

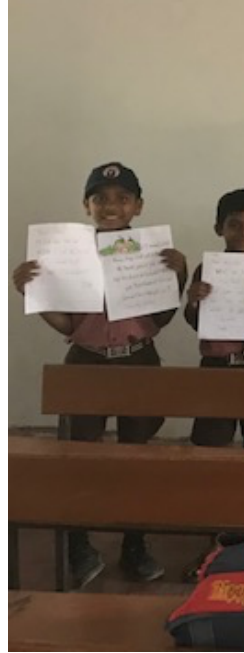
## Site Visit Report for Sri Aurobindo's Educational Academy and Society By Lakshmi Reddy, St Louis

I had the opportunity to visit the school on April 10<sup>th</sup> of 2018. I have been visiting this school for the past 7 years along with my sister, who lives in Oklahoma City. We spent two weeks in February and two weeks in April. She prepares English curriculum for pre school students through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and trains teachers during visit and via phone regularly. This is an English medium school and English is their second language. They use phonics, flash cards and games to learn the language.

**English** – Unlike most other schools in India where English is introduced through the mechanical memorization of the alphabets Sri Aurobindo's School teaches it through phonetics and phonemic awareness. Children are also taught vocabulary and spoken English beginning from Nursery. This has made a big difference to their ability to read and understand English. First and second grade students write letters to their pen pals in St Louis, which helps students to practice writing skills, learn about other cultures and world views.

Over all school is progressing in the right direction and teachers are working hard to learn and implement principles of Integral Education.





Sri Aurobindo's Educational Academy and Society, a non-profit registered society was formed in 2010 with the aim and commitment of improving and upgrading the quality of education in the rural schools of India. The school is dedicated to following the philosophy of integral education and to helping children become productive global citizens. On one hand they are not sufficiently developed intellectually to pursue higher education and on the other they do not acquire the skills required to be employed productively.

As a first step towards the implementation of this objective, the Society has set up a school in a rural village, Gaddipalli, Telengana, named 'Sri Aurobindo's School' based on the principles of education laid out by Sri Aurobindo. The school currently has about 270 students, a new but unfinished building, an open ground, a 20,000 sq.ft.Hall donated by the

community society and four acres of land donated by Gopal Reddy, the founder of the Society.

Kids come from 15 different villages, some students come from extremely poor families in different circumstances. Most of the students are first generation students and are curious to learn and participate in sports and other activities. Students stand out among their peers who attend Government and other schools. They have dedicated teachers to guide students.

**Games Room** – A 400 sq.ft room has been allocated for a games room (blocks, puzzles, Legos etc...) for the children of Kindergarten. Even schools in the city of Hyderabad do not have such an infrastructure. Games were sent by well-wishers from USA and New Creation International. Children of the Nursery, LKG and UKG spend at least an hour every day in this game room. This allows children to develop imagination and creativity.



**Physical Exercises** – Everyday at 3.30 all the students and teachers participate in sports. The school has appointed a trained instructor who has created a daily program and also trains the teachers. A children's playground has recently been completed with a grant from World Foundation for Education. A tribal girl who graduated from the school was selected in kabaddi team.





In contrast to the education imparted in the government and private school in rural areas, Sri Aurobindo's School focuses on the all around progress of the child, giving equal importance to the development of his body, his character and his mind. The curricula of the school is based on the principles of Integral Education and is designed with the explicit aim of developing the

innate faculties and instruments of the child and not cram him with irrelevant information. The aim is to help children become independent learners, responsible, creative, and committed to the progress of himself and the community.

School provides free education to 30 students a year and partial scholarships. They provide free essential nutrition, free uniform to all the students. Herbal garden will help them to learn to investigate, research, hands on learning opportunities about different medicinal plants and their use.





Students receiving egg during lunch. They are grateful to generous donors for their sponsorship.



The longterm plan of the Society is to make Sri Aurobindo's School a centre for training teachers of the schools in the district and help them implement the system of Integral Education.

Students learn about different leaves, sizes, shapes and their utility.



Over all school is working towards achieving their goals. They are planning to add 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade as per request from students and parents. School is sustaining with the help of grants from New Creation International and local donors.

Cultural program is organized every month and annual program.

Over all school is progressing in the right direction and teachers are working hard to learn and implement principles of Integral Education.

They are looking for support with computers in the classrooms and hope to hire music teacher for all round development.

Omid, who is visiting school, who were travelling as part of the "Green Silk Road" project, from Valikben (my village in north of Iran where we started a permaculture garden and artiste residency in "wild nature" with Gijs on the first part of our Green Silk Road journey) to Auroville.



Green Students learning to plant trees as part of clean and green project during their science class- hands on learning.

