



gaia education

Design for Sustainability



Community Life Design Ecovillage Design Education in Auroville



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Design Education
Programme



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Course Overview

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Community Life Design: Ecovillage Design Education, was a four week course held in Auroville in February to March 2023. The course welcomed nine participants from various backgrounds, amongst which Auroville-born, new Aurovilians, volunteers, and other international participants from Asia, Americas and Europe. Youth Camp was the host site, along with another larger hall venue in Douceur Community. As Auroville is a large collection of communities and countless projects, we had a great opportunity to visit a large number of best practices for Ecology, alternative Economy, Social and Worldview dimensions.

The programme offered a broad range of diverse experiences, ranging from in-class content, expert sessions, experiences sharing, on-site visits, physical and bonding activities, movies, various social events, design and hands-on work, etc. The diversity of the sessions combined with a good knowledge base and a smooth facilitation have been praised by the participants.

Participants (50-150 words): (Basic stats including numbers of participants, age range, gender

ratio, countries, ethnicities and backgrounds)

The group was made up of ten participants from Philippines, Indonesia, Mexico, Belgium, United States, and of course from India. The diversity of the participants was also reflected in the gender with a ratio of women/men at 1:4 and in the age range with some participants being in their early 20's and others in their 50's.

Course rhythms (50-150 words): A description of the times of daily activities, sessions, free time, social time, interaction with hosts, rest; how many hours in lectures & practical sessions, etc.



The course was designed over four weeks from Monday to Saturday. Generally, the day was broken up into morning sessions of three hours in our main hall, with theory or some form of cognitive content, focusing on the “head”. Three hours in the afternoon were dedicated to hands-on activities and visits to different projects and sites in Auroville that embody the Ecovillage Design principles. For one hour and a half on Tuesday - Friday early mornings, we offered a variety of Worldview Introspective sessions and somatic experiences in- and outdoor, so that we could start our day with opening our “heart”. Weekly, we also had a slot for movie night, and one for other activities such as music jam, potluck, Deep Sharing, or Gratitude Circle. We also set enough time aside in the mornings and afternoons for breaks, collective cleaning, and spontaneous activities such as outdoor activities, dance and games.

Highlights & challenges of each dimension

Social Dimension (150-250 words) What happened in this dimension? What were the highlights? What subjects were covered? 1-2 participant quotes from the Gaia Education Evaluations or other sources. A sentence on each core faculty/facilitator.

Anonymous Quotes:

“Even though i grew up in Auroville, i did not think it was possible to feel part of community-family feeling within just a few weeks!”

“I am glad to feel supported by people to be who i am, really who i am inside can come out now.”

The Social week was facilitated by various Aurovilian experts in the field, in order to cover all the dimensions of the Social wheel of Gaia. The overview of this week was held by Kavitha Urvasie Selvaraj, who is a third generation Aurovilian, educated in Sustainable Development, with a variety of work experiences living in Auroville. She has worked for the Auroville town hall doing research on Auroville’s impact on the bioregion, and has worked in the Entry Service supporting the process of integration for newcomers joining the community. She has also Founded an organization called Youth Link, and has worked with the Global Ecovillage Network as the Asian region’s Educational Director, and International Network’s Trustee. She is currently developing an Eco Resort, alongside an Auroville International Center in Bali.



- **Life Stories:** Participants were given the opportunity to share about their own life story using creative and personal means such as storytelling, tokens, pictures, improvisation dance, etc. Ten participants from various backgrounds joined us for this form of creative expression.
- **Community Formation Stages:** Learning about community formation stages helped us discuss how each one of us have experienced this before in our lives - in our ecovillage, or even in our organization. Becoming aware of phases helps ensure that in future projects we can identify beforehand how we plan to deal with the challenging moments.
- **Art Therapy:** The participants were invited to draw their body outline on a piece of paper and to fill it in, using colors of different body feelings and sensations in order to represent how they visualize themselves in their own body. This was followed by a discussion about our past, who we are today, and what we would like to embody in the future.
- **Introduction to Rational Behaviour Theory, Non Violent Communication & Restorative Circle:** Tools for communication and conflict resolution in Auroville have taken various different directions, however, providing a base in Rational Behaviour Theory, helped the students grasp NVC and RC, which are tools used in various intentional communities worldwide. Unfortunately, or fortunately, we did not have a “serious enough” conflict to emerge during the course, as we would have used the tool we learnt to practice a resolution process.
- **AV Conflict Resolution Policy:** As part of the Decision Making processes, the Auroville Conflict Resolution Policy was looked at with the group, along with a discussion on how the policy is applied, and how it can be limited - with a discussion on the scope for improvement.
- **Alternative Governance:** Collective Decision Making Processes, e.g. Citizens Assembly and Dream Weaving processes were introduced during the course. Again, as with Conflict Resolution, Auroville does not work with any one defined process, but adjusts tools as required according to the people engaged in the topic, and the context, timeframe, etc. The most recent attempts at larger Citizens Assembly and Dream Weaving processes were highlighted as the number of participants Auroville engages in such processes is often higher than in other smaller ecovillages.
- **International Zone Walk:** The International Zone of Auroville is a bridge between the bireogion, India and the world at large. It is both a representation of what Auroville is for those who just arrive, but also a platform in which to create spaces for knowledge exchange and exploration of what it means to be part of an ‘international’ culture unfolding. We visited the Visitors Center, Matrimandir View Point, Indian Pavilion, Tibetan Pavilion, and French Pavilion.
- **Soup/Salad Cooking Together:** Several spontaneous occasions took place, such as for Paco’s Birthday, where the group eagerly got together to celebrate with cooking together and buying a collective gift, and celebrating one member of the group. Many all teamed up to go out into the neighbourhood to have coffees, and dinners together, to explore, and have space for deeper conversations.



- **Biryani/Pizza Potluck Movie Nights:** Several films were screened during the course. Auroville Introduction Films “ A Dream Down To Earth”, and “Voices of Auroville”, along with our first 20 min film on the 2015 EDE - for Social/Worldview. We also screened “Ever Slow Green” on Auroville Forests for Ecology, and “Best of Enemies” for Social & “Demain” for Economy.
- **Bonfire & Music Jam Night:** In the first week a bonfire was organized where a music jamming took place, inviting a couple of musicians from Auroville to join in.
- **Collective Dance:** We had spontaneous moments in the course where we played music and people could move their bodies. We also organized a facilitated session on Collective-Folk-Dance, and Dance of Universal Peace.
- Introduction to Map of Non-monogamous relationships
- **Deep Sharing Circle:** We introduced the tools of Deep Listening, and Council, and Forum - which eventually led to a Deep Sharing Circle, which was truly moving.
- **Mapping Auroville:** Each participant was given a map of Auroville on which we mapped each site visited during the course, and identified the different zoning - it generally helped us orient to the vast scale of the sheer size of Auroville.



Economic Dimension (150-250 words) What happened in this dimension? What were the highlights? What topics were covered? what practical activities were performed? 2-3 participant quotes from the Gaia Education Evaluations or other sources. A sentence on each core faculty/facilitator. Any other information that you consider relevant.



Anonymous Quotes:

“Buying cheap makes people poor!”

“Time is the only thing that humans cannot control, so why do we put a price on it?”

The Economic week was facilitated by various Aurovilian experts in the field, in order to cover all the dimensions of the Economic wheel of Gaia. The overview of this week was held by Michael Dieter Salvador Marco Manger, who is an Aurovilian since over 10 years, but was also previously trained in France as a Tax Lawyer, and HR Manager, and Accountant. Michael has been exploring various think tanks and initiatives towards an alternative Economy in Auroville since he left France. As an Educator, he is at ease with explaining the conventional tendencies, as well as explaining the alternatives emerging, in simple ways for students to grasp more easily. He also has a great sense of humor, making alternative economy more appealing overall.

- **Global Economy, Basic Finance & Collapseology:** Opening the week with an introduction to what Economy is, and a discussion on defining concepts that are not always so easily understood. Collapseology was also introduced, with a rather deep dive of emotional grief associated with the discovery (or re-discovery) of how fast our linear Economy is depleting our planet.
- **Talk by Flourish Team on Auroville’s Economy:** We had a presentation of projects and entrepreneurial initiatives in Auroville, and initiatives to create more exchange of knowledge and skills amongst these. Auroville has plenty of such initiatives but also an untapped or underutilized potential for increased cooperation.
- **PIE-Progressive Integral Economy Proposal:** a model proposing progressive economic stages based on increasing trust and sharing, and decreasing financial transactions, towards a gift economy
- **Introduction to Shared Leadership:** We provided an opening into leadership in the last week, to ensure that participants were aware that becoming independent in their project also should not shy away from the financial self-sustainability topic. In order for any project or Ecovillage to be successful, the economy of it should be well integrated into each one’s livelihood design. We also looked at how sharing the leadership role amongst several team members can bring about shared responsibility, enhanced autonomy and lead to innovation. It helps the members to maximize the value they can leverage upon.
- **Site Visits:** Aquadyn: Building Water Filters for Energy Treated Drinking Water, PTDC: Auroville’s Food Coop, Free Secondhand Store, Nandini Clothing Coop.
- **AV Legal and Financial Structures:** We discussed Auroville’s current situation extensively, as right now the Indian Government is getting more involved in Auroville’s financial and social governance. It is important to understand how Auroville is unique - it is protected and funded as an “Act of Indian Parliament”, which has been a huge blessing, but also welcomes more governmental intervention.



- **Introduction to Co-op Models:** The co-op model can be central to the transformation of any local economy from a conventional perspective - to including more alternative, planet friendly solutions. Therefore the topic of Co-op was explored, also discussing how different models of co-ops have emerged in different parts of the world, and their reasons for success.
- **Into Local Currencies:** We examined the topic of alternative currencies by looking at Auroville's attempt at the Aura, AV Maintenance Model, and triad cooperation model (enterprises, institutions, communities). Of course this led to a discussion on what conditions must be allowed in order for local currencies to emerge or survive worldwide.
- **Economy Of Service vs. Economy Of Production/Sales** - Auroville embodies all forms of conventional and non conventional economy practices - and it was interesting to map them out and realize that Auroville is just a mirror to the world. Evidently Auroville has more alternative solutions than other places - but it is also deeply struggling with the Economic transition towards something more conscious.
- **Personal Economy Breakdown Exercise:** We provided a simple tool for participants to get a better understanding of their own financial and material needs - that they they could see how better to structure their lives/work in order to meet those needs - which can often be done almost fully in kind when living in Ecovillage !





Ecological Dimension (150-250 words) What happened in this dimension? What were the highlights? What topics were covered? what practical activities were performed? 2-3 participant quotes from the Gaia Education Evaluations or other sources. A sentence on each core faculty/facilitator. Any other information that you consider relevant.

Anonymous Quotes:

“Auroville’s conflict between foresters and developers is so silly when you think about it, because we are all here for human unity right?”

“I want to continue my journey towards a self-sufficient life with my project, but i think its the first time i realize i cannot really do it all alone.”

The Ecology week was facilitated by various Aurovilian experts in the field, in order to cover all the dimensions of the Ecology wheel of Gaia. The overview of this week was held by Kavitha Urvasie Selvaraj, who is a third generation Aurovilian, educated in Sustainable Development, with a variety of work experiences living in Auroville - such as Pitchandikulam Forest (Restoration Ecology Bioresource Center where she worked on developing the initial pilot project “SEDAB- Sustainable Enterprise Development in the Auroville Bioregion - which resulted in the manifestation of the the Sustainable Livelihood Institute, which now exists as a separate entity in Auroville) . Her mentor, and GEN Elder, Joss Brooks, is the one who has supported her into the work of GEN and Gaia from the very start. Kavitha is also trained in various tools of Ecovillage’s green knowledge - such as Permaculture Design, and has worked in projects relating to Regenerative Agriculture and Forest Restoration. As Auroville has so many green experts, Kavitha did not have much to do but tie the threads together for all the wonderful site visits and deep knowledge sharing that was offered through the Ecology week of EDE.

- **Pitchandikulam Forest Deep Ecology & Presentation of their Restoration Projects in India:** Pitchandikulam is a great example of a community-campus which has successfully been able to work together with Tamil Nadu institutions and different enterprises to create and run projects around forestry, education, social enterprises, etc. for Auroville, its bio-region and Tamil Nadu. We visited their campus with a presentation on their current projects in India, and had a walk around the lush forest to see the possibility of what restoring looks and feels like. We also visited the Art Department, Museum, GIS Mapping Center, Indigenous Nursery and Seed Bank.
- **Deep Ecology Morning Practices:** We included Site Specific Environmental Ephemeral Art, and Biomimicry Patterns in Forest Nature - different practices focusing on observing, connecting, getting inspired by and copying Nature’s beauty in all its forms. We also shared briefly about Joanna Macy and the Work that Reconnects - especially in relation to the Collapsology topic - as a means to move out of trauma, and into action.



- **Sustainability Consultant House Assessment Challenge:** The participants had to assess with a critical eye the sustainability practices of Kavitha's household around the four dimensions. The output was a rough evaluation of how well this household stands in each dimension. They were asked to wear their "consultant" hat, and imagine what they could recommend as improvements.
- **Introduction to Permaculture Principles:** Kavitha provided a short introduction to the Permaculture ethics and principles. As Comm4unity Education also provides Permaculture Certification Trainings, the students were invited for a deeper dive if they so wish to join a follow up course later. We also discussed about how tools like PDC initially were spread through Ecovillages - and how the EDE's more updated curriculum has been designed by many educators who used to work with Permaculture tools as well.
- **Site Visits:** Ecofemme: Women's Menstrual Products, Kinisi: E-Vehicles, Probiotic House: Household Products, Hemplanet: Hemp Edible and Other Products, Solitude Farm: Permaculture Example, Cafe and CSA Basket, Pebble Garden: Seed Saving & Growing Food on Pebble Land, Sadhana Forest: Whole Systems Design, Revelation Forest: Early morning guided ecology walk, Auroville Green Belt: a tour of the area designated to be bought by Auroville which is partly lush and green and partly currently heavily eroded.
- **Introduction to Samparpan Farmers Market in Pondicherry:** A Food Chain Network/collective of the bioregion - which is also connected to Auroville outlets.





Worldview Dimension (150-250 words) What happened in this dimension? What were the highlights? What topics were covered? what practical activities were performed? 2-3 participant quotes from the Gaia Education Evaluations or other sources. A sentence on each core faculty/facilitator. Any other information that you consider relevant.

Anonymous Quotes:

"Today was better than yesterday and tomorrow will be better than today."

"Facilitating my first check in was so difficult, but i want to try to do it again."

The Worldview week was facilitated by various Aurovilian experts in the field, in order to cover all the dimensions of the Ecology wheel of Gaia. The overview of this week was held by Priyamvada Bhatt, who was educated through one of Auroville's most forward thinking schools. She has been following a lifelong journey of "Free Progress Education", supported by various Aurovillian mentors. She has also studied at the Bhoomi College in Bangalore. She has been trained in tools like Awareness Through the Body, and various other talents that only an ecovillage child can accumulate over the years of integral self - development support. She has also undergone Gaia EDE, TOT and online curriculum of Economy GEDS. She did not only hold the Worldview week, but was generally present as a supportive Comm4unity team member to ensure the course ran smoothly - eg. facilitating Check Ins, or guiding site visits also during some sessions in other weeks.

- **Awareness Through the Body Morning Practice:** Introducing a set of practices developed in Auroville to help children develop their capacity for attention, concentration and relaxation, while enhancing their ability for self awareness and their sense of responsibility.
- **Introduction to Ikigai:** Exercise to find a feeling of accomplishment and fulfillment that follows when people pursue their passions.
- **Introduction to Integral Education:** It is a complete system of education. It develops not only cognitive mind but it develops physical, vital, spiritual, and psyche aspects of personality also. Using innovative techniques of imparting education and activity based learning, students are equipped with multi skills and abilities to apply and use in life. It is an internationally renowned framework and philosophy developed by Sri Aurobindo and Mirra Alfassa - founders of Auroville.
- **Matrimandir Visit:** We scheduled visits to our icon meditation central chamber / surrounding 12 petal chambers - for anyone who had a calling to visit the Peace Area of Auroville. This is never compulsory - although all those who were new did sign up to experience this. We has deep conversations about the spiritual significance of the Matrimandir chambers and gardens throughout the course, as it had a deep impact on every one of the participants. We also visited the gardens as a group, quietly walking together, absorbing the beauty and serenity of the place.



- **Auroville Matrimandir Bonfire Community Gathering:** The course was held in February, which is also the time of year that Auroville celebrated the founder Mirra Alphassa's Birthday on the 21st - and Auroville's anniversary on the 28th - known as "Auroville Week". Gathering with about 5000 people at the amphitheater before the dawn breaks - to sit in silence as a bonfire is lit, watching the sun rise up over the stunning gardens of the Matrimandir's horizon, is magnificent. The group was treated to a breakfast celebration at the Town Hall Cafe, followed by a long discussion about collective spirituality. The rest of the day was given off so that participants could attend any of the many theatre/exhibition/performances that were held throughout Auroville that afternoon/evening.
- **Introduction to Massage, Yoga:** Two facilitators were invited to give an introduction to Yoga and to Massage. The Yoga class was beneficial for both those who were new to it, as the instructor had the capacity to include a few extra steps to ensure those who were more advanced could also practice well. The Introduction to Massage is also always a favourite during EDE courses, as it allows for more intimacy to emerge - discussing consent, and right touch, and knowing how to avoid hurting another, is truly liberating. It opened many discussions about how many participants yearned for more non-sexual intimacy amongst family and community - and to feel empowered to be able to offer it, was truly a deeply bonding experience of the group.
- **Meditation and Visualization Exercises:** During Dragon Dreaming, Ikigai, Art Therapy, Forest Walks and Check Ins, we included various forms of centering and visualizations, so that participants could benefit from the largest array of mindfulness practices as possible. By the end of the course it was exciting to hear about what techniques each one felt worked for them - some choosing a collective practice, and some identifying techniques for their individual routine as well.
- **Acupuncture & Sound Healing Therapy:** We offered an optional NADA-Protocol ear acupuncture laying down session, accompanied by a sound bath. Everyone opted to try the needles, and it was truly deeply shifting. That very same morning we had all announced our "21 Day Challenge" topics that we each wanted to work on for our own self development during the course. The NADA protocol is a process that helps with de-addiction and creating space for new pattern to be formed. Thus, it was helpful for us to receive this extra support to committing to transform our habits in life.
- **Belief Exploration Exercise:** Opening the EDE with Worldview, we explored the definition of the word "Worldview" along with the Cultural background of individuals lives, and their beliefs/values. This set a good base for open discussion throughout the course about "what do we want to continue to carry with us from our heritage past, and what beliefs/traditions that no longer serve us, can we choose to let go?". Transforming culture became tangible, and throughout the course itself the group was deciding amongst themselves to agree to change - eg. agree to use different language for gender, or agree to touch more through massage with consent.



- **Introduction to JoHari Window:** Trauma healing was a big part of our discussions - exploring tools for Art Therapy, Sound Baths, and JoHari window helped map feelings relating to our past, and process them in ways to begin to communicate more vulnerably and consciously with tools of Deep Listening, and NVC.
- **Ayurvedic Doshas / Multiple Intelligence - Personality Tests:** Looking at the wisdom of the West and East, and how our bodies communicate with us our tendencies, so that we can better understand our uniqueness, and how to form diverse-complimentary teams for project management.
- **Introduction to Spiral Dynamics:** Understanding that we can also see, on a societal level, that shifts are taking place. Noticing that at times we as individuals may participate in older or newer forms of consciousness and behavior, and that becoming aware of the potential for transcending to a new level is possible.
- **Introduction to Collapsology and Deep Adaptation:** Part of understanding the ecological crisis, and economical worldview shift we need to undergo, comes with a lot of pain and sense of helplessness. How do we process this individual- worldwide tragedy, so that we may heal, and move into a new state of renewed energy to move into action?
- **Introduction to one of India's Traditional Medicines:** Ayurveda has helped students in EDEs in Auroville to connect to India's wisdom and holistic worldview. Noticing how we can be empowered to know our own bodies and tendencies and adjust our lifestyle and diet accordingly to heal ourselves was deeply inspiring.
- **Diversity Exploration / Sociometry Exercise:** Exploring diversity in the room was a key to understanding the social-cultural-economic and worldview transition we are all experiencing. Becoming aware of the diversity is challenging, but also deeply inspiring, as we notice how many skills and experiences each one of us has, on which we can draw from in order to consciously design a new world.





Design Dimension (150-200 words) What happened in this dimension? What were the highlights? What topics were covered? what practical activities were performed? 2-3 participant quotes from the Gaia Education Evaluations or other sources. A sentence on each core faculty/facilitator. Any other information that you consider relevant.

The participants were guided through the Dragon Dreaming process, starting from individual projects until reaching a collective synthesis for grouped projects to emerge. This helped understand the difference of dynamics in the different phases with various group sizes. These group projects covered the building of a physical community, the creation of the next EDE program, and the creation of an art and well-being space. Tools such as pitching techniques and leadership style recognition were used to help out the participants throughout the process. One of the key highlights in Dragon Dreaming was to recognize through a naturally unfolding process, that one passion topics can be “caught from the universe and connected to” as they already exist beyond us. For the duration of our lives that we dedicate ourselves to the project, we become a channel for manifestation, and when we feel to move on, that it is also completely ok to let go. The project will continue to exist and transform beyond our individual involvement - as new members will join, and new teams can continuously re-define the ways in which they would like to manifest a particular project.

The students were also given the opportunity to work on two hands-on projects in rotation, one related to gardening at Youth Camp and the other to construction-related work on the Rhomboid.



- **Rhomboid Design Challenge & Learnings:** A geodesic structure the size of a room, on a metal frame with wheels, was offered to the group as a design challenge. They dreamed and planned for the structure... and began implementing with a coat of fresh paint. The dream for the structure was to create a space for inner discovery, with a calm decorated interior, perhaps even a crystal as inspired by the Matrimandir, so that people could quietly retreat into a room where they could watch the stars, or rotate the roof to close. The biggest learning was to realize that the Auroville pioneers has designed and built this structure as their project in the 60s-70s - and now in 2023 we continue to re-dream and re-plan. We also processed how attached we can get to our dreams & plans, and how it is challenging, but also liberating to be able to allow the next group to come and finish the work we have started.
- **Youth Camp Garden Design Challenge & Learnings:** The host accommodation site offered the participants the space to design a new addition to the campus. The challenge was to define what manageable sized project could be added within the limited time frame - so it was finally decided to make a kitchen garden near the common kitchen/dinning area. As the campus is white heavily shaded, the students had to identify plants that could grow in low-light, and discuss with the existing management team to ensure that there would be continuity in cae of the garden even once the group left. Half way through the dreaming-planning process, the group prepared a hand over process - to pass it to the next team.
- **Maison Des Jeunes: Project group 1:** Maison des Jeunes is a 12 room pod accommodation for young people coming newly to Auroville, with common kitchen and bathroom facilities. As several students from the course were currently accommodated there, they took on the project to see what could be improved. The dream of the participants were to have more space for art and well-being. So a proposal was developed to add an additional multifunctional space to the campus - so that massage, theater, and other well-being activities could take place at MDJ. As MDJ is one of the most affordable accommodations options in Auroville, the budget of how to manifest a space was a big challenge - but a variety of solutions were explored. Some participant graduates plan to follow up to see if this plan can manifest over the next year(s).
- **Pitchandikulam Forest EDE: Project group 2:** As some participants came from the Pitchandikulam Forest organization, they proposed looking at this hoast site for a design. Out of the groups' unique background, it was felt that perhaps they could offer to design the next Auroville EDE at Pitchandikulam Forest. As this proposal was accepted by the Pitchandikulam Forest team, and the Comm4unity team - a collaborative process was engaged in so that the participants were empowered to lead the design process and call on the older mentors when needed to help manifest the next EDE.



- **Bali Projects: Project group 3:** The managers of Comm4unity team have a EcoResort and an Empty-Land project that has the potential to start in 2024. They offered this to the EDE group to design. As some participants were eager to come to Bali the following year, they began their dreaming and planning process to see how their individual skills and passions could be integrated into the first phase of the Eco-Resort and Empty Land development. Some may come to help with the interior designing of the Eco-Resort, and prepare a Tree-House / Permaculture Garden or help with the Social Media strategy. Others also wanted to be involved in planning how the empty land could be used as a village-community center specifically for the kids, and how Auroville's youth could be invited to fly on scholarship to Bali by creating an exchange program for the development of best-practices exchange between Tamil Nadu-Bali.
- **Leadership Presence Style & Story of self-us-now:** Leadership styles were identified to help each one recognize their own tendencies towards passion-led-action. We also offered presentation skills and some framework and practice for each individual and group to prepare a pitch for their project. On the last day, we invited about 20 individuals who are connected to GEN network in Auroville to come to Pitchandikulam for an open sharing circle. The participants then had the opportunity to share their pitch in front of the like-minded crowd. The session was followed by an informal mixer with refreshments, so networking could take place to connect to the GEN Network. It was a wonderful way to close the course and connect to the larger network through the presentation of projects.





Design Studio Case Studies Brief description of the case studies developed during the programme if applicable.

- **Maison des Jeunes:** A Collective Space for Art & Well-being, to be created within the existing campus for volunteer accommodation in Auroville.
- **Pitchandikulam Forest:** A Design for EDE 2024. To be led by the current graduates of EDE, with support from Gaia Educators and GEN Elders.
- **Bali Projects:** A Design for Ecovillage Resort & nearby Empty Land to become a space for Training of Trainers, and a platform for the village children to engage with topics related to best-practices exchange between Tamil Nadu, India and Bali, Indonesia.

Lessons Learned (50-300 words)

What could help future EDE's from your experience? What were your biggest learnings? If a re-certified EDE, also list & respond to lessons learnt from your previous EDE.

- **Support from Gaia Education:** Need help from Gaia Education to certify as early as possible, so that there is enough time to market the course. We could also request additional support from Gaia to help with consistent marketing of our programs. The certification fee is challenging for regions in the global south to be required to pay the same as the global north. Our income generating capacity is a lot lower than countries in the north, and as usually more than half our participants are on full or partial scholarship, it would be nice to be considered for our unique differences in economic capacity, and also for our focus on providing as much free-education as possible. Please refer to our budget summary to understand more.
- **Auroville's Large Scale:** It is always hard in Auroville, because of it being so large, to ensure that all local participants don't disperse. Renting a van or bus is very expensive, so we provide e-cycles to the international participants. However, as Auroville is so big, cycling around can take a lot of time, and so local participants often have to take international students on their motor-bike to get there on time.
- **Food:** Auroville has many options for catering, and so most food was catered from Auroville's central Solar Kitchen, and the Bakery. This helped us eat more local, and ensured a wide variety on the menu of healthy food, but cooking together more often would have been nice for the team spirit.
- **Time:** Always a need for more time for everything. Design especially could have benefited from having more time. Difficult to dive deeper into any dimension in such a short time.



- **TOT:** There are so many EDE graduates in Auroville who are currently involved in organizing the next courses. If we could have some of these trained as Trainers, we could perhaps even run several EDE courses within the same year.

Describe your EDE in terms of the know-how and learning obtained, the stories and inspiration that happen to the participants and the organizers during the EDE or a good summary of a project or activity carried out during the program. Take into consideration that this will be circulated among the Gaia Education's community, so they wish to learn, get inspired and be empowered by your program and your participant's experiences. (200 - 400 words) . Include 1 or 2 pictures.

- Two participants left the group, one within the first few days due to pain from a chronic medical condition, and the second left after the first week due to emotional instability of experiencing a friend's suicide. This loss of community members was painful for the rest of the group - although it did provide an opportunity to reflect on the reality of this happening throughout our lives in actual community projects.
- It was an 'easy' group. Perhaps because of the smaller number. Perhaps because of the gentle personalities. The individuals who came together all really made an effort to connect to one another, and so we hardly had any conflict emerge. Often we tried to test our NVC tools when a conflict undoubtedly emerges, but this time we didn't have the chance !
- The Ecology facilitator dropped out: Due to family-work difficulties, our Ecology Gaia Educator needed to withdraw from holding the week. He was replaced by another facilitator, but having a larger team for holding the space would have evidently been healthier for the group and for the efficiency of the program itself.

Key trends from the Gaia Education Survey Monkey evaluations, using words and charts if possible.

- Gaia is not using the Survey Monkey anymore. We were asked to fill out a form. We do not have access to the answers - can you please send them to us at comm4unity@auroville.org.in?

Summary of projects/activities participants intend to engage in, inspired by their attendance in the course (50 - 150 words):

- We have a lot of interest and commitments made to follow up for the 3 projects of design during the course. Some participants even offered to help for the others' projects, so overall a great spirit of collaboration and possibility for followup.
- Maison des Jeunes: has option for followup with some hands-on gardening aspect, and building of a yurt/geodesic dome for the Art/Well-being space.



- Pitchandikulam Forest: the team has already begun processing the video footage and social media right after the course ended - in excited preparation for the next EDE to be held in January 2024 at the Pitchandikulam Forest site in Auroville. The application will be submitted soon to Gaia Education. There has also been an email sent out as in inquiry for a Gaia TOT.
- Bali Projects: A large number of participants will be coming to Bali this summer/next summer to continue the Resort and New land projects there - engaging in tasks such as Visioning, Ayurvedic Restaurant Cooking, Permaculture Farming, Village Kids After School Space, Regenerative Forestry, Tree House Building, App Building, Educational Program Design, and perhaps even eventually starting a Co-op Grocery Shop.

Concise financial information showing income/expenditure.

- This course hardly made enough to pay the main coordinator for barely 2 months of pre-post course preparation work. The rest of the 20+ Aurovilian facilitators were paid, but at a minimal stipend, less than half of the ideal amount. We had 3 international participants who paid the early bird reduced rate. The rest were on partial or full scholarship. The filmmaker costs were waived in exchange for the footage. Our participant from Bali project were covered full expenses of course including his flight. The rest of the Aurovilian participants paid only Rs.10,000 which covered only the cost of food/materials/basic expenses of the program.
- We cannot run another program unless the income is significantly higher. We need a

minimum of half the group to be international fully paying participants to make the course economically sustainable. This time we were waived from paying the EDE Certification fee (as 2 of our previous courses were not advertised by Gaia), so this helped make it possible.



Participant Quotes

Send 3-4 participant quotes from the Gaia Education Evaluations or other sources, please include names and photos (send the photos as separate .jpeg files and properly captioned/named) – please make sure that the people in the photos have given their permission to be included.



Edward



“It’s definitely a great journey, experiencing the challenges and fun that would come by as individuals and a group when we endeavor to live in a transformational phase of humanity, with understanding of its past, present and Nature, and reconnecting to both. This journey showed how everyone is so different and yet can organize and work for the best, when fear is overcome with knowledge.”

Michael



“It’s been an intense journey. We learnt so much and connected so deeply in such a short amount of time that it is hard to let go of it. It’s been a beautiful blend of theoretical, practical and exploratory activities. The space was held perfectly to help emerge the sharing of beautiful souls blossoming through the days, an ocean of knowledge, an horizon of possibilities, and so much more in a gracious melting pot of fun, joy, genuinity and depth.”



Chandra



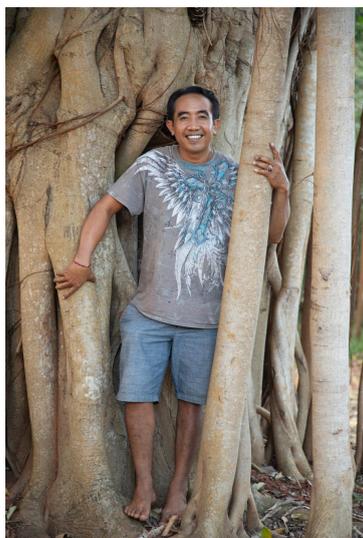
“So used to our busy routine lives, feeling completely lost in the system and norms of life today, this course was simply a blessing which came to me at the right time, at the right place.

I had forgotten what it felt like to be a part of something meaningful, to feel a sense of belonging and to share space with others where I had the freedom to completely be myself and most importantly accepted.

This experience was the motivation I needed to reawaken my inner fire, reminding me of our old ways, our roots, and why we are here in the first place.

A big heartfelt thank you to the team for this surreal experience which I will forever hold and cherish very closely to my heart, it was AMAZING!”

Ketut



“Great fun being among experienced people, building a community from different cultures and backgrounds, loving nature and principles. Brilliant ideas. I can do this in Bali now.”