

What is unique in the education of Auroville?

The Bridge - 25 February 2018

Context of the exploration

- How to give reality to the dream of an “Auroville Campus” ?
- How does the “educational landscape” looks like?
- Who are the actors, how do they feel about their educational activities?

The explorers

- Our Core team for this research (2012-13)
Jean-Yves, Chali, Rakhal, Dominique
Assisted by 2 newcomers (half time);
1 volunteer assisting with data collect
- Support from SAIER for funding

Starting questions

- Give visibility to AV educational activities;
- Listen to the “protagonists”
- How do they relate with the fundamentals in their practice?
- Is there a uniqueness in the “Auroville education”? And what does it actually means?
- What about their participation? and how to foster synergies

Initial intentions

- Assume that any member could potentially be a resource for future programs
- Combine conceptual and empiric research
- Explore diversity of pedagogical approaches
- Process information into databases of learning opportunities
- Trigger synergies and longer programs

A flavour of the “educational” potential

- About 75 residents were contacted; 50 said “Yes” to be considered as potential resource;
- a “resource” does not equal to “teacher” alone, but can be many other roles

Touching deeper on the specifics of Auroville education

- a sampling round of interviews with 12 education-involved members
- setting the tone through heart
- these conversations were amazingly inspiring;

Surprises

- The ideals and goals of Auroville?
- “unending education”, not a concept, but a living, practical inspiration
- ... and the motivation factor of all the persons we met.

Glimpses on education in Auroville - 1

- A learning process, for both teachers and learners
« A joy of feeling connected, of being one with the students ». (Harini)
- Importance of Auroville atmosphere, allowing an “experience”,
“As for the learners, their first demand is about practical knowledge to gain, but quickly they are pushed to go deeper, and they discover that there is more. They are immersed in the Auroville experience.” (Jeff)

Glimpses on education in Auroville - 2

- Giving a comprehensive picture to what is usually fragmented,
« Participants love this workshop because it opens their mind to something larger and more meaningful... My audiences often get that and appreciate that. They are not inviting me because I am the best biologist or the best ecologist or the best agriculturist, which I am not. The important is giving context and giving meaning to that context ». (Lucas)
- Combining inner and outer activities, tangible & intangible goals
Another contribution is this combination of spiritual and material research ; what we are trying slowly to get into is to have the mind being involved, but also the hands and the heart. How do you combine these 3 in a workshop or in an educational project ? Mind and hands are rather easy to connect. But how to invite the heart is something we need to explore. (Martin)

Glimpses on education in Auroville - 3

- No preaching, but enabling personal experience
 - « A key point in ATB is to be, as much as possible, in the witness attitude. Then one sees things from a different perspective and one is ready to learn from others, from each situation and from one's own mistakes. It is important to understand that this “watcher” sees what is there without judging ». (Aloka).
- Empowering people through an enlarged consciousness
 - “What we create here gives power; we realize we can fulfil a dream, seeing that a different world is possible. We are not alone in our beliefs, but there are others as well who share the same visions. We are a part of something which gives a sense of connectedness. All this gives a satisfaction of knowing that we are all in it together and doing something... » (Yorit)

Glimpses on education in Auroville - 4

- Enhancing a sense of evolution

« Research and Education are the main ideas of the Charter the EcoFemme project is relating to Research aspect of the project is very practical, as we try to find improvements on a very common reality of women taking care of their material environment. This is a project of experimental unending education, a way to discover new forms; it goes much further than a mere knowledge transmission, it is a mentality changing factor which may introduce evolutions in these women's life ». (Kathy)

And...

- Humility

“There is the feeling of “not knowing” where we are going, but just as if something was wanting to be born”. (Kathy)

Conclusions

- What came out of this survey?
- Where are we at today?
- Is there a prospective vision of education in Auroville?
- How is it contributing to a change of consciousness?