthusiastic. They presented the project to their parents, teachers and well-wishers. Grateful thanks to our school management and volunteer teachers: Usha, Janaki, Vashal, Thanajayan, Devenathan, Simone, Tia, Julie, Sathyvanni, Rajesh, Ramalingam, Subaryan and all the children. Thanks also to Meghan for sending photographs of the children by email.

4. Second standard - “Human Body” Micro-Project

The chosen topic of the project for this year in the 2nd grade was the Human Body. The duration of the project was January to February 2014. The Children showed great interest in learning things about the functions of their own bodies. Together we talked about the particular body parts they wanted to learn about and in which way they could study them. They decided to make books about the body parts and their functions. As teachers we decided this book would be a good resource for the future so we introduced the topic of the awareness of the body and being healthy as a book chapter. In the classroom work the topic of the five senses was introduced. The children did one activity for every sense. For example, they made rattles with different materials from the garden. For taste they blindfolded each other and had spoons of lemon, sugar, salt etc. The children made a magic box with different things inside to explore the touch sense.

For the project presentation the children decided to make their own drama. The main idea of the drama was staying healthy and clean. A smaller group of kids invented a puppet show with self-made puppets in the shapes of organs, using waste and natural materials found around them. They also learned a dance and songs connected with the project topic. The children made models of organs and body parts in clay class. In art therapy they made a second body book that was filled with the topic of safety and hygiene. In the classroom we read books about being safe in everyday life and the consequences of not taking care of hygiene. Another topic was the treatment and precautions for common diseases like cold, cough, headache, fever etc. During the whole project the children were participating in cutting, pasting and making models using different materials, making posters on all the given topics. Also they learned how to make fruit salad. As the end of the project, a presentation for the whole school took place. The children and teachers prepared the classroom and invited the parents. For the other school members a little show with the drama, the puppet show, the dance and singing was organized. In the classroom we shared information like cutting nails, washing hands, games, the presentation of the self made books and posters. We also provided fruit salad as an example of healthy food.
The children enjoyed themselves and learned a lot about their own bodies and how to take care of them.

5. Integral Art

All children universally go through the same sequence or stages of development unless there is an exception due to a physical, mental or cognitive delay or impairment. Developmental Art Therapy is provided for young children traditionally in Creche (Preschool), LKG, and UKG. Developmental Art Therapy uses the knowledge of a child's developmental stages to plan and implement art experiences designed to foster sequential growth oriented experiences in the following areas: physical (fine and gross motor, eye hand coordination), cognitive/intellectual, social, emotional and communication/interpersonal skills.
CREATIONS IN THE SANDBOX

“When one is very young [...] there is always, in the dreams of the child, a kind of aspiration, which for the child’s consciousness is a sort of ambition, for something which would be beauty without ugliness, justice without injustice, goodness without limits, and a conscious, constant success, a perpetual miracle. Children should be taught, [...] this is what should guide your life, organize it, make you develop in the direction of the true reality which the ordinary world calls illusion.” The Mother

The Learning Community

The main children who come to the World Game now, are part of The Learning Community, a community-based educational project in Auroville. The vision and the aims of The Learning Community are reflected in my approach to the World Game.

The World Game

The World Game is an activity which has been used as an educational tool since the beginning of Auroville. Although in Auroville this activity is now mainly played by children, it was also intended for adults. The World Game encourages spontaneity, trust in oneself, and being in the flow of the moment. There are no mistakes and no experience is required. There is nothing to accomplish, there is no place to get to. Because the World Game is playful, it flows joyfully and becomes a celebration of life.

We offer an opportunity in Auroville, with the World Game, to be creative, to express our own individuality and unique, living souls. The children go through their individuation process; with young children we can see this reflected in their creations. Our starting point for the World Game is that nothing is wrong with the children, that they are fine as they are, that we aren’t trying to “fix” something.

Through the atmosphere in the room and the peaceful aspiring attitude of the facilitator, and through the choice of quality and beauty in the objects, the children are invited to be true to themselves, to let their souls come forward. They are given the possibility to get in touch with and express their deeper dreams. It may be a way to change the world, if we believe that the dreams of children today are the realities of tomorrow.

How to play the World Game?

The World Game takes place in an inviting room, in my case the living room in my house in the forest. Personally I love to create an atmosphere of harmony, beauty and peace. I try to invite a higher level of vibration. I believe it is helpful in reaching our goal by offering an environment where the child can stay in contact with his psychic being and can awaken to his own creative spirit. Objects and figurines are nicely and playfully displayed on shelves and in baskets. These figures and objects from various cultures and from nature symbolize events and situations in our inner and outer lives. With these objects, the children materialize a universe reflecting their inner world: the world as seen, experienced or as dreamed of, or a pure imaginary world.

A typical session E. arrives at my house on his little cycle, he is 10 years old. He greets the dog, Sati, who is always excited to see a child arriving. E. knows him and picks up a stick in the garden and starts playing with the dog, while moving towards the house. Very often E. notices something in the garden: a new flower that has bloomed, a special butterfly, a little bird’s nest. Then he enters the room and his eyes light up seeing all the objects displayed on shelves and in
many little baskets. He straight away looks for his favorite figurines, some knights, or some play mobiles, and places them in the container filled with sand. I sit down quietly, choose music which fits the mood, and observe. He tells me a story of what happened at school this week, as he looks for the next objects he wants to bring in to create his little world for today. He becomes more silent while concentrating on making a very particular small world, filled with magical elements. He tells me a little about his world as he creates it. His story is spread out in the sand.

There are five ways in which children proceed: They make a scene silently and then at the end they spontaneously tell a story, or wait for an invitation to talk about it. Or the children tell a story all along the way- mostly the younger children- and the story keeps evolving and changing over the session or even over several sessions. Or there is a story told just by the placement of the objects without words, and after that an interactive story starts, with the other objects or with a partner, on another level without changing the created world, just moving objects around as in a one-act theater scene. Or the child proceeds silently and has nothing to add verbally. Or a story has been thought about before hand and is depicted very precisely, or is written down precisely after having been depicted.

The facilitator serves as a midwife for the images of the invited player, by receiving them just as they are, allowing them their own pace for emerging into the outer world.

Outputs

About 20 different children came to the World Game sessions during the year, mostly the children from TLC and some others. I also had a few adults this year. Some came weekly, others monthly, others periodically.

A research study started in March 2014 and is continuing, which will culminate in a book and DVD in the coming year. The processes of research and writing are a joy and a self discovery. The different topics to be found in the book so far are: the context, the history, the environment, the practical set-up, the evolutionary approach, the magical child perspective, the creative approach, observations and difficulties, stories and case studies. You will also find journal entries, pictures, and an audio-visual report. This year a big collection of pictures and videos were made, also with the aim of using some in the book and DVD.

Outcome

Through this activity the child creates his own world and becomes aware of his creative potentialities. The child can stay in contact with his psychic being and can awaken to his own creative spirit. Although the World Game relates to all planes of the being, it can be a good opportunity to invite and bring out touches of the psychic dimension. Beauty is the way the psychic expresses itself on the physical plane. The World Game creations can become artistic expressions for children in a spontaneous, poetic way. Throughout the many encounters and growing relationship between child and facilitator, several subjects were encountered in areas such as: what is the aim of life, what is creativity, what to do with the temptation of taking objects home?

Multi-fold scenes were created: some realistic, some playful, some chaotic, many magical, and almost all expressions of an abundance of imagination.

The little bags on the picture are improvised jails...

One can observe recurrent patterns such as nature, civilizations, battles, major life events. I will speak about this more extensively in the coming book.
Besides all this the activity leads to relaxation, an emotional workout, growing communication skills, aspiration for harmony, joy, etc.
CREATIVE EDUCATION THROUGH RADIO WITH CHILDREN

Objective:

- **To apply the concept of creative education in radio** using it as a tool to explore the various possibilities it offers for the children.

  *Creative education* consists in entering into a sharing and learning dynamic flow in which both adults and children are researchers, explore together a question, an idea, an intuition, build up a project etc.

  We become a learning team in an ongoing process of progress, spontaneous self-learning, and joy.

  The adult will be there mainly to give more autonomy and self-confidence to the child, while himself giving the example of self-exploration, creativity and humility, always ready to listen and to learn from the child.

  This type of education is itself creative in the sense that it doesn’t start from a ready-made curriculum but takes the challenge to discover in each one the inner tendencies which develop in a free space of non-judgment.

  *Education in sound* will then start with this inner listening.

  Flexibility and the capacity to reorient the research in a new and more adapted direction are also part of a creative education. Exploration is encouraged.

- **To help the child discover his own way to learn** develop capacities like self-observation, concentration, inner and outer listening, imagination, communication, creativity, and the capacity to discover and express his own inner world through a personal project using vocal work, speech, sounds etc.

- **To create with children radio programs and audio-books** which can then be shared with other children and teachers and could be the starting point to create and develop later one or more Educational Audio Libraries in Auroville.

Outputs:

- The primary tangible output has been the creation of 4 completed audio programs and there are 4 other programs in the process of editing:

  **Happy memories** Satyamayi, Chandana, Abinash, Leela, Sai, Aatman, Mira, Aarnav, Hannah, and Datchiany, are all 12 to 14 years old and students of Deepanam School intimately sharing their very happiest memories. When you are a teenager in a city composed of 45 nationalities, in which language do you remember your inner stories? Are you sure this memory belongs to you only? And how deep does human unity run? Find out in this “sound painting” of memories. (Thanks to Mahavir and Bhakti, Deepanam teachers)

  **Portraits for one audio book** Ahelia, a 14 year old Last School student, Yam, a 10 year old TLC student, and Jesse, a theater teacher and actor, share a passion for the theater. Here they talk about their lives in Auroville. Some extracts from their new performance, an
audio book based on The Water Book, Jalam and Savita’s Big Voyage, are given together with the interviews. Written by Sandrine, it is a marvelous journey with the spirit of water, named Jalam and played by Jesse, together with two Indian children. Savita is played by Ahelia and Sindhu is played by Yam. They travel through the ecosystem, and specifically the water cycle, in a compassionate story of friendship and collaboration with nature.

**Horse, my friend** Amongst the riding schools of Auroville, “Evergreen Farm” occupies a special place. Sarah, the creator and leader of the school, was inspired by Pat Parelli, the founder of the Natural Horse-ship approach. She affirms: “It’s not about teaching a technique, it’s all about learning how to “read” the horse. This process of communication works towards building a friendship”. Respect, observation without judgment, mutual understanding, truthfulness, full presence and clarity of intention are all necessary. You cannot lie to a horse! That’s why most of the work starts on the ground. With friendly games we create a joyful and trustful relationship. Later, children ride but without a saddle or a bit, only with a simple bridle, “to become one with the horse”, says Satyamayi. She is a 12 years old student who dreams to run, like Sarah, her own riding school one day. Sarah, Leela (11 years old) and Satyamayi share their love for the horses, interview each other, read some basic principles of Horsemanship from Parelli’s book, and much

**The little prince and fox** This chapter 21 from “The Little Prince”, fantasy written by Saint Exupery, is played by Sai (the prince), Atman (the fox) and Mira (the narrator), 13 years old students from Deepanam School.

The Little Prince arrived on Earth after visiting 6 other planets, but he lands in the middle of the Sahara desert, where he met a pilot, who just crashed. They become friends. Eventually, the little prince finds a rose garden, which surprises and depresses him—his rose (from his asteroid) had told him that she was the only one of her kind.

In this chapter 21, the prince befriends a fox, who teaches him that the important things in life are visible only to the heart that his time away from the rose makes the rose more special to him, and that love makes a person responsible for the beings that one loves. The little prince realizes that, even though there are many roses, his love for his rose makes her unique and that he is therefore responsible for her.

**Recordings still in the process of editing:**

**Hello teachers** Interviews of 3 teachers about education, and recording of the Deepanam School atmosphere, by one student (Datchiani).

**Songbirds girls** Interviews with 3 students about their love and joy for singing, and a joint performance of them singing their favorite songs - “a capella”. Two students are from Deepanam (Mira and Hannah) and one is from Last school (Ahilya).

**The good man** A humoristic, slightly ironic, short play about money and human attitudes towards it. Selected and played by 2 students from Deepanam (Arnaav and Abinash)

**The Matrimandir symphony** Recording of the Matrimandir soundscape background (including the new fountain song), and a reading about it by a student from Last School (Ahilya).
The creation of The Water Audio Book (40 minutes long) based on the script of “The Water Book, Jalam and Savita’s Big Voyage” written by Sandrine, illustrated by Emanuele

The water audio book, Jalam and Savita’s big voyage:

This story shows the unusual relationship between a little girl, Savita (played by Ahilya) from a village of India and a lovely form of the spirit of Water, Jalam (played by Jesse). He takes her and her friend Sindhu (played by Yam) on a marvelous and complex journey of his, this essential element of the earth; water. Jalam shows them the many wonders of water, explaining scientific facts and new discoveries as well as the mismanagement by humans. He also points to how harmony of the water cycle may be restored. This audio version is based on the script of the paper book: "The Water Book: Jalam and Savita’s Big Voyage", written by Sandrine and illustrated by Emanuele (available in 4 languages: Tamil, Italian, French and English). Music by Nadaka and from the album “The Earth is my friend - Children songs in 4 languages” (made in Auroville).

Outcomes:

- Introduction of the participating students to the use of the recorder Zoom H2 as means for self-expression and creativity.

- The exploration by the participating students of developing the possibilities of creative radio according to their own individual interests and ideas. The students have developed many capacities, including:
  - Improvement of their writing skill by creating and preparing their own scripts, projects or/and questions for interviews: to be clear and concrete in their objectives (short sentences) and then how to deepen and widen a subject by using the Why and How, to ask open questions, etc.
  - Knowledge of how to warm-up and use their voice by simple breathing, body and voice exercises (vocals, articulation). To acknowledge that the quality and clarity of the voice depends a lot of the inner state and the body posture – hence the need to get centered and well aligned as much as possible at all levels before starting to record.
  - Acquisition of the basic technical means to record properly with a Zoom H2 in different situations according to the purpose. Recording the atmosphere, a soundscape, an interview, a play etc. – each implies a different setting of the recorder, keeping the right distance between the source and the microphone, the right angle, avoid the parasite noise etc.

- Two students (from TLC and Last School) have been also able to experience recording in the soundproof studio of Auroville Radio along with Jesse a professional actor and Andrea a professional technical engineer. A truly professional experience of Radio!

- Development of the self-awareness, self-assessment and aim for perfection:
  - Development of the inner/outer listening, reflexive and communication capacities
  - Development of a dynamic mixed aged learning process: In order to get the knowledge and/or experience about the subject freely chosen for creating a radio program, the students didn’t hesitate to go beyond their class room and class age by inviting or going
outside to meet their resource person (ex. Songbirds Girls, Horse my Friend, Hello Teachers!). Learning is potentially everywhere and children enjoy this freedom to explore safely this potential in Auroville.

Development of autonomy, self-confidence and creativity: after those 5 months, students were able to record freely around the school with the recorder Zoom H2, to catch some atmosphere, soundscape, interviews, having lots of fun singing or creating sounds or initiating new ideas, in a natural, living and growing learning process.

Remarks:

One of the significant properties of the radio as an educational instrument, is to create in the pupil a reflexive and analytical process. By a simple self-assessment, the pupil can identify clearly experiences or in certain cases deficiencies, that the “second time record”, when it is possible, can most of the times correct.

Therefore, it has been really fulfilling as a facilitator to discover anew and validate the powerful mean for self-improvement the creative radio is (true mirror effect) and how much it can help towards realizing some of the aims of integral education in a dynamic, joyful, very creative and progressive way.

Such research deserves more time and space to develop and put into place all the technical means required (for example to initiate student to the editing and publishing part, also very creative).
DEVELOPMENT OF ART CURRICULUM

We started to work with the children in the primary section of Udavi School known as ‘New Building’ in mid June, at the beginning of their new term, taking four classes per week where we designed and implemented an art syllabus.

The initial exercises we introduced were basic drawing of lines and circles to free the body and mind of the children from their pre conceived notions about Art. These were designed to lead into different tracks depending upon the nature of the children, the age, mood and inclination of the class as a whole.

We were drawing objects inspired by circles in class 4 and some of them discovered the lily leaf just outside to be a form of circle but there was a general dissatisfaction with being able to draw the shape. With little help, Nirmal discovered that the leaf of the lily could be created by using an unfinished circle. He demonstrated this technique to the entire class and that may have been the changing point where class 4 got completely involved with us. They participated very enthusiastically later in the ABCD exercise and were able to come up with extraordinary ideas. Our focus with this group was more fun oriented learning and confidence building rather than skill development. Our approach was to make them think, visualize and draw, culling images from immediate surroundings.

With class 5 we used a different approach. After the initial exercises we sensed their restlessness and inclination towards skill based activity rather than ideation. We introduced different kinds of coloring activities that involved motor skills. We focused on observation skills and putting together or process based activity with them. We introduced watercolours and its use teaching how to hold the brush and techniques of paint application. We also developed clay objects with this class. Class 5 took very well to observation drawing. They created spectacular paintings of objects inspired by circles for eg. globe, basketball etc.

Once we realized their fondness for the outdoors we used sunlight to introduce the concept of shadows attached to the object as the next step. First we placed single objects in the sun, in a way that they cast shadows and asked them to draw. The result was very encouraging and so we placed a still life of 4-5 objects for them. We were happily surprised by the drawings of this group in their last exercise. They seem to have taken a giant leap by the end of our stay.

Class 6 got deeply involved in the plant observation exercise where 2 plants had been placed in the class room for study. It was very exciting for us to see that the students were no longer hesitant to draw but quickly created multiple sketches of these plants. We converted some of these into collages using newspaper and coloured paper.

Towards the end of our stay we felt a shift in the confidence level of the children in terms of their abilities to draw and represent ideas. They were not the same children we knew when we arrived. Their observation powers and skill level has increased. They look more focused, are able to see and draw shapes. They are also able to judge their own work honestly. We had lots of fun in and outside the class room and together we learnt that art is all around us.
FACULTY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH CRAFTS

Integrating the whole being in its process of progress is the chief aim of our team, for which creativity and freedom of expression plays a large role.

Goal of the Project:

Children are given the possibilities to explore within him what best he wants to pursue. For that we prepared a lot of creative activities to provide effectively to the students. This also helped them to express beauty and helped them to concentrate in their works. Our goal to bring forth the creative aspect of the children was fulfilled through these art classes and had created around them more harmonious well being.

Program/Activity details:

There were plans for each age group, keeping in mind their needs and skills. For younger ones were mainly provided with paper collage, different medium of colors, embroidery, soft toys making and lots of nature crafts.

The older students were able to choose from various crafts classes: pottery, origami, wood carving, carpentry, painting, beads-works, and nature crafts. They brought out their creativity in making Flower vase, patch work, Pillow cover, Star doll, Pencil holder, Embroidery, Bracelet and card making. The most enjoyed time was when the oldest girls made their own dolls with variety of hair colors and brought in their fashion sense in stitching dress for the dolls.

The highlight of the year was project - a play - where they prepared their own costumes and props and all were involved in stage decorations, which enriched their self confidence, team spirit and the experiences of moving towards the same goal.

Clay modeling and painting is another area where students are challenged with their creativity and imagination. This works involved their 5 senses and developed the taste for beauty and individuality. As they were able to choose their own activities we noticed that the children were more focused and responsible, but at the same time those who could not make up those choices were assisted and challenged in various areas and with different ways.

The funds were used mainly towards the purchase of the raw materials used for different paints for painting, clothes for costumes, papers, beads. Our theater room got new curtains which were much needed and made a lot of deference for the event.

Also various inputs from skilled people helped make our working areas more successful.

Outputs:

Bringing the value aspect forefront our students were able to inspire each other with the sense of respect, love and care. The constant atmosphere of assistance, creativity and openness nurtured certain values in them like love, care, confidence, concentration and openness towards new ideas. They began to respect their own space and others too.
We hosted the open house where family, friends and the community were welcome to see their works. Our guest-facilitators from different parts of the world brought their skills and amazed us with richness of imagination.

Our emphasis is originality and independent thinking, we do not encourage comparisons. At the same time, there is an emphasis on the simple and spontaneous creativity.

We had about 45 students and 8 teachers/helpers who were involved in the journey.

The academic year 2013 – 14 was the time line for us which concluded with:

8. Open house
9. Language day
10. Drama performance

Thus we had a successful year and a program full of experiences encouraging students to take greater responsibilities and cultivating in them the taste of perfection and beauty.
LIFE SCIENCE LABORATORY

To be aware of our local wildlife, respect and preserve it is the basic objective of the Life Science Laboratory. We have built the Life Science Laboratory as a living center for wildlife protection, study and care. At present it has:

**Freshwater Aquariums:**
- 6 nos of fresh water aquariums with over 15 species of fish
- longest freshwater aquariums 5ft long

**Seawater Aquariums:**
- 6 nos sea aquariums with over 10 species of fish & crustacians found in our local coastal waters - these are mostly collected by the students as well

The above aquariums are taken care of by the students. Great interest & interaction happens when children are encouraged to be responsible & observe living species in the aquariums. Responsibilities like daily feeding & regular cleaning of the aquariums are taken extremely seriously by the students.

**Wildlife Programs:**

Some of the favorite studies are:
- reptile study
- bird watching
- aquarium maintenance & feeding the fish
- Eco-trips within our bio-regions
- Night walks to observe wildlife in dark

In the classes projects like bird watching & reptile studies were the favorite topics. Learning to identify the local birds of Auroville & being part of regular surveys in the different months were encouraged.

**The Great Backyard Bird Count**

GBBC is a worldwide event. **GBBC 2014 took place on 14-17 Feb,** birders from 135 countries took part, documenting over 4,000 species in more than 140,000 checklists. Indian birders have participated in the GBBC since the event went global in 2013. A record 1,131 **birders from India took part,** submitting over 3,000 lists, containing over 800 species.
The students during the GBBC over 2 days (14 & 15th Feb) together identified in & around Deepanam School a total of 25 species of birds. This was really a very successful program. We wish to take part each year in the GBBC to be able to bring this awareness in the students.

**Wildlife Rescues:**

Along with discovering & studying our local wildlife we also have become the "rescue-team" for saving snakes that are often killed by people due to fear.

Bringing awareness & educating people that snakes are our best friends as they feed on insects & rodents that would otherwise become real pest to us.

We have been called upon at places / homes where snakes have been found to catch them safely and take them away to be released somewhere safer in the greenbelt / forest areas of Auroville. Small groups of children are given this opportunity to take part in releasing the snakes for educative reasons.

This delicate ecological cycle needs to be understood and respected as we share this earth with many other living creatures. Together we make this world a better place - each has the right to be in their place.

Here are the details of our rescues:

1. 23 snakes = (8 venomous & 15 non-venomous) - were safely removed from homes etc. & safely released in the forest areas.
2. 5 birds found injured were brought to be looked after.
3. 4 baby squirrels
4. 1 civet cat was caught in the wired-fence which was released back in the wild
Name of the Programme:

“Papui and Elay – Health Trek”, A Graphic Novel featuring the understanding of health and diseases based on the works of Mother and Sri Aurobindo and our own life experience.

Objectives:

- To give the opportunity to young people, through the popular medium of comics, to discover another way of looking at Health issues, up to the details of the daily events.
- To give the opportunity to people to discover the writings of Mother and Sri Aurobindo on the topic of health through a reader-friendly medium.
- Papui in his search for the Treasure and Something Else wants to convey more than a hope, but the certitude of the existence of a Truth that saves, a Truth that reveals to him the hidden meaning of things, the Truth of a creative Joy, of a Light, of a Beauty, and of a Unity of all things and events.
- To encourage human beings to regain their ability to create the world they live in.

Outputs:

We have produced:

- A soft copy of the book “health trek” in French (original language) - distributed for free.
- A soft copy of the book “health trek” in English (translation by Mauna) - distributed for free.
- 1000 hard bound copies in color of the 120 pages book “health trek” in English, printed at the Ashram Press.
The book is being distributed by us in several places:

- The visitors centre bookshop
- Seagull bookshop
- Farm fresh
- Happy food
- Savitri Bhavan
- Auroville online store
- We are still exploring other possibilities

The book will be presented at a book fair in Northern India by AVART end 2014.

We gave free copies of the book to: LOE, library, Kailask clinic, Savitri Bhavan, Lilaloka library, Quiet healing centre, SABDA, healers...

We held a book release event at the Visitors’ Centre on 18 April 2014 along with a mime show about the book by Drupad and a short reading of a chapter by Yvelise - attended by 50 people - we sold 25 copies of the book.

Remarks:

The writing of this book was in itself an adventure into:

- Learning to write a complete graphic novel and how to go about it so that it is as efficient as possible. We had to learn to respect our respective rhythms, as a process of creation doesn't happen just by the click of a hand. There are small mistakes, such as the size of the police of character, which is very difficult to handle when one does drawings by hand. It requires a lot of coordination. If we would do another one, we would try to get it better. Same for the DTP work, we learnt some important tricks and lessons.
- Exposing one’s own story to the public. This isn’t so easy and Yvelise especially had some resistance, which translated into lots of pain in her hands preventing her from writing. She had to buy a special program where she could dictate. Even the program wasn’t enough as it would often crash. She really had to break through some inner resistance.
- Our health and what happens when you look at your whole life in a synthetic way. In many ways, it was the beginning of a more intensive “work” on the physical and emotional aspects of our health, and it is slowly bearing its fruits, as our health is getting slowly better.
Objective / Goal

The children will have a space where their fantasy / imagination of the character that they are to play can take a truer / more creative form. Their involvement will be enhanced and their creativity will be better rewarded by the availability of dress up material. The teacher’s role will be vastly facilitated by the richer choice of material to build the stage in which the children will perform. Consequently, the will appreciate the children’s performance more, which will encourage the children to stage more such plays.

Ultimately, the Kindergarten believes that this will help to bring a stronger awareness of the richness that each child’s cultural background contributes to society at large, and thus help towards audience cross – cultural unity.

Outcome

This project came to completion by the end of last school year. A lot of the material took time to create: first it was designed, then the material was bought from different sources, and finally crafted by a tailor. Listed below is all the material that we were able to acquire with the project funding:

- Animal masks
- Wigs
- All types of dresses: king, queen, Indian mythological characters, clown and many others
- Make-up and jewellery
- A music set
- A small, moveable stage
- Storage equipment

As in 2013, where the kids have fond memories of the plays (Goldilocks and the three bears, Rupa the elephant, Krishna’s birthday, Ganesha’s birthday and Arc-en-ciel) that they performed with the new dress material, this year we put together a play-dance called “The Five Elements”. In this play the children dressed up with costumes representing the five elements water, fire, earth, spirit and air. The final dance performance turned out wonderfully, where parents of the children were invited to come and watch.

The material is also used from time to time during our daily “big circle”—the whole school gathers in a big circle at 11:00 and different groups stage a little performance, either a song dance or little skit. The children now enjoy putting up short performances as they can dress
themselves up beautifully and present themselves in their imaginary role.

All classes now benefit from the extra material that is available, facilitating the introduction of a theme that the teacher has introduced during the class period.

**Conclusion**

We have observed that since the dress up material arrived at the school, that the children love drama, that they enjoy making their imaginary worlds come to life, that they have a space where they can feel free to discover and interact with their classmates. The children assign roles to one another, learn to listen and to observe each other, and to play the roles that they have been assigned. The roles that are assigned are taken seriously and give them an importance of being that they are proud to portray.

Parents, on their side, have expressed that the children come home with a happy smile and are eager to express themselves about the plays that they have done.
1, Aim of Project:

For the past years we have been working to improve and further develop the student portfolio as a method of evaluation and assessment. This year we decided to give more attention to the portfolios for two reasons: one was that we need to continually assess and improve our work, and the second was that we have new teachers who had not been present during our earlier work on developing portfolios. Over the years we have observed that the student portfolio is very motivating; children naturally want to save work, and the portfolio encourages them to take a second look and think about how they could improve future work. Everything that goes in the portfolio comes from the students’ work and as such corresponds to the classroom curriculum and other activities that the students participate in outside of the school. Each selection includes an entry slip which is a self reflection that describes the relevance of the selection to the development and competency of the student. A portfolio contains separate pieces that may not mean much by themselves, but, when taken together, it produces an accurate and holistic portrait of the student.

The portfolio can provide a “rich picture” of a student’s abilities, and show growth over time. It should ideally contain a collection of the student’s work in all subject areas and also include outside school, extra activities the student is involved in. Photographs can be included to give a more vivid view.

Over the years we have developed student portfolios; the purpose of the portfolio is to assist students, parents and teachers to observe individual progress made over the course of a school term and/or year. By using a portfolio, the children learn to assume the responsibility for learning how to evaluate their work and how to set goals for future growth. With analysis the portfolio can demonstrate aspects pertaining to:

- their interests, strengths and weaknesses
- intellectual, aesthetics aspects of their being
- emotional and moral values
- integral learning and self esteem skills
- cooperative learning skills
- communication skills
- five aspects of personality, that is, the physical, the vital, the mental, the psychic and the spiritual

Each selection should be chosen deliberately with the aim to observe the student’s progress. The students take an active role in selection and assessment and this helps them to take ownership in their own learning and to become more aware of themselves. This is an ongoing process.

2, Program/Activity details:

Researchers observe that as the children mature, they are able to develop their portfolios in a way that indicates a growing self-awareness. The portfolio is an aid for those who guide the student in his/her personal development. The student learns to present the portfolio to others who are interested in his/her growth (parents, teachers, friends…)
We have observed that the students have progressed in their ability to develop each stage of the portfolio development process more independently:

- **Collection** – teachers and students learn to save material that represents growth opportunities. A few times each term, time is set aside for the children to choose work that will be included in the portfolio.
- **Selection** – students review and evaluate the material they have saved, and identify pieces that demonstrate their progress or something that they find interesting. It may be an assignment that they liked and did very well in, or it may be something that they found difficult. The reflection on the entry slip will make this clear to the observer. Teachers may also ask the children to include certain work.
- **Reflection** – students become reflective, evaluating their own growth over time and their progress, as well as the gaps in their development. Students are asked to assess each piece that has been chosen by using an entry slip. An entry slip provides the student with the chance to reflect on the work and his/her participation in it and at the same time gives the readers an overview. At the end of each term the children do a term review, giving the student a chance to reflect on his/her progress, participation and possible difficulties. At that time they will also be encouraged to include a report, picture or drawing that represents activities that they are interested in outside of school.
- **Projection** – students consider their reflections, and learn to set learning goals for the future. This supports lifelong learning.
- **Presentation** – teachers and students share their portfolios with their peers. At least once a year the children present their portfolios to their parents. By the time the students are ready to leave the school (grade 8) they have learned to present their portfolio to others.

The process and resulting observations are often discussed in teachers’ meetings. This was very helpful as it gave all teachers a chance to learn and improve. We need to continue the work on the portfolios. Next school year we plan to have study sessions to help us improve the work.

3, **Outputs:**

All students at Transition School worked on and produced an individual portfolio. This portfolio will be maintained and added to throughout their time at Transition School. The students, their parents and other teachers who work with the students all profit from this. The students in grade 7 start to prepare their “school leaving portfolio”. Here they are encouraged to look more deeply at their portfolio, filter it and reflect upon the purpose of the portfolio.
REMOVING READING AND WRITING DIFFICULTY

Objective  Removal of the reading and writing difficulties of 21 students.

Details of the difficulty

- **Difficulty for the 19 students**
  1st group students had difficulties in reading, writing and remembering 40 and lesser difficulties in 20 letters in Tamil; 2nd group students had difficulties in 40 letters and lesser difficulties in 40 letters; and 3rd group had difficulties in 40 letters and lesser difficulties in 60 letters. All these students had difficulties in Consonant-Vowel-Combination letters. It was because the 64 Vowel-Consonant-Combination letters had 1 or 2 additional vowel symbols, /n> N> h/> used to distinguish between the sounds ‘v’> short /el/, ‘v’> long /ai/, ‘x’ short /oi/, ‘X’ long /oa/, ‘h’ used to distinguish between short and long vowel sounds in Vowel-Consonant-Combinations.

  They also had problems in Vowel-Consonant-Combination letters with short /oo/ sound as in ‘cook’, ‘book’ and with long /OO/ sound as in ‘tooth’, ‘booth’. These sounds are represented by single letters like R> G> T> A> and R+> G+> T+> A+; or F> L. K> U> O> S> and %> ^> &> * > @; or Z> J> E> Y> W> D and Z+> J+> E+> Y+> D+. Here the difficulty is that no common symbol is used to represent these sounds; the symbols used were different and of three kinds.

  Further they also faced difficulties in hearing clearly and distinguishing between the sounds of 7 Consonant letters; they sounds were similar but with a slight difference. They were: y> s> e> d> z> u> w> (/y and s/> /e> d and z/> /u and w/); the sounds of the letters in each of these groups are similar and the letters are different. They found it difficult to distinguish between these sounds and hence to remember the letters.

- **Difficulty for the two slightly dyslexic students**
  The two dyslexic students are generally cheerful and not at all gloomy. They are good-humored. Sharveen has a scientific temperament and is dynamic. Bhavatharini is sweet and is trying her level best in reading and writing well. In spite of it their progress is hampered because they found it difficult to read and express themselves in writing.

Remedial Activities that were decided upon and given to them

Due to various reasons these students did not have adequate opportunities to use these letters in reading or writing contexts. If ever they had got such opportunities they were in a small measure, not in such a measure that any difficulty felt by them in remembering and reading were got rid of permanently. For these students these activities were deliberately designed so that they practiced reading and writing all these letters with involvement and joy.
For 19 students The remedial activities provided them with repeated opportunities for reading and writing so that they saw all the letters with symbols in many contexts and in many combinations of words. Following were the activities given to them:

1. Matching activity.
2. Finding out the mistakes in the words in sentences and correcting them, and then writing the full sentences correctly.
3. Finding out the missing letters in the words.
4. Changing the words starting with a short vowel to words starting with a long vowel.
5. Listening to and writing down the words dictated by the teacher.
6. Reading the letter hand-written by the teacher.
7. Circling the words told by the teacher in the newspaper.
8. Slide game.

All the letters involved in these activities are Vowel-Consonant-Combination Words.

For the two slightly Dyslexic students

For dealing with this difficulty we did not use any elaborate process for a long duration which is normally adopted in many places. From the Internet we learnt about the methodology discovered by Ronald Davis for ridding oneself of this difficulty. Davis himself was afflicted with dyslexia till he was 38 and suffered a lot in life. In spite of it he became an engineer and was doing well in his profession. When he was 38 years he was thinking about his dyslexic ailment and was trying to see things with different perspectives like deliberately seeing things with crossed eyes. At some point during this activity he found out that he was seeing the letters in words correctly and in the right sequence. He made efforts to see from this perspective and managed to get that perspective consciously. Straightaway he went to the library came across a book by Mark Twain and managed to read the entire book at one goes. It was the first time he had managed to read in such a way. Later he explored this process and found out that he had come across the right perspective by locating his real mind’s eye. He discovered that for some reason his perspective had got disoriented and locating this mind’s eye and seeing him made him get back his right orientation. His further exploration led him to see the necessity of removing all the activities that confuse him in this process and made him disoriented. Practice of making the alphabets and words with clay enabled him to be rid of any confusions that intervened in his perspective and made it disoriented. He systematised this activity and designed a methodology to cure dyslexia.

His methodology consisted of two parts. One was to enable the dyslexically affected person get back the correct orientation from seeing from his mind’s eyes. It is called the Davis Orientation process. In his institutes he trained trainers in helping the dyslexic persons locate their mind’s eyes and rightly orient their perspective. The second was Symbol Mastery Process for sufficient duration so that no confusion can intervene and disrupt this orientation.

We wanted to try this methodology for our two dyslexic students. We bought his Davis Orientation and Symbol Mastery Kit and learnt about the details of his method. As Davis considered his method applicable only to people above 12 years it could be tried with Sharveen only. Further Davis considered this orientation process should be performed only by the trainers trained in his institute. In India we read about only two such trainers in North India and found the cost of using them prohibitive. Sanjeev Ranganthan, who is capable of imparting visualization techniques to others and with a certain experience in it, came forward
to try it. For Sharveen dthe Orientation Technique of the Davis Correction Programme was applied by Sanjeev Ranganathan. Even though it could not be applied to Bhavatharini who was just 9 years old, Symbol Mastery techniques were used for her effectively by using Plasticine Clay.

Below is given the description by Sanjeev Ranganathan, of how the Orientation Technique was used for Sharveen.

**My use of Davis Orientation process for Sharveen**

“Sharveen is an intelligent and responsible child. He, however, found himself struggling with reading writing and even the simplest algebraic equations. In such situations he either froze or made up his own situation/words, etc. His writing skills were quite weak and he often mixes up letters and their orientation even though he is in 7th grade. He is, however, able to type much quicker and with fewer mistakes than his peers. He took significant time to understand abstract equations, but was able to implement procedures almost once he has mastered them. He displayed great patience in what he did.

He noticed that he found himself in a state of confusion sometimes, especially when he felt under stress e.g. during examinations. Due to the factors mentioned above his teachers felt that Sharveen could have some form of disorientation/dyslexia. The school received materials related to the Davis dyslexia kit and Sanjeev with observation from Kavitha followed the Davis Orientation/Alignment procedure in the kit.

Sanjeev took permission from Sharveen to try out a procedure that might help him get clarity when he feels confused or stuck. Sanjeev then along with Sharveen went over the feeling of release (fist closing exercise) to help him be at ease and be capable of remembering what a calm feeling feels like. To assess which orientation procedure is to be used Sanjeev used the Perceptual Ability Assessment. This was done by visualization of a piece of cake in Sharveen’s hand, giving it characteristics and then viewing it from different vantage points. Sanjeev realized that Sharveen was very creative and added much detail to his cake, but the description of shape and cross section from different points of view were not consistent with what is normally expected.

This prompted the use of the Alignment by visualizing yourself standing behind when you are sitting down and creating a mind’s eye that looked from beyond and above you. This process is supposed to help to orient things from the traditional point of view and avoid confusion. Sharveen seemed comfortable with the process though he mentioned that everything seemed normal like before.

Sharveen uses the release technique, but does not seem to utilize the reorientation procedure that went with the release as often. Sharveen’s teachers, however, have seen a marked improvement in his reading and abstraction skills. He seems to have developed a knack of being able to catch himself when he is about to make a mistake and his ability to grasp new procedures is significantly faster. These have also resulted in improved academic achievement in the last year. It is, of course, a question even to us how much the alignment technique contributed to this improvement.”
RESULTS

- **19 students** Among the 19 students, for 8 students, Priyadharshini, Swathi, Anitha, A. Akash, Dhinesh, Hemraj, Pooja and Inbanila, the difficulties have been removed. They are now able to read, write and recognise the letters. They are also able to read the books faster than before.
  Out of the 13 remaining students, for 3 students, Abinesh, Sunil and Vinitha, 75% of the difficulties had been removed. They need one more month continuing with such activities to complete the process and to become normal like the above mentioned 8 students.
  For the remaining 8 students, Sudharsan, Kumesan, Keerthana, Yesotha, R.Sweatha, Sweatha, Vasantha and Prabhakaran, only 40% of the difficulties had been removed. For various reasons their attendance was very irregular. Still we feel confident that 3 more months of continuing the present process and regular attendance can complete the removal of their difficulties in reading and writing. We intend to take necessary steps to improve their attendance.

- **2 students** 90% of the difficulties had been removed for Sharveen, But still Bhavatharani has learning difficulties. As she is enthused on seeing her progress, she is becoming more involved in doing these activities, and wants to be completely free of her difficulties. For that she needs 3 more months of such activities which we hope she is fully ready to do.
SUMMER CAMP

The object of the camp is “to give orientation to the students in the essentials of Indian Culture” (in the light of the Teachings of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother).

The camp was from 2nd May to 21st May, 2013. The beneficiaries are about 50 students, who are going to outside schools and are not ordinarily exposed to the principles of education enunciated by the Mother and Sri Aurobindo.

This summer camp aims at:

Experimenting at providing something which is not catered to in outside schools. Outside the emphasis is on improving the mental, vital and physical instruments, whereas the psychic part is missing. That part can be provided only in a conducive environment by teachers who are themselves volunteers and try to practice.

Research is knowledge developed and confirmed by regular experiment, practical analysis and constant result. This project has three components.

- The Project Holder and the resource persons
- Beneficiaries and
- The experiment and outcome of research.

The Project Holder and the resource persons:

The Project holder, Mr. Varadharajan, who is the guide of the project is an Aurovilian from 1969 onwards, had the benefit of the Mother’s personal guidance to him in Tamil relationship matters and education.

The other resource persons are Ms. Syamala, who had also the personal guidance of the Mother in outreach matters and in education.

Mr. S. Mahalingam, an old Ashramite and now an Aurovilian has translated into Tamil more than 14,000 pages of the Mother’s and Sri Aurobindo’s works etc.

Ms. R. Meenakshi, a long time Aurovilian, is an educationist, poetess, social worker, author of a good number of books and publications and till recently a Member of the Sahitya Academy Advisory Board (Tamil).

Mr. R. Viraswamy is a Dr. Radhakrishnan Best Teacher awardee of the Tamilnadu Government.

Beneficiaries:

The first lesson the beneficiaries learn is the joyful commitment of the guides, not for monetary benefit. Second lesson they learn is that there is no examination or certificate and each one is competing with himself only and not with others and joyfully giving himself to whatever he does. The guides express only those which coincide with their personal experience so as to encourage introspection, observations and analysis of personal impressions. These are
conveyed by silent practice and not by preaching. The constant result is the joyful learning by understanding for its own sake and not for examinations. At the same time knowledge is evoked from the examples from known to the unknown, in the light of Foundations of Indian Culture. To give one example, the local tradition of Lord Murugan (Mylam temple). The psychic being is the mediator between heaven and earth. Arumugam or Murugan has two wives, Deivanai and Valli, one the heavenly bride and the other daughter of the hill. Six is the symbol number of New Creation (Arumugam has six faces), peacock (symbol of victory) is his vehicle. There is a whole series of correspondences, with the psychic being. He is the mediator of manifestation of the spirit in earth. Matter has not to be despised but raised to its maximum capacity. His abode is on the hillock, the symbol of matter.

There are many such examples, from which the children can easily understand the Foundations of Indian Culture, the principle being the whole of life is to be an progressive expression of the Spirit.

A Chennai trip was organized to Tiruvanmiyur and Pattinathar Samadhi and Mahabalipuram to give first hand exposure to inner knowledge and spiritual art expression in stone, the spirit’s expression in matter which has stood the test of time. (The Indian sculptor stresses something behind, something more remote to the surface imagination, but nearer to the soul, and subordinates to it the physical form…….The art of making in stone or bronze calls for a cast of mind which the ancients had and the moderns have not or have had only in rare individuals…………..Sri Aurobindo in “The Foundations of Indian Culture)

Their knowledge was practically nil and at the end of the camp they had assimilated some knowledge by experience.

Result: The Mother has said that Auroville has become the symbolic representation of all the difficulties of the earth and it will be the place of resurrection to a higher and truer life. “We are experimenting in the area of outreach education, where children have no exposure to these ideas. The Mother once told this Project holder that “little by little they will change”. We have to hold firmly to our ideals and adapt the means according to necessity of circumstances. This is one such small forward step, which has the ripple effect. We have been requested from places like Chennai, Chinglepet, Salem, Coimbatore, Trichy, Madurai, Thuthukudi, Tirunelveli, Ambasamudram, to share our experience. It is a research experience not only for the students, but also for the resource persons, who have also to update themselves to have living experience.
Aim of the project

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 class room 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.

Exhibits

The exhibit encompasses four main topics that integrate display/learning modules. They are

- Natural Resources and their conservation
- Maths in Science and Nature
- How stuff works?
- Students’ Museum

Output/Activities

- **Natural Resources and their conservation & Students museum**

Organic farming - A team of students have learnt the basics of organic farming and developed a garden at the school premise

Herbal medicines – Our science club team have visited AV Botanical garden. They have learnt the local names of many herbal medicinal plants and also the Botanical names of the same. They have collected seeds of the same and planted at the school and their homes wherever possible. They displayed the same materials as posters in the exhibition. Our students also visited Ariyankuppam beach in the early morning to collect marine fishes and other living creatures from the sea. They had a good interaction with the fishermen to know more about different varieties of the fishes and other sea living creatures their local names. Using available
resources from the book and internet students identified the zoological names of the same and prepared a nice collection of specimens. They also learnt how to make specimens using appropriate receipts. They displayed the same in the exhibition

- **Maths in Science and Nature**

Students prepared a list of activities to explain this Probability theory concept and they made a model to explain the same

They displayed a live model to explain Parabola model and all the participants enjoyed working with the same

- **How stuff works**

Magic with magnets  Students did a list of activities using magnets…learnt the history of magnets and their chemical nature.

Solar room heater – Students made a solar room heater using low cost materials and explained to the participants the principle behind this model

Telegraph m/c – Using the original piece of the same students explained the working concept of the same.

Students made live model to explain the structure of DNA and their components

Students made live models to understand the physics concept behind wave motion and Tidal waves.
Since it is now almost a year since we first began talking about a Teacher Training Program in Auroville it seems appropriate to send you a report on our activities and on the status of the IETTP now.

Activity began in earnest in September when we announced the start of the IETTP and invited applicants. In the interim we have refined our understanding of how the portfolio and advisory processes will work and have interviewed a number of people who wished to join the program. We have also sponsored a variety of workshops and other forms of assistance to teachers who are not necessarily a part of the IETTP, and we have had a series of discussions with Maya, Ana, and Asha about our joint vision for a Teachers’ Center, which would coordinate all the support work for teachers and schools.

Five Aurovilians are now enrolled in the teacher training program and another two have been assisted in finding work with children appropriate for their particular interests and experience. Stacy, Adrianna, Shilpi, Davaselvy and Nandinni have joined the program and each has started a portfolio with a list of personal professional goals and an action plan. Although not necessarily required, all have chosen to attend the Special Needs Course and a Seminar on Integral Education which will be taught by Deepti in February and March. Each participant has an advisor and a plan of study. There will be regular check-ins as a group and individually with the advisor.

Because the IETTP is a free progress program, teachers and prospective teachers may apply at any time, and will certainly finish at different rates, depending upon their goals and opportunities. For any larger group we will need to find and mentor new advisors, but, at the moment, and for an evolving program, five is a good number. Francois has been overseeing the needs of the trainees, coordinating the advisory work in school, and purchasing equipment with the needs of a Teachers’ Center in mind.

**Workshops and Advisory Services**

In addition to the specific work with the IETTP trainees we have sponsored two four week sessions of a highly successful course on Special Needs which has drawn more than eighty teachers. We have also sponsored the Sixth Annual Integral Education Conversation, and the ongoing work with advisors continues in several schools with Lisbeth, Francoise, Maya and Heidi. A list of the professional development activities in Auroville in 2014 will be attached to this report.

Many of the winter’s workshops and seminars have been held at the new Saiier Building, where the IETTP program is based, but the smaller meetings have been held in a school or home as before. We have been fortunate to be able to use the new Saiier Building for meetings, courses and workshops. The space provides continuity, and some flexibility (though smaller and more
moveable chairs would help) and a sense of “home” for the work with teachers. The staff has been unfailingly helpful.

The IETTP core group consists of: Francoise, Maya, Chali and Heidi, although several other teachers have been and will continue to be closely involved with advising and planning.

**A Teachers’ Center**

The IETTP Core Group has met several times with Maya, Ana and Asha to share ideas in an attempt to find ways in which we can collaborate in our efforts to support integral education and research in Auroville, focusing particularly on teachers’ professional development. From these conversations we have formulated the vision of a Teachers’ Center, which would coordinate and facilitate all teacher development activities in Auroville, consistent with an integral education philosophy. We have been offered space in the new Saiier Building as a home base for the Teachers Center. The Center will serve as a network and “place”, when appropriate, for teacher support programs in Auroville, but each program will retain its own identity. For example, the IETTP will focus on teacher training for integral education. The ACCESS Center at Transition will continue to house and circulate books and teaching materials. Maya, Ana and Asha will continue their development of educational materials in schools for specific purposes. Lisbeth, Francoise, Heidi and Maya will continue with their advisory services, when requested. Schools will continue to sponsor and support their own study programs and workshops. All of these independent activities can support and enhance each other within the network created under the umbrella of the Teachers’ Center.

The range of possible activities for a Teachers’ Center is listed below.

1. **Bringing people involved in education in Auroville together**
   - Hosting meetings for Auroville teachers to discuss different topics regarding education and creating a platform for all schools working with Integral Education in Auroville.
   - Providing a space where all the Auroville schools can be represented, and where ongoing work can be displayed.
   - Providing activities for those who are working in education to feel supported at all levels.
   - Offering teachers access to a central resource center with books and other didactic material.

2. **Teachers’ training suited to the needs in Auroville**
   - The Integral Education Teacher Training Program (IETTP) – a program for people planning to become teachers, or for teachers who want to improve their skills.
   - Workshops for teachers of Auroville schools and outreach schools (Tailored workshops specific to the needs of individual teachers, groups of teachers or schools, and ongoing work with mapping these needs)
   - Linking teachers training with all other work areas in Auroville that can be a resource for teachers’ training.
   - Providing teachers with tools and support, taking into account and understanding the children’s needs in all periods of development, this including children with special needs and finding ways to integrate them in the class/group.

3. **Research and development in the field of Integral Education**
   - Research in the field of Integral Education
   - Educational material development - to develop concrete didactic materials for Integral Education, and educational materials specific to the needs of Auroville (eg. multicultural, bilingual aspects).
   - Resources and professional support for teachers conducting action research or writing books.
WHITE PEACOCK
A CERAMIC ART STUDIO FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS

Objective / Outcome:

- To create a space for exploration of creativity through clay work
- To build and maintain a community space where the Human Unity spirit appears in a group of people guided by their passion for art
- 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
- To discover one’s hidden potential using art language and support from co-students and facilitator

Outputs:

- During this school year the studio team has chosen an architect and started building a new classroom cum firing/storing place – a new home for the “White Peacock” club. We noticed that Mona Doctor-Pingel, an architect, has a great feeling for the ceramic pieces installed in the building – inside and outside, on the walls, floor and the ceiling. With the younger and elder children we made a lot of decorative pieces that will be used in the new classroom – wall and floor tiles, ceiling plates, water spouts, murals etc.

- An average of 40-50 children and adults aged from 3 to 68 - mostly Aurovillians 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 technical person worked on our project throughout the whole year.

Outcomes:

Clay work gives an opportunity for students to freely express something deep within themselves and to come in contact with one’s inner self. 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. Sunday classes continue to be extremely popular by families with young children. The youngest clay artist is just 3 years old. Children who attend classes for 2-3 years show great skills and deep filling of the material. They gained certain confidence and now able to come up with their own ways to achieve constructive forms and to manifest their own creative ideas in clay and colors. Children were involved in the building of a new classroom through their work. They were highly motivated as they felt the importance of their work and went onto another level of responsibility as the work they have done will be seen by everybody for a long time. This project is ongoing as we will continue with more murals for the same building. The architect made the space and the walls in such a way that the building itself will create a unique atmosphere of clay passion.
This year one more team member with engineering background joined us. This was a long waited addition to the team. He was monitoring all the firings and improved our electrical kilns’ performance adjusting the system to multiple power cuts. He maintained all the kilns and exchanged the heating elements in the large kiln. It was a year with smooth firing schedule. He will continue the technical supervision and maintenance of all the equipment.

Remarks:

This year we focused on practical pottery. First half year we were exploring design in pottery as a way to make useful things beautiful and vice versa. We spent a lot of time sketching easy and comfortable to use things such as soap dish where soap doesn’t slip and doesn't become wet etc. Some students went very deep in this. Parents supposed to be our judge team as they got the results to be used at home. The feedback was very good. The second half of the year most of the time was taken by practical tasks got from the architects of our new building. While making a community projects we are growing as a team and all the inner blocks and fears dissolve as we are all one joined author of the art piece.