AUROVILLE & Higher education institutions

Documentary research

April 2009

Introduction:

Auroville is a place for learning\(^1\). Many students and researchers come to study, explore, write books on Auroville, follow Aurovillian experiments from their labs and universities of India and the world? Many guests come to cooperate, teach or attend a large offer of classes and workshops on a wide range of topics from sustainability and renewable energies to health and well being.

- What are the specificities and features of the educational activities in the Universal Township of Auroville?
- What are the actors, the channels, and modalities of matching offer and demand of education?
- What is the nature of the relations of Auroville with Universities or higher education institutions, centres of research and expertise?

The educational landscape of Auroville seems at first glance very diversified, and shows a great vitality, especially in terms of informal education; in the academic area, except for some American Study-abroad programmes, relationships with world universities or higher educational institutions are few, as they rely in most cases on individuals who have carried out researches about Auroville.

This document aims at gathering information, in order to give beginning answers to these questions; it is a first draft overview of what exists and is functioning, and shows the rich diversity of many initiatives, projects, and seeds of life long “unending education”.

This first inventory of learning activities, educational network and publications will have to be enriched and updated.

May these seeds grow and blossom one day into the establishment of this remote and still alive dream of the Mother of a “World International University of Human Unity”\(^2\).

Several aspects of Auroville will to be explored:
- Auroville as an object of study and research
- Auroville as a field of learning experience
- Auroville as a venue for workshops and seminars
- Auroville as a source of production of knowledge

\(^1\) The schools and other centres for children are not addressed in this research. Although they play an important role in the “learning” area, we excluded primary and secondary level education from the scope of this survey.

\(^2\) Reference to Kailas text
1. Auroville as an object of study and research

Auroville, this incredible "utopia" which seems working after 40 years, is an object of curiosity from scholars and researchers. A series of academic research, thesis and PHD's survey have been made on Auroville and are still going on. More than 250 surveys or publications have been carried out on Auroville.

- **Documents**
  - List of Academic works made on Auroville, posted on AVNet (appendix 1)
  - Update of List of Academic works made on Auroville (appendix 2)
  - Tentative list of Researchers (appendix 3)

- **Links**
  - [http://www.auroville.org/research/academics.html](http://www.auroville.org/research/academics.html)

- **Questions:**
  - Where are all these academic works stored?
  - Is the community of Auroville aware of the findings of these researches?
  - How far is Auroville really known by Universities in the world?
  - How many universities or higher education institutions have been in contact with Auroville?
  - What is the nature of these relationships? Are there partnerships? Memorandum of Understanding?
2. Auroville as a field of learning experience

Since long, Auroville has offered its experiments and realizations, its lands and forests as a ground for learning and sharing educational resources.

- **Different categories** of publics have come by their own initiative or framed by world educational institutions:
  - Students from India and foreign countries,
  - study programs groups sent by Western universities,
  - volunteers,
  - professional or expertise specialists, consultants,
  - etc.

- **International Student Programmes**
  - Living Routes, University of Massachusetts (Abbey, Bindu)
  - University of Washington (Shivaya, Ing-Marie)
  - California Institute of Integral Studies
  - University of IOWA
  - American University of Paris (Tanya Elder, Laurent Sauerwein)

- **Internships & Volunteerings in Auroville units and services**
  - AVIS - Auroville (Shivaya, Dominique)
  - ALZEA - Lyon recently signed-up partner from France (Shivaya, Dominique)
  - Weltwaerts, german Volunteer Program - Resp: Jurgen (Quiet), Karin (Discipline), Julieta (Courage)
  - Breuninger Foundation exchange programme, german "Wasan Project", I am sure that Kathy has a copy.

- **Hosting of students in Auroville units for research, cooperation and study**
  A rather large number of Auroville Units and Services open their doors to students and volunteers, with the purpose of sharing their experiments and disseminate their knowledge. This activity remains on a small scale, except in some cases like Sadhana Forest or Earth Institute, for they lack financial means and a proper infrastructure to do so.
  A specific survey of the number of students coming yearly in Auroville should be conducted.
  The hosting units which regularly host students and volunteers are as follows:
3. Auroville as a venue for workshops and seminars

- LEAP coordination programme, health and wellbeing catalogue of workshops, classes and lectures
- Pitanga – facilities for physical development classes, venue for cultural activities (exhibitions, concerts, etc)
- Unity Pavilion
- Verité
- Quiet
- Mitra Students Hostel
4. Auroville as a source of production of knowledge

- Educational programs designed and organized by Units of Auroville
  - directed to students and scholars
    - Earth Institute - large range of trainings modules and seminars on Earth construction technology; this programme is the result of a cooperation with the UNESCO Chair in Grenoble
    - Dew Institute-CSR (Centre for Scientific Research) – Programs on sustainable energy
    - Convergence – Program on green work titled Evergreen
    - Buddha Gardens
    - Pitchandikulam Bio-Resource-Centre
    - Palmyra
  - directed to an open public
    - Savitri Bhavan – Classes and courses on Sri Aurobindo and the Mother's works, vedic studies
    - University of Human Unity – classes and seminars on Integral knowledge, theories of evolution;
    - Industrial School of Irumbai - Auroville Applied Institute of Technology

- Cooperations at the level of Institutions
  - UNESCO Chair in Earthen Architecture – Craterre/Architecture School of Grenoble: affiliation with Auroville Earth Institute
  - in project: UNESCO Chair in Human Development and Culture of Peace of Florence (Italy) and Auroville (CIRHU) (and UHU?)

- Learning facilities offered to researchers and learning public
  - Savitri Bhavan – research publications, library, learning material and recordings
  - House of Mother's Agenda – library, documentary research
  - Laboratory of Evolution – mediatheque (books, recordings, DVD)
  - Centre for Research in Indian Culture – Conferences, seminars, cultural events, hosting scholars
  - Kala Kendra – hosting visiting artists, artistic education through cultural events, exhibitions, film presentations, student exchange program
  - Botanical Garden environmental education Centre – Teacher training, educational materials
  - Blue Light Service Centre – IT facilities lab, training facilities, workshops

Conclusions
Proposals for development of educational activities in Auroville
Perspectives of further research