





INTEGRAL EDUCATION

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To the dreamer in each of us.





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## FOREWORD & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Visiting Auroville and its schools this semester brought to me an enriched understanding of this world to which I belong. It introduced me to reality as it was and woke me up from deep slumber and ignorance. We are heading at jet speed towards a future that doesn't seem too bright unless we change the way we look at things. We are progressing towards a collapse that will destroy everything. The world is going through an evolutionary crisis which we need to quickly address. Understanding education is an attempt to find an answer to that effect. Exploring alternatives to traditional methods of education provide for resolving conflicts in the world outside and within. The journey that I undertook completely transformed me in the last four months, getting me interested in interacting with children and learning from them. To present that learning, I pan across the education I received in my life, starting from the school I went to, to where I am now, both literally and figuratively. This book is for people who love children for who they are, not who they should be.

The thoughts and insights of professor Raja Mohanty and professor Kirti Trivedi at IDC provided the starting point of this project, the seeds of which were implanted in the first semester. The 'on-field' observations were made at Deepanam School in Auroville, the teachers and children of which were extremely helpful and attention giving. Shruti, Somya and Vallabh were greatly involved in giving me feedback and the much needed critique at each stage of this project. Rohit very patiently listened to all my ups and downs. Mom and Dad gave me the moral support and strength to keep going.



## INTRODUCTION

Education is the building block of civilization. It is through sharing of thoughts and ideas that each generation evolves from the previous one. The purpose of education is to help each person discover his or her purpose in life. Krishna-murti sums up the function of education beautifully in his lines: “Surely, education has no meaning unless it helps you to understand the vast expanse of life with all its subtleties, with its extraordinary beauty, its sorrows and joys. You may earn degrees; you may have a series of letters after your name and land a very good job, but then what? What is the point of it all if in the process your mind becomes dull, weary, stupid?”

While the system of education has expanded enormously since India’s independence, it has not been able to shed colonial prescriptions of textbooks and examinations. Quite sadly, children are still being assessed on subjects like Maths, English, Physics with extra-curricular activities tagged as mere hobbies. The need of the hour is to teach our children not just the ability to answer, but also the power to question, the ‘what’ and the ‘how’ of things, the joy of learning, an innate desire to find out more about stuff that interests them.

At the moment, most schools in India are producing robots, following a universal curriculum for everyone, irrespective of how much the child can grasp, completely ignoring his interests. In the future, I hope, a focus shift from teacher - centred to child - centred learning will happen, beneficial for the overall prosperity of each child.

This is not to suggest that there are no worthwhile educational institutions today that address these issues. Both the western and eastern world has seen thinkers and educationists who have risen to the occasion. People like Tagore, Krishnamurti and Sri Aurobindo in India and others around the world (Rudolph Steiner and Maria Montessori would be good examples) tried to experiment with the educational system of the times and arrive at solutions and alternatives to help the situation. There is a great amount of literature available which contains the views and thoughts of these authentic thinkers.

Tagore's poetical and aesthetic vision, along with unpleasant memories of his own schooling, led him to create Shanti Niketan. Krishnamurti and Sri Aurobindo, who were both men of deep spiritual insight, addressed education as a fundamental dimension of human life. That shapes the alternate approach to education. It is a philosophy of education based on the premise that each person finds identity, meaning, and purpose in life through connections to the community, to the natural world and to humanitarian values such as compassion and peace. This aims to call forth from people an intrinsic reverence for life and a passionate love of learning. The term holistic education is often used to refer to the more democratic and humanistic types of alternative education. What distinguishes holistic education from other forms of education is its goals, its attention to experiential learning and the significance that it places on relationships and human values within the learning environment.

By nature, children are inventive and full of curiosity. They want to explore, understand, make sense of the world they live in and contribute to it in any way they can. In essence, such education lets the child grow at his or her natural pace without defining rigid parameters or setting goals to be achieved. The underlying belief is that you can't inject learning into a child's head in double or triple doses, because he or she is expected to pass an exam. Education is to be a natural, spontaneous unfolding of one's interests and personality, which, at the same time, develops self-discipline and basic values. The role of the adults is to help in this process.

The core elements common to many contemporary educational alternatives are respect for every person, balance, decentralization of authority, non-interference between political, economic, and cultural spheres of society and a holistic worldview. Classroom is often seen as a community, which is within the larger community of the school, which is within the larger community of the village, town, or city, and which is, by extension, within the larger community of humanity. Therefore, as parents, teachers and students, the subject of Indian schools is of fundamental interest to all of us.

## STUDY HALL

All I remember of Study Hall, the school in Lucknow where I went to study till twelfth grade, is that there were no exams till eighth grade and there was a huge art-room. The rest of the building was brown and white but the art-room was full of color; all types of colors that pastels, pencils, crayons, enamels, sketch-pens and paints can ink. I remember painting three walls of the room as underwater world, in class five, climbing on tall ladders to reach the height of the wall (considering I was shorter at that time).

In junior school, there were few subjects and a lot of ‘real’ projects, extra-curricular activities including art and craft, music and dance. That is when I liked going to school because the subjects weren’t pushed down the throat and the objective was to clarify the concepts. There were only tests and quizzes. Though the teachers referred to syllabus and the kids carried textbooks-loaded-bags to school, no one actually ever feared marks. The courses were covered one chapter at a time and the understanding was judged after each one was finished. The prime idea was that young children shouldn’t undergo the stress of writing an exam or fear its outcome. Teachers used to write remarks about progress in each subject in a small diary that we carried back home with us, with an illustration on the cover that we made ourselves. The school was a bliss, till fourteen years of age.

We hit reality in ninth when we had to write our first exam. I was hysterical at the length of the question paper and the kind of questions asked. There was a sudden drift in the way of teaching and the method of evaluation as well. The teachers were preparing us for the board exams now. Sigh! Most of the teachers tested information absorption rather than the clarity of the concept. Marks were given on how much one could regurgitate the lines that one mugged up from the textbook referred to. I actually don’t even remember what I studied from ninth to twelfth except in probably English because the books didn’t throw jargon. They were very comprehensive and conversational language books, thankfully. History and Chemistry is where I lost my mind the most because it tested memory, not understanding. I could never remember dates,



formulae or facts. Infact, I failed my Chemistry pre-board by one mark. Shameful it was, but I had the clarity that metallurgy was not where I was heading. So, nothing mattered.

The good bit about the senior secondary levels (eleventh and twelfth) was that there was a free choice period where we could do anything - read, paint, play, listen to music, anything actually. I chose painting, to de-stress myself from the pressure of performance with Science subjects. I used to look forward to going to the art-room, each Wednesday, after lunch. I loved sitting there with paper and brushes, painting to the sound of pleasing instrumental music in the background. Our art teacher was very inspiring. She never forced us to do anything; there were no deadlines, no submissions and no rules. She only guided through, like a torchbearer, a harbinger of hope in a boring curriculum of alpha, beta and gamma.

I didn't finish school with flying colors. I didn't care to be a ninety-percent-and-above-so-that-the-world-looks-at-you-in-admiration sorts. Back then, I wanted to just pass the boards so that I could apply in a university for further studies. And I know it wasn't just me; most of my friends wished to get it done with too. Sad as it was, such was the charmless-ness of the education in senior school. Isn't it a pity? A situation for the entire education system in India to really worry and do something about? Year after year, schools are producing robots, placing information on a pedestal, while sidelining the other aspects of the human being. Very few schools seem to be interested in devoting time or employing people who take care of the emotional growth and spiritual dimensions of the child. Unless, ofcourse, when there are exams and their mind and emotions, both, go for a toss! I know it isn't the first time anyone is writing about the present system to be crucially flawed. But it is important to understand exactly where and why the empty spaces lie, so that endeavors to create alternate learning spaces don't fall apart at the same places.

## IDC

Having written an entrance exam, an aptitude test and an interview, I made my way to Industrial Design Centre (IDC) at IIT Bombay when I was twenty-two, enrolling myself in the Visual Communication post graduate programme. The course is a mix of pedagogic experimentation with research, design approach, philosophy and new thoughts.

It has been exactly twenty four months since I went into the library at second floor for my interview. It was a pleasant, non-grueling, one hour long question-and-answer session. The only question I remember being asked till date is: “What would you do in IDC if you had the freedom to do anything for two years of your life?” I was surprised at that unusual question for a moment. It was like a wishlist of things to-do! I felt good about the fact that two people in this world weren’t testing me on what I had ‘done’ before but were curious to know what I really wanted to ‘do’.

Grappling to understand the nuances of the education system, existing and to be, the professors at IDC have chosen to explore the complex and variegated world of school education, choosing to walk on the roads less travelled. Looking inwards to more indigenous solutions, they are experimenting with educational models and spaces in which children learn. In the process, they also suggest alternative modes and methods to improve access to learning and also provide a more holistic learning for children.

An experiment to understand children, observe them as they are and their responses to materials is done during Workshop Damru, which is a free space for learning. Kids of varying age groups and social strata come to IDC to explore resources and materials like clay, building blocks, paints, computers, books etc. But nothing is taught. Only the materials are provided. It is upto them to choose which one they like working with and define their own interest area.

Essentially, learning anything needs time, patience and a freedom from constraints and obligations. That is what we at IDC have been discussing for quite some time. There are

people who like structure, schedules, deadlines, objectivity. There are some who don't. We are in the process of finding a fine balance between both. The belief we uphold is that even at graduation level, students should be allowed a certain extent of freedom within which they can explore. We define our projects, shape them the way we want, set our goals and choose our direction in life. Informal interactions are encouraged between students and faculty who mutually benefit. With this freedom comes responsibility of being self disciplined, of making our own choices, schedules, charting our own paths and owning the outcome of the decisions that we have made. Such a model of learning, which is a balanced mix of freedom, discipline and responsibility, actually has great scope to be implemented at any level of education.

## SCHOOLS IN AUROVILLE

Around the world, sensitive individuals are opting for lifestyles that are more holistic, nature-based and ethical. In many instances, this requires moving away from mega-cities and forming smaller communities that strive for self-sufficiency in the essentials of water, food and culture. Auroville is one such eco-village in which a sustainable model of education is followed, that which doesn't fade away with time but one that lays a strong foundation of personal and collective progress.

Following Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of Integral Development and Mother's vision of Free Progress, most schools in Auroville run under the umbrella of Sri Aurobindo International Institute of Educational Research (SAIIER). Being in Auroville, children have a great advantage of a conducive and natural learning environment. Away from the hustle-bustle of the city life, the schools here are practical learning labs.

Children play in the mud, jump in streams, roam in fields, climb the trees and appreciate plants, insects, birds and reptiles. They are exposed to sustainable agricultural practices from a very early age. Working with their hands develops in them a respect for labour. It naturally develops their ability to use a variety of farm and carpentry tools. Learning the science behind pumps, motors, generators etc. becomes more interesting thus. Recycling resources comes by default to them.

Multiculturalism is more obviously witnessed in schools here than in other parts of India because of international students. The parents of these kids, belonging to different nationalities, have settled here. That is the beauty of it. Everyone learns together, without any discrimination or bias. They experience each other's culture and language. Festivals that are linked to seasons and food cycles are celebrated, giving meaning and relevance to the traditions and cultural activities in Auroville and the villages around it.

## DEEPANAM

Deepanam, one of the schools in Auroville for elementary education, has been in existence since 2001 but the current chapter of the school began in October 2006 with just twelve students with a few parents volunteering to teach and run the school. The team that was administering the school previously tried to apply several models of education but was unsuccessful in the implementation. Basically, they were focusing too much on the theory of the models than their application.

In essence, Deepanam aims to contribute to the Integral development and Free Progress of children (outlined by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother) in an environment of beauty, creating an atmosphere where children can become aware of themselves and grow into conscious, active and responsible individuals. It chooses to focus on giving individual attention to each child following his or her own path of learning. It is an experimental school in an environment which makes it possible for the children to develop the necessary qualities for free growth, natural development and the joy of learning for its own sake. Deepanam doesn't elevate the teacher over the student. It believes that teachers learn as much from students; any facilitating of learning can't simply be unidirectional. They facilitate not just 'what' to learn, but the deep 'how' and 'why' behind things.

The children in the school are divided in groups depending on their age or mastery of the English language, not on how well they know their academic subjects. The children are from 7 to 14 years of age. Each batch has about 8-10 kids, for greater intensity and one-on-one interaction. Each batch also chooses a 'name' that they want to be called as (currently the groups are called Welcome, Rainbows, Horses, Giraffes, Unicorns, Lions). Though the more 'serious' subjects are taught group-wise, several activities happen in mixed age groups as well, like carpentry, craft, singing, dancing, capoeira, field trips etc.

The school works through flexible projects rather than sticking to rigid textbooks in fixed classes, and strives to make the process of learning appealing and interesting. From a very young age, little fingers are kept busy working with real

materials on real projects, the utility of which they can see around them. Young minds are kept questioning at each step and with each result their hearts resound with the joy of discovery. Children learn for the sake of learning, not for fear of punishment or hope of any reward. No stress or obligation is imposed regarding the pace of study, nor any marks given to them on that score. Students are encouraged to maintain their own portfolios wherein they collect their worksheets and evaluate their own progress. Rivalry and unhealthy competition is immensely discouraged. Thus, the value of cooperation is naturally learnt.

The school teaches them communication not just to compete and impress others, but to be able to speak, write and convey what they truly think and feel. The lessons learnt do not just equip them for a career, but enable them to be in tune with themselves, with nature and the integrated nature of life.





## FREE PROGRESS

Free Progress is a term pregnant with meaning, the accent being on the word 'progress', with 'free' as the adjective that defines the method by which one progresses.

"It is a progress guided by the soul and not subjected to habits, conventions or preconceived ideas," said the Mother. The spirit of this approach demands that the school organization and programmes be as diverse and supple as possible, to remain plastic enough to respond to each student's line of progress. The main object of this method is to help the adolescent find that part of himself or herself that can then take up his or her own education. This process develops the students' faculties of the mind, the powers of the will, the refinement of the aesthetic and emotional being and builds all this upon a strong and balanced physical being. There is an attempt to address each of these elements of the youth's psychological nature as consciously as possible.

The teacher's task is to suggest, not impose, and a broad process of consultation is fundamental to the school's approach. In this active and free progress oriented approach, classrooms are replaced by areas of work and play, where children can move freely, following their own rhythm and inner guidance. The school greatly stresses on freedom of expression and growth, but to achieve this perfection of the inner being's free flow, an outer discipline is indispensable. Contradictory though it may sound, they do best together. Discipline and freedom are complementary.



## INTEGRAL DEVELOPMENT

“If we truly want to progress and acquire the capacity of knowing the truth of our being, that is to say, the one thing for which we have been really created, that which we can call our mission upon earth, then we must, in a very regular and constant manner, reject from us or eliminate in us whatever contradicts the truth of our existence, whatever is in opposition to it. It is thus that little by little all the parts, the elements of our being, could be organized into a homogeneous whole around our psychic centre. This work of unification demands a long time to be brought to some degree of perfection. Hence, to accomplish it, we must arm ourselves with patience and endurance, with a determination to prolong our life as far as it is necessary for the success of our endeavour. All this can be realized by means of a fourfold discipline. These four aspects of the discipline do not exclude each other, and can be followed at the same time; indeed it is better to do so.

### **Psychic:**

The starting point is what can be called the psychic discipline. It is the psychological centre of our being, the seat within of the highest truth of our existence, that which can be known and manifest this truth. It is therefore of capital importance for us to become conscious of its presence within us, to concentrate on this presence and make it a living fact for us and identify ourselves with it. You must find in the depths of your being that which carries in it the sense of universality, limitless expansion, termless continuity. Then you decentralize, spread out, enlarge yourself; you begin to live in everything and in all beings; the barriers separating individuals from each other break down.

### **Mental:**

In its natural state the human mind is always limited in its vision, narrow in its understanding, rigid in its conceptions and a certain effort is needed to enlarge it, make it supple and deep. Knowledge belongs to a region much higher than that of the human mind, even beyond the region of pure ideas. The mind has to be made silent and attentive in order to receive knowledge from above and manifest it. For it is an instrument of formation, organization and action. And it is

in these functions that it attains its full value and utility. True education of the mind comprises of development of power of concentration, capacity of attention, expansion, wideness, complexity and richness, organization of ideas around a central idea, thought control, mental silence and more total receptivity to inspirations coming from higher regions of the being. Fear nothing that awakes his imagination; it is imagination that develops the creative mental faculty. It is through that that study becomes a living thing and the mind grows in joy.

**Vital:**

The vital being in us is the seat of all impulses and desires, of enthusiasm and violence, of dynamic energy and desperate depression, of passions and revolt. It can set in motion everything, build up and realize, it can also destroy and mar everything. With the collaboration of the vital no realization seems impossible, no transformation impracticable. Education of the vital has two steps. The first is to develop and utilize the sense organs; the second is to become conscious and gradually master of one's own character and in the end to achieve its transformation.

**Physical:**

Lastly, we must, by means of a rational and clear-seeing physical education, make our body strong and supple so that it may become in the material world a fit instrument for the truth-force which wills to manifest through us. The education of the body has three principal aspects: control and discipline of functions, methodical and harmonious development of all parts and movements of the body, rectification of defects and deformities if there are any.

As we rise to this degree of perfection which is our goal, we shall perceive that the truth we seek is made up of four major aspects: Love, Knowledge, Power and Beauty. These four attributes of the Truth will spontaneously express themselves in our being. The psychic will be the vehicle of true and pure love, the mind that of infallible knowledge, the vital will manifest an invincible power and strength and the body will be the expression of a perfect beauty and a perfect harmony.”

“The most effective starting point, the swiftest method is total self surrender and as it becomes more and more perfect and integral, it will carry with it the aspiration for identification, a total fusion with That to which you have given yourself, and little by little this aspiration will overcome all differences and all resistences, especially if the aspiration has, added to it, an intense and spontaneous love, for then nothing can stand in the way of its victorious onset.”

*The Mother*

**PSYCHIC**



## Meditation

A day at Deepanam starts with a ten minute concentration with all the children and teachers sitting together at the courtyard. Some elevating music is played and shlokas are chanted. This helps the child to quiten down and focus within.

The weekly school assembly gives the students the opportunity to make their own decisions regarding the functioning of the school and to closely come in touch with decision making process. The school offers a harmonious, organized and safe learning environment to all children, so they can grow integrally in their own rhythm.

Once a month there is a special assembly where issues are discussed together and children are encouraged to resolve conflicts, both, outside and within themselves.

Morning meditation at the entrance courtyard of the school where all the teachers and students gather to concentrate and chant shlokas with elevating music.



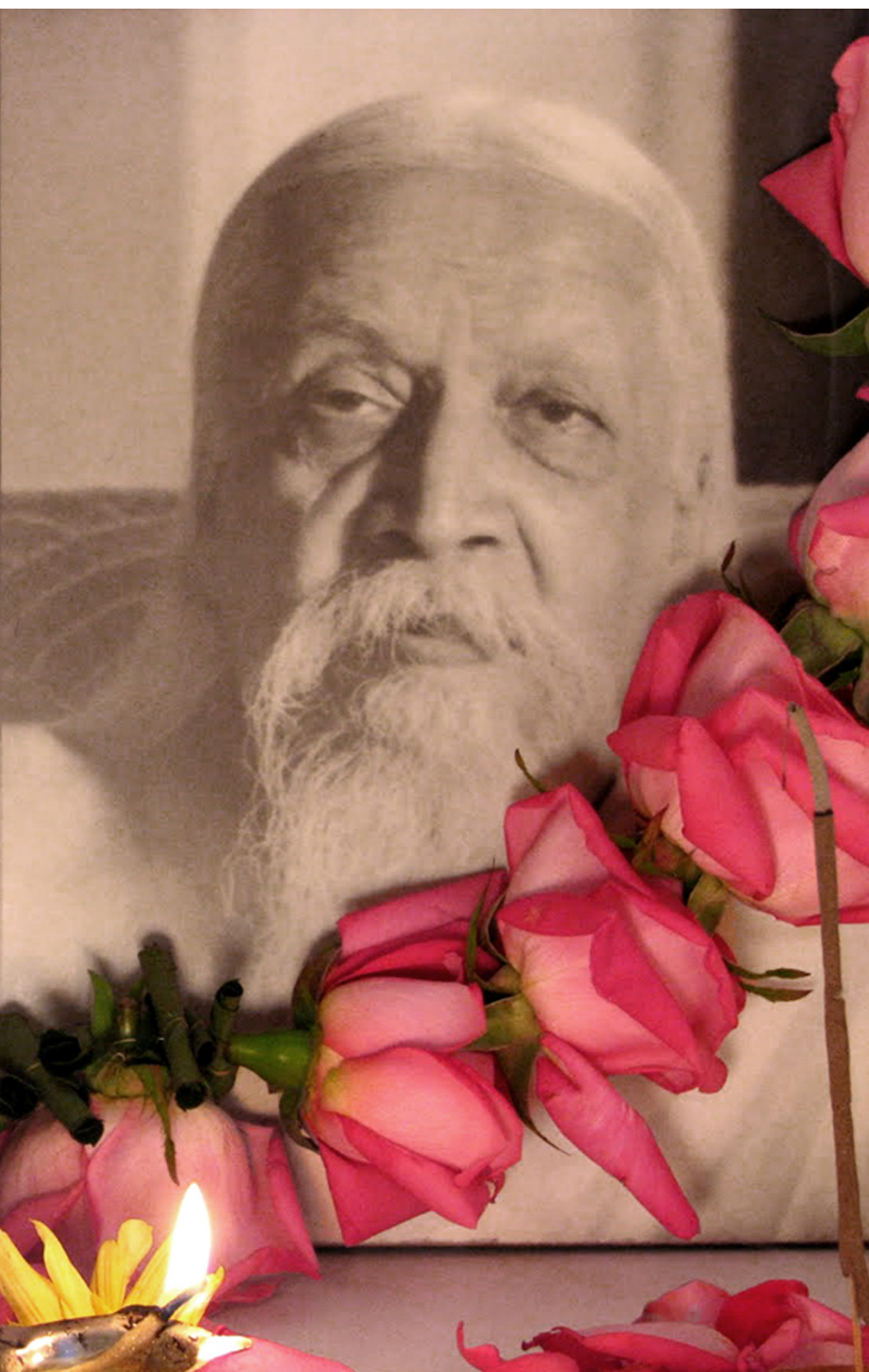
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“In order to increase the suppleness and comprehensiveness of his mind, one should not only look to the number or variety of subjects for study, but particularly to the diverse approaches to the same subject; by this means the child will be made to understand in a practical way that there are many ways of facing the same intellectual problem, dealing with it and solving it. The brain will thus be free from all rigidity and at the same time, thought will gain richness and be made ready for a complex, comprehensive synthesis.”

*The Mother*

**MENTAL**



“A child of seven or eight, and that is the earliest permissible age for the commencement of any regular kind of study, is capable of a good deal of concentration if he is interested. Interest is, after all, the basis of concentration. We make his lessons supremely uninteresting and repellent to the child, a harsh compulsion the basis of teaching and then complain of his restless inattention! A child, like a man, if he is interested, much prefers to get to the end of its subject rather than leave it unfinished. To lead him on step by step, interesting and absorbing him in each as it comes, until he has mastered his subject is the true art of teaching. A foundation should be laid at this time for the study of history, science, philosophy, art, but not in an obtrusive and formal manner. Every child is a lover of interesting narrative, a hero-worshipper and a patriot. Appeal to these qualities in him and through them let him master without knowing it the living and human parts of his nation’s history. Every child is an enquirer, an investigator, analyser, a merciless anatomist. Appeal to those qualities in him and let him acquire without knowing it the right temper and the necessary fundamental knowledge of the scientist. Every child has an insatiable intellectual curiosity and turn for meta-physical enquiry. Use it to draw him on slowly to an understanding of the world and himself. Every child has the gift of imitation and a touch of imaginative power. Use it to give him the groundwork of the faculty of the artist.”

Sri Aurobindo



## Languages

Crosswords, puzzles, memory cards, books are provided to keep children engaged and guides assist them in reading and writing.

The four Auroville languages (English, French, Sanskrit and Tamil) are the tools for carrying out any research or projects. The teacher's prime attention is to make the children realize the importance of learning the languages as only after that could they carry out tasks much more effectively on their own. The teachers steer them to understand the advantages of reading and writing that make learning exciting.



## Story telling

Children love telling stories. They come one at a time to spend time in the sandbox room. There are toys available that they can pick and plant in the sandbox. The choice of toys tells a lot about their character. After making their own picture, they narrate the story to the teachers and their group. Each one has a different story, everytime, and some impossible ones too. It soars their imagination and creativity up high.

The sandbox room where the children come couple times a week to make their picture stories and then narrate them.





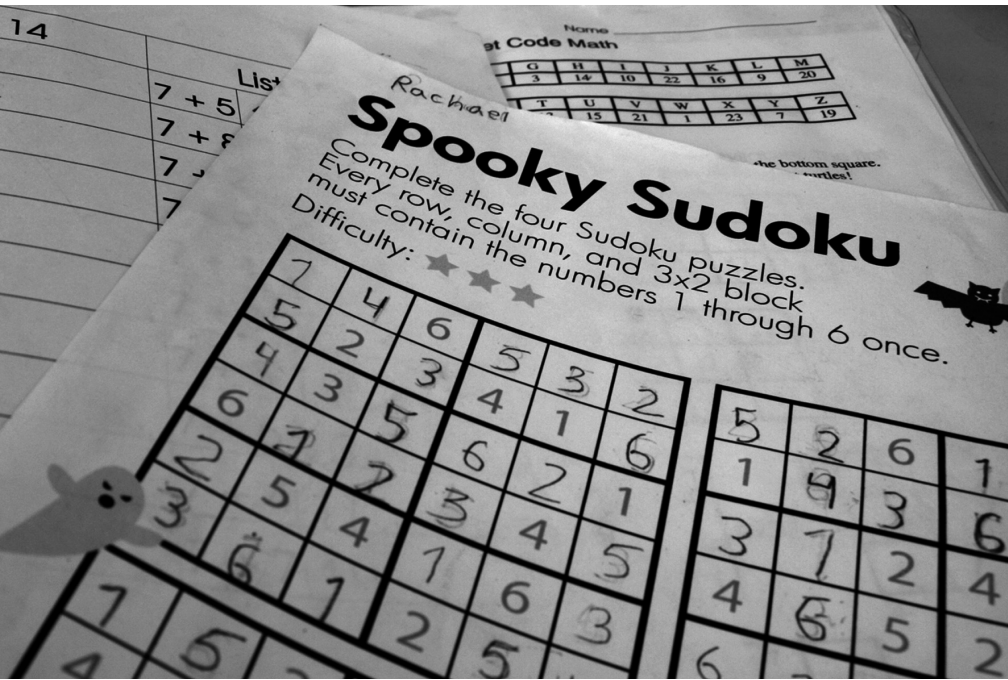




Mathematics

There are games, worksheets, puzzles, quizzes that engage the children in basic maths. Each topic is covered in great length because the subject needs constant practice. Though there is not much homework, children are asked to practise at home whatever they do in school. Practical application of the subject is emphasized upon by playing games with stones, jumping on numbers, counting paper currency that they make themselves. The idea is that the so called academic subjects be introduced interestingly so that children do not see them as subjects; instead, they are naturally led to discover them.

Worksheets make the classes more fun, engaging and exciting.

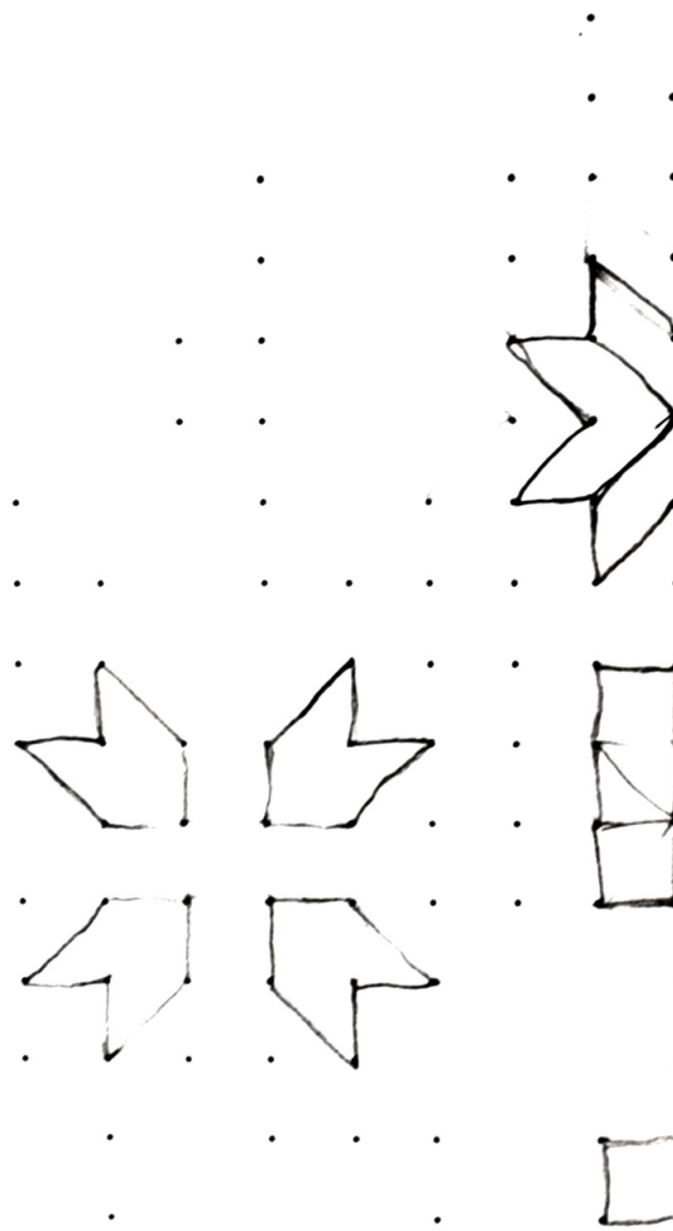


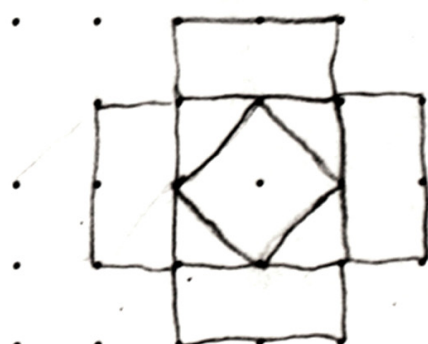
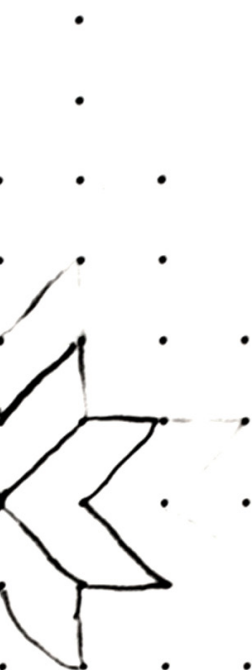


No subject is taught in isolation. Creating a pattern, for example, includes identifying shapes, distinguishing them from each other by their color and size, counting the number of units being used to make the pattern and understanding the basics of symmetry. Such a team work also contributes to understanding the idea of being ‘a part of the whole’, each one taking the pain of chipping in their effort. Though the primary language of instruction is English, the children also learn the pronunciations of numbers, shapes, colors in Tamil and French. So, subjects are actually layered, not isolated.

Pattern making activity as a part of Maths and Language.









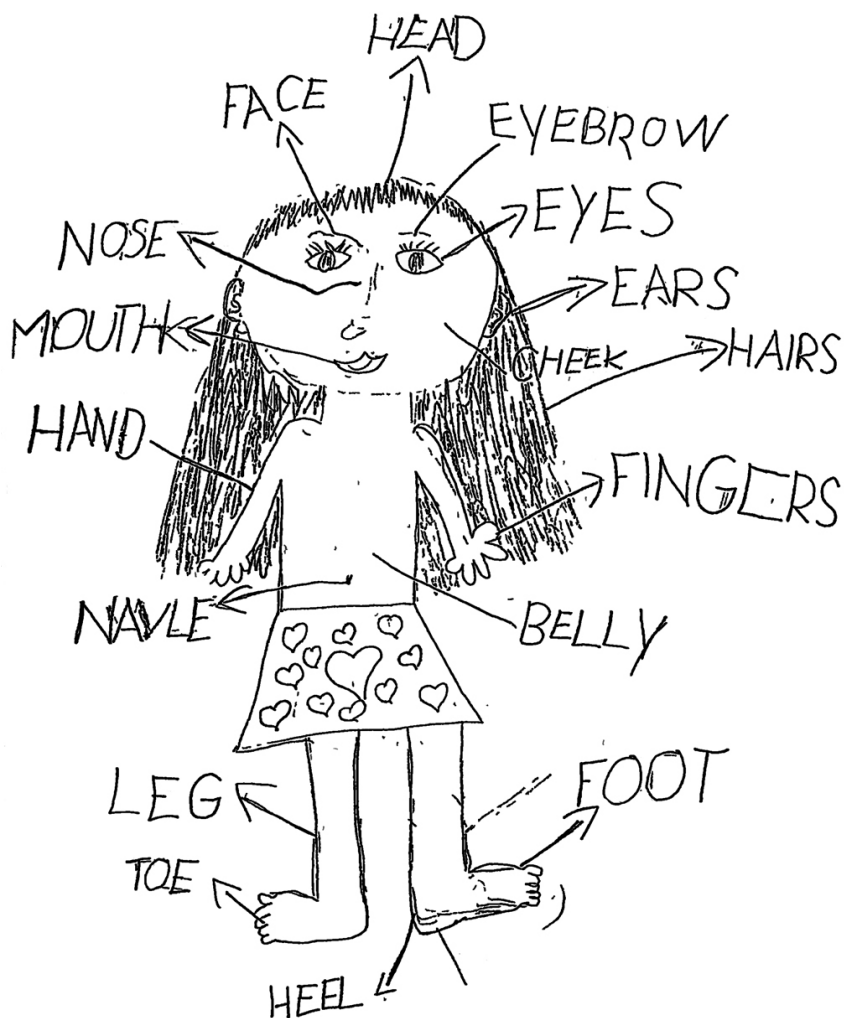
## Science

Science is not one subject but many. It is a metaphor for life. It is taught from appropriate phenomena, not as a procedure. For example, from music begins the journey to studying the more scientific aspects of sound. From the phenomena of light and color, the artistic activity of painting or by simply observing a single ray of light penetrate a darkened room, the teacher introduces the study of optics. A sense of awe and wonder permeates the investigation. It not only involves the students' minds, but also encourages questioning and self-discovery. There are multi dimensions to every topic. For example, in labyrinths can be understood sacred geometry, symmetry, seed patterns, mystery and spirituality. The teachers borrow from nature a lot. So, the connection to the world around them is never severed. There is no insistence on any one final product. Children are free to explore possibilities of the project outcome.

Children performing an experiment to collect iron from the surface of the earth using magnets.







My body parts



The project undertaken by the kids to know the parts of their body. Each one made a self-portrait, with fabric, crayons and pencil.

## Life Science

Life Science, in essence, teaches the children of Auroville to be living in harmony with nature. They don't fear reptiles, infact, they are more than excited to handle them. Since the subject is extremely practical and 'on-field', notes are taken down later. The names of the animals are easier to remember after spotting them in person, obviously.

Kids catching a butterfly in a net to identify the species, study its details and take pictures.

Animal Project: The importance of conserving our natural surrounding is essential and urgent! Providing the kids with a direct program that enhances their interest and respect for animals and their ecology is the key to this project. Auroville



has a rich biodiversity of fauna & flora. At Deepanam often seen is the tremendous concern and affection that the students show for animals in general. They show great interest in knowing about snakes, fishes, birds, rabbits, white mice. The children of Auroville want to be the guardians of nature and a lot of enthusiasm is shown.

Butterfly project: Kids went to several gardens around their school to identify butterflies, catch them and study the small details on their wings. The project developed an innate appreciation for the small insect.

Kids being taught how to handle snakes fearlessly, which is a major part of their Life Science projects.











Kids visiting Botanical Garden to know more about organic farming and working of solar panel, growing their understanding of themselves in a larger environment.

## Project Approach

The children are presented with authentic task, project or investigation and in small groups, they carry out their research. All do not do the same thing, but they work towards the same goal or task by contributing differently, each according to his or her ability. This builds on natural curiosity, enabling kids to question, connect, problem-solve, communicate, reflect and more. Several excursions are made for 'hands-on' knowledge. The children are encouraged to be active learners, there is a lot of interaction and interchange, as children share and help each other in the process. In this way the basic necessary academics are made more motivating and enjoyable.



## Portfolio and Open House

Record of kids' work includes worksheets (exercises on paper: Maths, Language, Illustrations etc), booklets, chart sheets, newspaper clippings, anything actually, that the child likes collecting and wants to be a part of his folio. The 2D sheets go into each child's portfolio file which is updated at the end of each term. It is a delight to see these. Flipping the folio of a child gives a glimpse of his character and thoughts. The 3D models are exhibited in the classrooms and become a part of it. Projects and portfolio are shared with all the other teachers and parents in an Open House, which is like an exhibition showcasing all the work at the end of the academic year.

A young kid updating the portfolio before the Open House, filling in all his sketches, temple drawings, newspaper clippings, worksheets and notes.







# AUROVILLE

Auroville is very different from most of the countries. It has mud roads. It does not have traffic. There are jackals, hares, mangooses, peacocks, snakes, lizards, chipmunks, and many birds. You can go bare feet to school. We do a lot of sports. In Auroville There are people from all over the world. In my school there are kids from Germany, Israel, Brazil, Slovenia, France, U.S.A, Italy, Russia, Holland, Spain, and of course India. When I grow up I hope Auroville will become a great place full of nature and happy people.

by percy

Project Auroville: brought lots of joy to the kids and a feeling of togetherness, adventure, confidence, and knowledge of their living place and nature. Great focus was given to knowing more about Matrimandir, the Soul of Auroville.

M- Miracle

A -Aspiration

T- Transformation

R- Revelation

I- Integral purity

M-Modesty

A- Alchemy

N- New birth

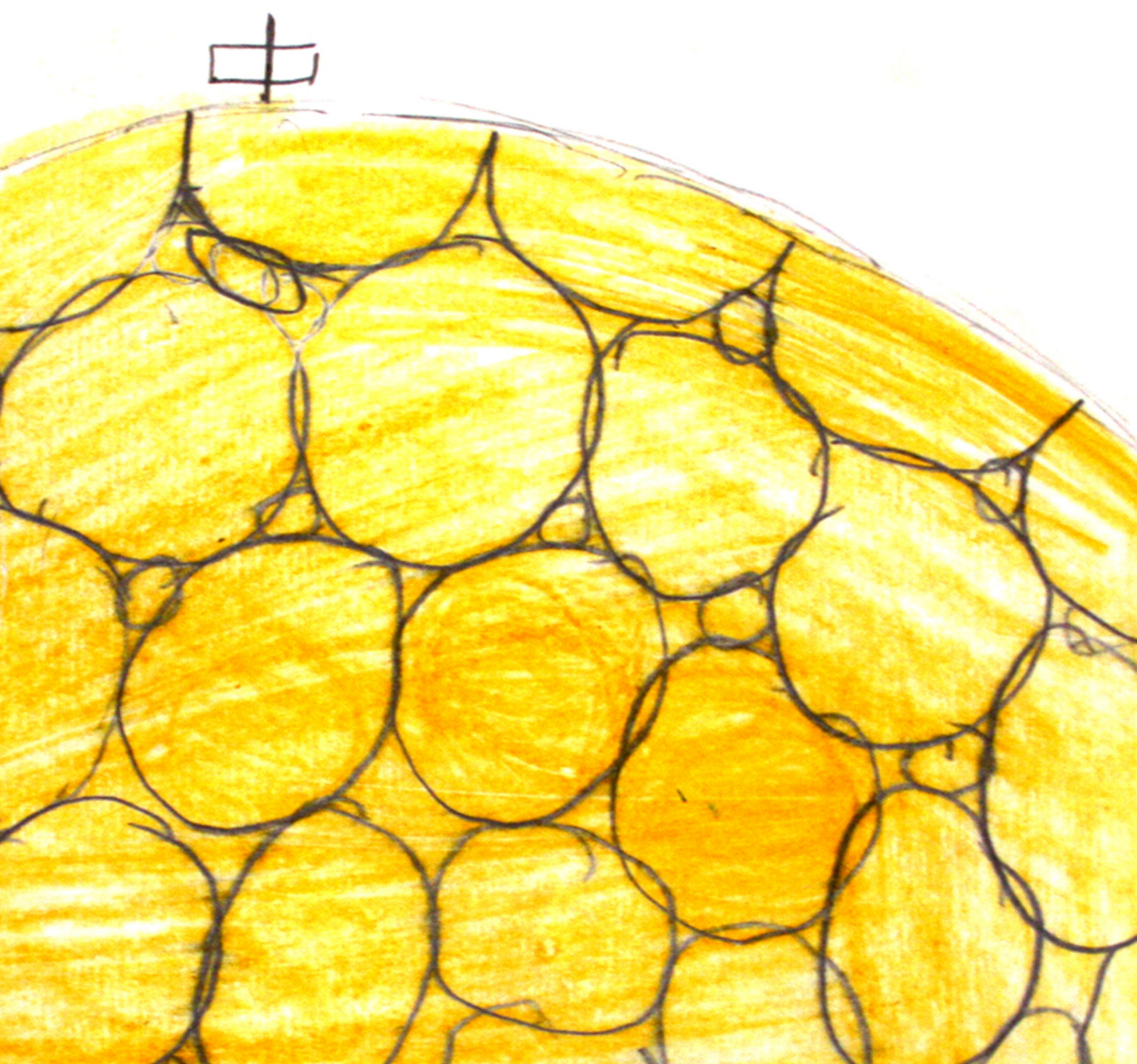
D- Divine help

I- Immortality

R- Regularity













## Auroville in the Future

When I grow up I would like Auroville  
on Earth with a lot of trees, and  
from all over the world.

I would like there to be peace and  
an example of all cultures living together.

I would like there to be no more  
Auroville. We will find a way to live  
on Earth. Instead of transport we will  
We need will grow on trees and flowers.

ture

ille to be a place

imals and lots of happy people

on Earth and Auroville will be  
happily together.

pollution in the world and in  
e happily without polluting the  
will use teleportation, everything  
here will be no more need for.....









“That alone will be a true and living education which helps to bring out to full advantage, makes ready for the full purpose and scope of human life all that is in the individual man, and which at the same time helps him to enter into his right relation with the life, mind and soul of the people to which he belongs and with that great total life, mind and soul of humanity of which he himself is a unit and his people or nation a living, a separate yet inseparable member.”

Sri Aurobindo

**VITAL**



Getting actively involved in activities like art, craft, music, dance, capoeira, material workshops etc. brings an insight to children about what they like doing. None of the subjects are compulsory. All the children choose and define their interest area themselves, the broader picture of which is to refine their senses, emotional responses, build their aesthetics and shape their character.

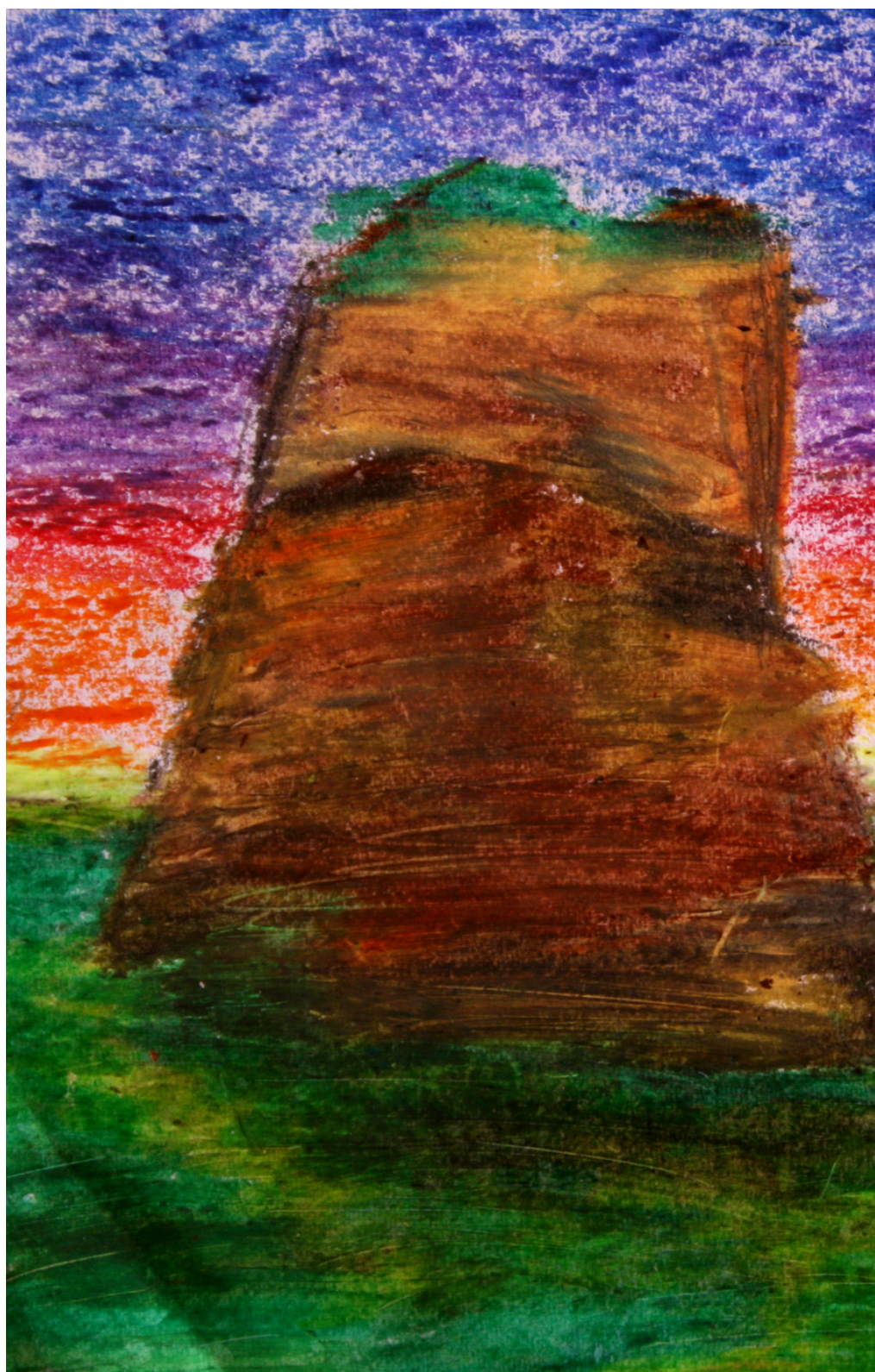




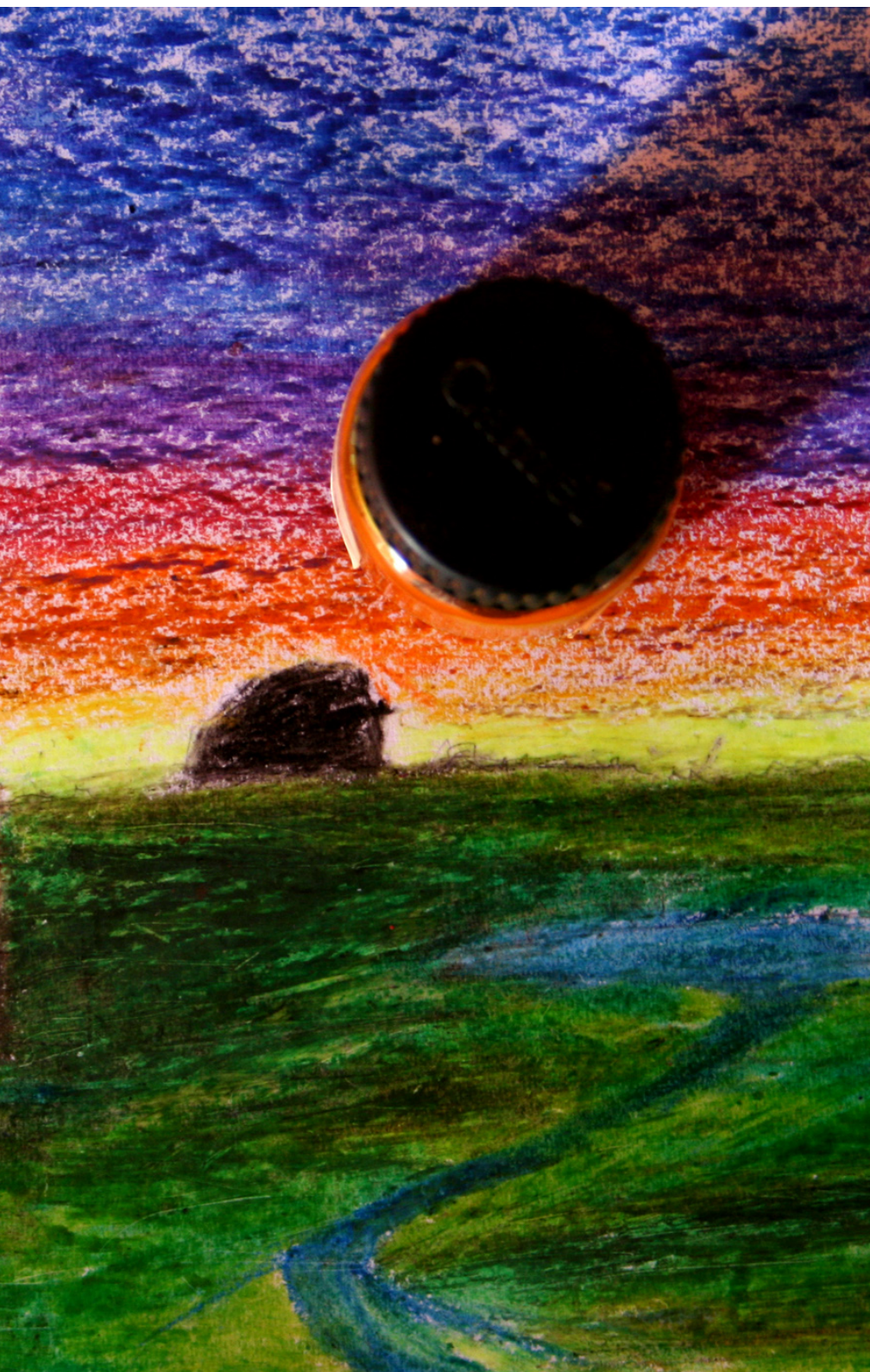
















## Art and Design Workshop

In this workshop, under the treehouse, are made installations, mixed-media artworks, miniature wood furniture, models with commonly found materials (natural and man-made). Sometimes these are found in school like clay, newspaper, stones, sticks, wooden logs etc. and sometimes they are sourced from around Auroville like jute, cotton, wires, cardboards, discarded water bottles etc. The teachers assist the children in giving a tangible shape to their idea. The creative thinking is the child's and only skill-based-help is provided whenever needed. It is a peaceful space to work under the tree and with this creativity comes the power of concentration. Children are deeply engrossed in making their artworks, recognizing their potential.

Debu providing help to the children during their carpentry workshop, helping them chisel pieces of wood and stones.



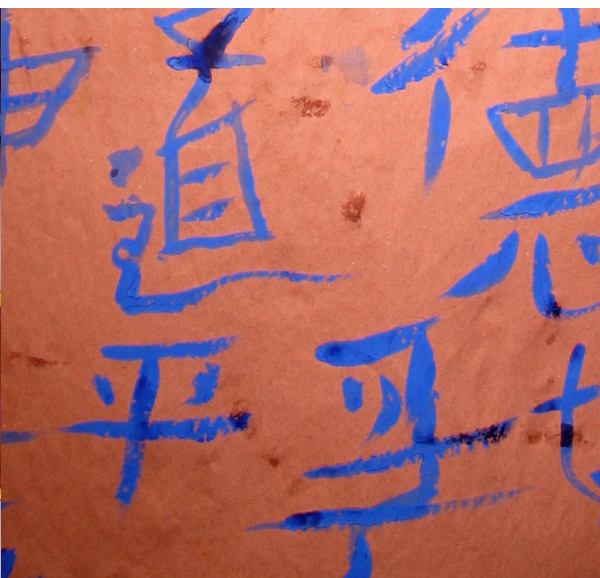
















# STILT Workshop

From  
10 - 13  
Years  
OLD

At: Tree House  
with  
Antonio AND Felix  
AFTER LUNCH

TODAY















## Capoeira

A capoeira stage performance: the older kids sparring in centre stage while the younger ones play the musical instruments.

Capoeira is an artform that combines elements of martial arts, music, and dance. Participants form a circle and take turns in either playing musical instruments (such as the Berimbau), singing, or ritually sparring in pairs in the center of the circle. The sparring is marked by fluid acrobatic play, feints, take-downs, and extensive use of leg sweeps, kicks, and headbutts. The artform is an expressive way to depict several emotions through harmonious body movements.





## Gardening

Children grow vegetables, fruits, flowers and experiment with seed varieties in their school's garden. This happens twice a week for each group. Along with the growth of the plants, the kids themselves grow in the process. A special emphasis is also laid on involving the children in daily life at school: arranging the room, cleaning up, cooking etc. Progressively children are encouraged to take up more initiative in making their schedule and eventually charting out their own paths.

The kids planting flowers of different colors in their garden to form the symbol of the Mother, a flower with five petals.











“Physical education is meant to bring into the body, consciousness and control, discipline and mastery, all things necessary for a higher and better life.”

The Mother

**PHYSICAL**





“In their more superficial aspect they appear merely as games and amusements which people take up for entertainment or as a field for the outlet of the body’s energy and natural instinct of activity or for a means of the development and maintenance of the health and strength of the body; but they are or can be much more than that. An invaluable result is the growth of what has been called the sporting spirit. That includes good humor, tolerance and consideration for all, a right attitude and friendliness to competitors and rivals, self control and scrupulous observance of the laws of the game, fair play and avoidance of the use of foul means, an equal acceptance of victory or defeat without bad humour, resentment or ill-will towards successful competitors, loyal acceptance of the decisions of the appointed judge or referee. These qualities have their value for life in general, not only for sport but for a development that is direct and invaluable.”

Sri Aurobindo











All children in Deepanam are encouraged to attend the Dehashakti sports programme for it is part of Integral development. The kids go to the sportsground after school for couple hours everyday.



# DEEPANAM SCHOOL

What the teachers at Deepanam feel: “First one has to distinguish between teaching and learning! Teaching is serious adult business while learning is play and life; learning is not something that one does but something that happens. We feel that if children are happy and healthy they will learn everything they need to learn. This is a big change in the mindset for many parents and teachers which we are gradually exploring, debating and applying.”

## CONCLUSION

I am twenty four. I started going to school when I was four, I still am going to one. A lot has changed in these years, for the better and for the worse. I don't intend to change the whole world but with the exposure that this project on education has brought to me, I hope that sometime, somewhere, I should be able to make a contribution to this world that will be acknowledged and appreciated.



## THE STUDENT'S PRAYER

“Don’t impose on me what you know,  
I want to explore the unknown  
And be the source of my own discoveries.  
Let the known be my liberation, not my slavery.  
The world of your truth can be my limitation;  
Your wisdom my negation.  
Don’t instruct me; let’s walk together.  
Let my richness begin where yours ends.  
Show me so that I can stand  
On your shoulders.  
Reveal yourself so that I can be  
Something different.  
You believe that every human being  
Can love and create.  
I understand, then, your fear  
When I ask you to live according to your wisdom.  
You will not know who I am  
By listening to yourself.  
Don’t instruct me; let me be.  
Your failure is that I be identical to you.”

Umberto Maturana



chandana



Rachael



tara



Satyamayi

