In this report we are highlighting programs that have been carried out for the first time in the school. We will not be describing the regular programs of the school whose descriptions can be found in earlier reports or in our school brochure.
Workshop on Development Through Drama

‘Development Through Drama’ was a workshop held in January 2019 for Auroville school teachers. It was conducted by Tracy Evans – a theatre and drama coach from London. The course content was based on the book ‘Development Through Drama’ written by Brian Way. The workshop was a two-week program that consisted of discussions and activities for teachers and visits to Auroville schools by Tracy.

Vidhya joined the workshop from Udavi School and invited Tracy to work with the children at the school. Here is her report:

Objectives of the Workshop:
º adopt drama in school education as a personality development tool
º explore drama as a way of experience rather than as a means of communication

The workshop dealt with the faculties of the physical self, speech and imagination. The central idea was to bring awareness upon what already exists within rather than ‘cultivate’ something new. The exercises of the workshop were essentially loose and flexible in nature. There was no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ way to do an exercise. They were exploratory, and the participants were trained to focus on the emotions felt while working out these exercises.

During her visit to Udavi School, Tracy worked with two groups of students: The first group consisted of 7th graders, and the second was a mix of 8th and 9th graders. The two groups were divided into subgroups. Some of the exercises she conducted were –
º adding vocal sound effects to actions and scenes
º role-playing
º enacting a theme or scene
º developing an idea into a story
º plot development and twist

The first group responded enthusiastically to exercises such as adding vocal sounds, role-playing and theme enacting. In short, they were attracted to activities that required the flow of vital energy. The second group responded well to story development and plot twist – activities that required mental energy. The students were given only 10 minutes to prepare their skits or plays. Tracy was much delighted at the level of energy and creativity in these children.

From this workshop, the students learnt the following:
º observation of their emotions (self-awareness)
º observation of emotions in others (conscious mirroring)
º expression of emotions as bodily movements or speech
º concentration
º coordination with group members
º spontaneity
º confidence

My most important learning from the workshop is that spontaneity could be as effective as planning. In fact, spontaneity carries a charm which planning lacks. Besides this, the potential of these exercises is vast and can cater to different needs of child education. The exercises are safe channels for the expression of physical and mental energies. Along with my students and co-participants, I continue to explore the various possibilities of drama as a personality development tool.
REPORT ON INTERNET CLASS

Vidhya, our English teacher at senior school, introduced internet classes to the main building students of Udavi. These took place in the evening after sports. Here is her report:

The endeavor started with a promising note, and it has maintained the momentum creating interesting projects on various subjects.

In the internet class, students choose topics (academic or non-academic) of their interests and create internet-based projects in PowerPoint. First, the scope of the project is outlined. This is the most difficult part of the work that requires most of my interventions. The scope is decided based upon the complexity of the topic, time required to complete it and the ability of the students. Next, the students conduct secondary research on the internet and collect information in the form of texts, images and videos. Together we sift through the collected information for its relevance and accuracy. Paragraphs and complex sentences are broken down into simple bullet points. Finally, the information is arranged in proper sequence and formatted in PowerPoint. That completes the project! The team then presents the project at the school assembly. Presentation is followed by review questions on the topic conducted by the team.

FOLLOWING TOPICS WERE PRESENTED BY GRADE 7,8,9 & 10 STUDENTS DURING THIS ACADEMIC YEAR:

**Grade 7:** Matter and its Nature; A.P.J.Abdul Kalam – The Missile Man and People’s President of India; P.V.Sindhu – A short biography
**Grade 8:** Hampi – A World Heritage Site
**Grade 9:** Cristiano Ronaldo – A short biography; Adventure Sports – White Water Rafting; Musical Instruments – Indian and non-Indian
**Grade 10:** Traditional Dance Forms of the World

The topic ‘Matter and its Nature’ was a revelation to me. Hariharan and Deepak of grade 7 chose this topic from their science textbook. The topic deals with molecules and molecular bonds of different states of matter (solid, liquid and gas) and their state change. One can understand the abstractness of these concepts. The textbook provides only a few images to explain them. The students decided to ‘remake’ this textbook lesson into an internet-based project. To explain molecular bonds and interactions, relevant animated images were selected. To explain state change of matter (melting, freezing, evaporating etc.), video clips of Lake Superior of North America freezing into ice during winter, melting of gold metal with propane torch, frost formation on windowpane, volcanic lava boiling and evaporating an entire lake in Hawaii and cloud formation over San Francisco Bay Area were chosen. The project was much appreciated by the rest of the students as it helped them understand their textbook better. This proved that a suitable image or video clip could replace hundreds of words. It highlights the merits of internet-based, audio – visual learning. The merits are:

- better understanding of difficult concepts
- better retention of learning in memory
- improved analytical and critical thinking
- decreased learning time

The ultimate aim of internet-based education is active and self-directed learning. The key here is to inspire curiosity in students.
Adelaide Raulais, an accomplished artist, seeking to join Auroville offered to work with our students. We welcomed her. Together we decided that she would create a sculpture with our senior students. Here is her report:

We started during the October holidays with painting and land art to get in touch and explaining different mediums.

The younger students started with basics exercises: Ball, Egg, Cup and animals in Clay. The concentration was very good as well as the creativity. The work was going on in a playful way. I also brought regularly books to show them Indian tribal art with a lot of animals and they learned that the expression can have different styles.

The older students discovered the work in 3 dimension reproducing deeds in a bigger dimension. Observation and finger ability was required. As there were a lot is questions about sculpture I brought regularly to the class books of master pieces in India and Europe.

Then we switched to relief work of animals. The concentration was much better by the younger ones. After that we made a small model of the dome that we had decided to do. The dome is a universal shape of the cosmos.

As the mother spoke about the snake as carrying the energy of evolution and progress I chose this animal for the dome temple. We are on the earth to progress -when the snake bites its tail it is one with the universe.

The other animals are mirrors of different emotions that we want to learn to control. With the group of the younger students we drew sketches of the reliefs and decided the place on the dome where we would place them.

Then the construction could start with the help of Earth Institute. Satprem did the plan, Dania, architect supervised all the work.

The curiosity of other students of the school was also there with a lot of questions about the technique of making the dome and the meaning of the work. Some of them also started to help.

After completing the construction with bricks we did the plaster. It was a fun work. The last step was to realize the relief with the plaster. It was very creative and busy.

SCULPTURE – INSTALLATION
PROJECT 2018-2019
MUSIC CLASSES IN UDAVI SCHOOL

Katerina, a volunteer from Ukraine offered to teach Piano at Udavi. We invited her. Here is her report:

I arrived at Udavi School on August 20 of 2018. It took me about three to four weeks to schedule classes. At that time I could only use an old keyboard to teach the children. I started my classes in September for 2 days a week (Tuesday, Friday) with eight students-Sivashakti, Lara, Anisha, Janani, Agalya, Avantika, Vishal and Barani.

In October the school got a new piano. From that time I scheduled children's piano classes and piano practice separately.

On Saturday my day was full with smaller children from the new building: Bama, Bumika, Meethul, Yuvasree, Keethi, Gautam and Logeshwari.

With time, interest in piano classes grew and more students came to learn piano:

Monisha, Ashvini, Pavita, Abi, Sasidharan, Shaktikanan, Hindupriya and Permasanjay.

During Christmas performance four of my students were accompanying the choir on piano and drum, 2 students was singing solo. Dakshini, an ex-student, accompanied me and Miriam played flute.

TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAM

Since some time a need is felt to start a training program for our newly appointed teachers. In March 2018, we have realized that plan. As a start Ms. Davaselvy and Ms. Marion have planned the program for about two years. They have included various resource people and arranged for a few conversations about teaching and learning methods with the trainees. This program was successful and the trainees were interested in participating in this program.

As a start, we have enrolled six teachers across the standards as trainees. The program took place twice a week for two hours per session.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To enable the trainees to learn about our school and to learn the different methods of teaching and learning styles.
2. To enable the trainees to learn to observe the students and their classes in order to guide the students and also to become better teachers.
3. To have a platform for sharing and inspiring others by their good work and their values which they care for and bring out in their work as teachers.

DURING THE SIX WEEKS PROGRAM THEY HAVE LEARNT AND PRACTICED THE FOLLOWING:

1. We have started having classes on ‘Human development’. The trainees have learnt about children at their different stages of growth and development according to their age. (Mental and physical and other development)
2. They have learnt to present their learning in a way that could work with the students.

They have learned different games which could be played (like sorting, classifying, and differentiating, estimating and so on) with the students.

They did some research work to find out about the students at different ages. The Research Question given to them was: When is it alright to tell lies and why? – They were assigned to ask this question to various age groups so that they would understand how development takes place at different stages.

Conclusion: This was only a start. We plan is to have an ongoing program so that at different times different trainees and also the interested teachers can benefit and grow in their profession.
Since its inception the Udavi school has taken in 18 students each year at the level of the Creche. About 4 years back the people of Edayanchavady requested the school to take in each year additional students. Considering the genuine need of the students and the fact that Udavi school has a very big campus able to hold more students than it presently has, it was agreed by the school management to increase the intake of students by one more group of 18 students each year.

We started taking in an extra group of students four years ago. This has necessitated that we built more classroom space for our students. Last year we raised funds from 2 sources – about Rupees 11,00,000=00 from IDRF to extend the creche and Rupees 60,00,000 from Bajaj Social responsibility to extend the kindergarten section. The extension of the creche has now been completed and will be put in use from June 2019. The construction of 6 classrooms at the kindergarten has started with the Bajaj grant and is expected to finish by January 2020.

We have also requested the GOI grants group to fund additional classrooms at the primary level of the school. The plans for the building are complete and will be filed with the TDC soon. We hope to start the building of the primary section as soon as funds are available to us from the government grant.
Drama Classes at Udavi

Our drama teacher, Partha, joined the Working committee and has taken a long sabbatical from Udavi. We approached Adishakti, an experimental Theatre Company who are based in our neighbourhood for a drama teacher. They recommended Risabh who was available only for two months. He was brilliant. Here is his report:

6th standard – I was a little concerned about the age group of the 6th class students but they were receptive to all the exercises that were presented to them. There was a positive impact on the nature of group dynamics within their groups. There was less individual focus since the class strength was a little higher than ideal. Positive reinforcement worked better than absolutely shutting them down with a punishment. Body awareness, breathing, imaginative expression were the areas that were most accepted and worked on.

8th & 9th – The students of classes 8th and 9th were mature enough to understand the importance of each exercise. They were not only receptive but had questions and interpretations which added to the richness of the experience. It was more interactive with them. The conversations that flowed added to the whole learning of the individual. Listening, dealing with failure, imaginative expression, space-object work, voice work and body awareness were the areas were successfully worked upon.

Classes 10th (2 weeks in holidays) – Similar to 8th and 9th, the teaching was really effective. The effort was to maximize the time we had. It was a fun time with them. Voice work, dealing with failure was covered in the time we had.

I had a great relationship with the students. After a point it became as they saw me as their elder brother whom they play games with every week. One of the most special moments were when many students took my phone number on the last day and one of them called me on Diwali to wish me. I had the most amazing experiences of my teaching career. A connection with the kids that I’ll cherish for life. When you see an impact by what you said or did on a kid, that creates for the most special payoff. I hope to come every year and devote my time working the students.