THE BRIDGE

22 - 27 Feb 2018

A collaborative research encounter in Auroville
AUROVILLE
& THE WORLD
INTRODUCING AUROVILLE AND THE BRIDGE

Auroville is an international, experimental township in South India, constituted of about 2,700 members from over 50 nationalities. It is based on the teachings of Sri Aurobindo – renowned Indian yogi, revolutionary, and poet – and was founded by his spiritual counterpart, Mirra Alfassa, in 1968. The largest and longest-standing intentional community in the world, Auroville is practically researching into transformation of cultural, social, environmental and sustainable living, and spiritual needs for the evolution of humanity. Over the last 50 years, it has been developing innovative and alternative forms and practices, some of them award-winning, inspiring people and projects worldwide.

On the occasion of Auroville’s 50th anniversary on the 28th of February, 2018, a Collaborative Research Encounter, The Bridge, will present and share the Auroville laboratory with researchers engaged in similar fields in India and around the world. The event aims to convey the full potential of this laboratory and issue an open invitation to formulate projects, conduct research on and actively engage in this experiment.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE BRIDGE

Bridging the Inner and the Outer: How to bring consciousness into everyday life?

Bridging Ideals with Reality: How to take responsibility for our shared evolution?

Bridging across Disciplines: How to collaborate in a spirit of simplicity and joy?

Bridging Knowledge with Practice: How can we share our knowledge and experiences for the benefit of the greater good?

FIELDS OF RESEARCH

The Bridge aims to foster inter- and trans-disciplinarity. We have invited researchers and practitioners from the following fields of entry:

EDUCATION

Educational initiatives and approaches that seek to foster experiential and life-long learning, resonate with the vision of integral education, and aim to deepen individuals’ connection to their inner being in all fields of action.

SOCIETY & ECONOMY

Societal and economic practices that deliberately attempt to unify individuals in conscious collectivity, reflecting an ethos of care and solidarity for one another and the planet.

ENVIRONMENT

Practices and approaches that aim to integrate individual, social and environmental systems, enabling a lasting balance of the whole.

CITY ART & CULTURE

Diverse artistic expressions and cultural practices that strive to transcend boundaries and transform our relationships with each other, our surroundings and the world. These are key to the development of new forms of collectivity, such as Auroville, a “universal township in the making.”
PROGRAMME OUTLINE

22 FEB THURSDAY OPENING

“Greetings from Auroville to all [wo]men of good will. Are invited to Auroville all those who thirst for progress and aspire to a higher and truer life.”  
_The Mother, Feb 28th 1968_

Morning
11.00 A.M. VISITORS CENTRE  
Exhibition visit

Lunch
12.30 P.M. VISITORS CENTRE

Afternoon
2.00 P.M. UNITY PAVILION  
Registration

3.00 P.M. UNITY PAVILION  
Inauguration of Universal Earthen Wall, by Auroville Earth Institute, UNESCO Chair Earthen Architecture

4.00 P.M. UNITY PAVILION  
Introduction to Auroville by Aster Patel, Kripa Borg & Aswhin Ezhumalai  
Presentation by visiting researcher Lionel Obadia “Auroville, as utopia, project and reality: anthropological views”  
Introduction to The Bridge by Aditi Rosegger & Suryamayi Clarence-Smith

5.00 P.M. UNITY PAVILION  
Tea

5.30 P.M. UNITY PAVILION  
Sound bath with Svaram
23 FEB FRIDAY
CONSCIOUS COLLECTIVITY

Experiments and practices that foster collective consciousness.

“Auroville will be a site of material and spiritual researches for a living embodiment of an actual human unity.” Auroville Charter

Morning
9.00 A.M. SOLAR KITCHEN
Site visit & field presentations of Prosperity area, Shradhanjali, Humanscapes

Lunch
1.00 P.M. SOLAR KITCHEN

Afternoon
3.00 P.M. UNITY PAVILION
Presentations by visiting researchers:
- Lara Monticelli From the Individual to Collective Consciousness.
- Manish Jain From a Schooling to a Learning Society
- Sarath Davala Unconditional & Universal Basic Income: “Foundation of a more Caring and Evolved Society”
- Israël Gev Socio-Economic Models of Water Management in Israel

4.30 P.M. UNITY PAVILION
Tea

5.00 - 6.00 P.M. UNITY PAVILION
Panel discussion on Conscious Collectivity with:
Abha Tewari - Israël Gev - Kavitha Urvasie Selvaraj - Lara Monticelli - Manish Jain - Sarath Davala - Suhasini Ayer - Facilitated by B Sullivan

Event
8.00 P.M. KALABHUMI
Trashion show

24 FEB SATURDAY
HARMONY FROM DIVERSITY

Approaching a lasting balance of individual, social and environmental systems.

“...in this harmony between our unity and our diversity lies the secret of life.”
Sri Aurobindo, The Ideal of Human Unity

Morning
6.30 A.M. UTILITY CANYON
Site visit Utility Canyon

8.00 A.M. GAIA’S GARDEN
Breakfast

9.00 A.M. PITCHANDIKULAM
Forest walk & Tea

10.30 A.M. PITCHANDIKULAM
Presentations of green practices in Auroville

Lunch
12.30 P.M. PITCHANDIKULAM

Afternoon
3.00 P.M. PITCHANDIKULAM TBD
Presentations by visiting researchers:
- Mark Lawrence Harmony with Nature in the Anthropocene
- Ravi Agarwal “Is the sea I see, the sea he sees?” Re-thinking the Ecological Crisis
- Ram Subramanian Harmony in Social Action
- Jennie Stephens Collaboration for Community and Climate Resilience

4.30 P.M. PITCHANDIKULAM TBD
Tea

5.00 - 6.00 P.M. PITCHANDIKULAM TBD
Panel discussion on Harmony from Diversity with:
Bindu Mohanty - Jennie Stephens - Lara Davis - Mark Lawrence - Ok Jeong Lee - Ram Subramanian - Ravi Agarwal - Ribhu Vohra - Facilitated by Sanjay Prakash
25 FEB SUNDAY
UNENDING EDUCATION

Development in all fields and inner and outer dimensions of life.

“Auroville will be the place of an unending education, of constant progress, and a youth that never ages” Auroville Charter

Morning
9.00 A.M. SAIIER CONFERENCE HALL
Awareness through the Body session

10.30 A.M. SAIIER CONFERENCE HALL
Presentations of educational experiences and initiatives in Auroville

Lunch
12.30 P.M. NATURELLEMENT

Afternoon
2.00 P.M. VERITÉ/UNITY PAVILION TBD
Presentations by visiting researchers:
- Gitanjali J B Being the Da Vinci One is Meant to Be
- Larry Seidlitz Integral Yoga at Work
- Bem Le Hunte Creative Intelligence: Transforming Education and Transforming Self
- Sonam Wangchuck The Next Learning Revolution

3.30 P.M. VERITÉ/UNITY PAVILION TBD
Tea

4.00 - 5.00 P.M. VERITÉ/UNITY PAVILION TBD
Panel discussion on Unending Education with:
Aneeta Pathak - Bem Le Hunte - Gitanjali J B - Jean-Yves Lung - Larry Seidlitz - Sanjeev Ranganathan - Sonam Wangchuck - Facilitated by Lucas Dengel

26 FEB MONDAY
CREATIVE PROGRESS

Creativity that transcends boundaries to give expression to our highest aspirations.

“Make of beauty your constant ideal. Beauty of soul, beauty of thought, beauty of feelings, beauty of action, beauty in work.” The Mother

Morning
8.30 A.M. MATRIMANDIR
Visit

9.30 A.M. TOWN HALL
Tea & Visit to Art Exhibitions

11.45 A.M. SAWYAM - DUSTUDIO
Site visit & exchanges

Lunch
1.00 P.M. SILENT KOREAN LUNCH AT DUSTUDIO

Afternoon
3.00 P.M. UNITY PAVILION
Presentations by visiting researchers
- Jacques Blanc Why is there art instead of nothing?
- Desmond Lazaro Tradition methods, Contemporary Practice
- Goutam Das Santiniketan - Heritage and Continuity
- Kirti Chandak The three roles of art: aesthetic, educational, spiritual

4.30 P.M. UNITY PAVILION
Tea

5.00 - 6.00 P.M. UNITY PAVILION
Panel discussion on Creative Progress with:
Aurelio Hammer - Desmond Lazaro - Goutam Das - Jacques Blanc - Kirti Chandak - Peter - Priya Sundaravalli - Supriya Menon Meneghetti - Facilitated by Marco Feira

Event
8.00 P.M. VISITORS CENTER
Baul Concert
27 FEB TUESDAY
COLLABORATIVE SESSIONS

“Auroville wants to be the bridge between the past and the future. Taking advantage of all discoveries from without and from within, Auroville will boldly spring towards future realizations” Auroville Charter

Morning
8.00 A.M. UNITY PAVILION
Kolam session

10.00 A.M. - 1.00 P.M.
Collaborative sessions

Lunch
1.00 P.M. UNITY PAVILION

Afternoon
3.00 P.M. UNITY PAVILION
Sharing & Moving forward

4.00 P.M. UNITY PAVILION
Tea

Event
5.00 P.M. SAVITRI BHAVAN
50 poems from Auroville

28 FEB WEDNESDAY
50TH ANNIVERSARY

Morning
5.00 - 7.00 A.M. MATRIMANDIR
Auroville’s 50th Meditation with Dawnfire & Water Ceremony

Evening
5.30 - 6.30 P.M. MATRIMANDIR
Meditations on Savitri - A musical presentation by Nadaprem

THE BRIDGE
& BEYOND...

Let us facilitate the following outcomes: the initiation of collaborative projects between Auroville practitioners, Indian and International researchers, inspired by the Auroville Charter as well as current projects happening in Auroville, that can yield valuable insights for Auroville and the world; the creation of an international, transdisciplinary network of researchers united in a community of goodwill, exchange, practice and experimentation, dedicated to the progress of human society.
Aster Patel, Ph.D., grew up in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry, where she studied at the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education. Later, she graduated from the University of Paris (Sorbonne). Her doctoral dissertation was titled A Comparative Study of the Philosophies of Sri Aurobindo and Henri Bergon.

She has taught at the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education in Pondicherry and has conducted a number of workshops in integral psychology. She held the Sri Aurobindo Chair of Philosophy at Banaras Hindu University.

Aster has participated in seminars and conferences at various centers and universities in India and at UNESCO, Paris, and the United Nations. She was a guest presenter at AUM 2003 in Los Angeles and at the 2003 Third International Conference on Integral Psychology in San Francisco. In December 2004 she spoke on the confluence of Indian spirituality and science at the National Conference on Indian Psychology, Yoga, and Consciousness organized by the Indian Council of Philosophical Research in Pondicherry, India. She has also written and published papers in philosophy, psychology, education, and yoga.

For nearly three decades, she has been engaged actively in the experiment of Auroville, with direct responsibility at the Centre for Research in Indian Culture and the Centre of Indian Studies of Bharat Nivas. She is a former member of the governing board of Auroville.

Her personal quest has always been for a lived experience of wholeness, from the inmost core of consciousness to the densities of matter. The activities of life have provided her with a rich field of learning.
LIONEL OBADIA

Lionel Obadia, Ph-D is professor in anthropology at the University of Lyon, France, now heads the department of Humanities and Social Sciences of the French Agency for Research (ANR). He is specialized in religious studies, anthropology and sociology of religion. After a Ph-D on Buddhism in France and in the West, he has studied Buddhism, shamanism and witchcraft in Asia, mainly Nepal. He has recently conducted research on Jewish Messianic movement in Europe, US and Israel, and football (soccer) in a religious perspective in France. He has also examined epistemological and methodological issues in religious studies. He is the author of ten books (Marchandisation de Dieu, 2013, Anthropologie des religions, 2007, translated in Greek and Portuguese, reedited 2012, Religion, 2004, translated in Korean, Sorcellerie, 2004, Le bouddhisme en Occident, 2007, translated in Italian, and others in English like The Economics of Religion with Donald Wood, Emerald, 2011) and more than two hundred chapters and articles in French, English, Spanish, Chinese and German. He had the chair “(Re)thinking religious in the plural : towards a new anthropological history of the forms and dynamics of religion’ at the Institute for Advanced Studies of Strasbourg (2014-2016). I have been doing fieldwork in Auroville to study the founders’ ideals and the adaptation of these ideals to the changing local (Indian) and global (worldwide) environments since 2015, with a focus on the concepts of “utopia” and “spirituality.”

ABHA TEWARI

Abha Tewari came to Auroville in 1978, after graduating in Psychology from Delhi University. In the early 1980s, she co-founded Shradhanjali, a handicraft unit making products with natural materials like flowers, paper, wood or seeds, employing mostly women. She taught yoga in Pitanga for 15 years. She is also an executive of Auroville Village Action Group, working with womens’ self help groups in the Auroville bio region.

B SULLIVAN

B (William Sullivan) came to Auroville in 1974 from the USA where he was a teacher in a California college in the departments of theology, philosophy, and cinema. Over the years he has done many different things including construction, administration, publication, and teaching. He is one of the founders of the Verite Community and the Centre for Scientific Research. He wrote the book The Dawning of Auroville, and made the film Auroville Belongs to Humanity. B lives with his partner Nandini in the Trash Mahal at International House in the International Zone.
Kavitha Urvasie Selvaraj is a third generation Aurovillian, Indian/Dutch by nationality. She studied at an International School in India, receiving her International Baccalaureate, and then studied Sustainable Development in the Netherlands. Kavitha has focused her thesis on Intentional Communities through the Auroville lens, and has since been working towards connecting Auroville to the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) and likeminded people and projects abroad. Kavitha has helped found a service for young adults in Auroville in early 2015, called YouthLink. YouthLink has been set up as a platform for young adults to initiate and incite projects together. It is also a space for young people to design their own curriculum for community building courses. She continues to be interested in developing her skills as a facilitator and is eager to explore holistic curriculum design for the Auroville community - currently Kavitha is engaging youth in the design process of more short and long term courses such as Comm4Unity, through the YouthLink platform. She believes that there is potential for each intentional community to offer unique learning opportunities to the world and that these conscious spaces are where the needed solutions will be born.

Israel Gev has a Ph.D. in Geology and Hydrology, from Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Israel. He is the head of water resources planning, Water Authority of Israel. An expert in management and development of water sources, Israel directs long-term plans for the management and the development of water sources in Israel. Since 1993, Israel is a friend of Auroville, and has been involved in its water issues. During his first visit to Auroville in 1993 he conducted a joint research between The Institutes for Desert Research of Ben Gurion University and the Forestry Unit in Auroville. The study dealt with the impact of afforestation on the water balance. Later, over the years, Israel has continued to come for social visits, and has been involved in meetings and advising for the preparation of a master plan for water management in Auroville.

Manish Jain is deeply committed to regenerating our diverse knowledge systems and cultural imaginations. He is one of the strong voices on deschooling our lives. He has served for the past 19 years as Coordinator and Co-Founder of Shikshantar: The Peoples’ Institute for Rethinking Education and Development

KAVITHA URVASIE SELVARAJ

ISRAEL GEV

LARA MONTICELLI

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Dr Lara Monticelli is currently an independent research fellow, awarded by the FBML Foundation (Italy), working on her project titled ‘Laboratories of Change’ in collaboration with researchers at the Dutch Research Institute for Transitions (DRIFT), Erasmus University (Rotterdam). The project focuses on the (re)emergence of community-based social movements (e.g. sustainable communities, eco-villages, transition towns) as living laboratories experimenting with practices of resilience and resistance to environmental, economic and societal challenges. She is especially interested in how these movements re-politicize and re-configure everyday life, thus representing radical attempts to embody the critique to contemporary capitalism and prefigure alternative futures.

Most recently, Lara gave a semi-plenary at the European Sociological Association (ESA) held in 2017 in Athens, titled ‘Embodying the Critique to Capitalism in Gloomy Times. Theoretical Perspectives and Potential Research Horizons on Emerging Real Utopias’. In the past years, she has co-chaired two mini-conferences within the Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics (Berkeley 2016, Lyon 2017), creating a vibrant forum for the discussion of this emerging research agenda. She is the co-founder of the new research network ‘Alternatives to Capitalism’ within the Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics (SASE) that will run for five years from 2018 to 2022 (https://sase.org/about/networks/).

Prior to this, she worked as a post-doctoral research fellow at the Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences at Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa (Italy). Her other research has been centered on the study of political engagement among young precarious workers, combining perspectives from the sociology of work, social movement and political participation studies.

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based in Udaipur, India and is co-founder of the Swaraj University, Creativity Adda, Learning Societies Unconference, Walkouts-Walkon network, Udaipur as a Learning City, Families Learning Together network in India. He recently helped to launch the global Ecovillages Network and the global Giftival Network. He is a featured speaker/advisory member of the Economics of Happiness network for localization. He has edited several books on Vimukt Shiksha (liberating learning) on themes such as learning societies, unlearning, gift culture, community media, and tools for deep dialogue. Prior to this, Manish worked as one of the principal team members of the UNESCO Learning Without Frontiers global initiative. He has also been a consultant to UNICEF, World Bank, USAID in Africa, South Asia and former Soviet Union. Manish also worked as an investment banker with Morgan Stanley. He has been trying to unlearn his Master’s degree in Education from Harvard University and a B.A. in Economics, International Development and Political Philosophy from Brown University. He and his wife Vidhi have been unschooling themselves with their 15 year old daughter, Kanku, in Udaipur, Rajasthan. Manish is passionate about urban organic farming, filmmaking, simulation gaming, bicycling, group facilitation, clowning, intercultural dialogue and slow food cooking.

Sarath Davala is a sociologist with a doctorate from Delhi University. He was an Associate Professor at the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore for seven years, and then found his calling in the rural India. For the past 20 years, he has worked with various rural organizations as a researcher and a organisation development consultant. Sarath was the Research Director of the Basic Income Pilot Project that was initiated by SEWA and UNICEF during 2010-14. He is the co-author of “Basic Income: A Transformative Policy for India”, published by Bloomsbury, London in 2015. Earlier, he had written several books and articles on labour in India. In 2015, along with a group researchers, he founded the India Network for Basic Income (INBI) and is currently devoting much of his time to build INBI, which has recently been selected to be featured under the category “Best Practices in Governance” on the New Vision of Development web platform of the World Economic Forum.

I have always admired the Auroville community, and have had the opportunity, in the past, to visit the community a couple of times. I am happy to hear about the critical reflection that is taking place within Auroville community on the larger questions of work, freedom, basic needs and their relationship.

For me who is researching and advocating the idea of unconditional basic income to all citizens, Auroville stands as a symbolic community that is idealistic and at the same time pragmatic in its world view. There are major intersections in Auroville’s worldview and that of what our network believes in – a vision of a more evolved man, and a more evolved human society.

A society that provides an unconditional basic income to all its citizens is a better society because it does not allow anyone to start from zero, resembling God’s grace that provides us with water, air and land – unconditionally. As (hu) man evolves, would (s)he not increasingly resemble the Divine?

I look forward to participating and profiting from The Bridge event because I strongly believe in the next evolutionary stage of human being where we raise the floor of humanity and ensure everyone has a minimum (in terms of material conditions) and can lead a ‘post-wage’ and ‘post-material’ life. If we do not do this we have failed as a civilization, and our current role in the evolution. I wish to engage with the participants, and participate in conversations on this topic.

Suhasini Ayer - Guigan, is a graduate of “Delhi School of Planning and Architecture”; co-founder of the “Auroville Centre for Scientific Research”; an organisation dedicated to applied research in the field of solar passive architecture, sustainable urban development and building technologies, water and waste management and renewable energy.

The head the “Auroville Design Consultants”, a small niche practice with a team of half a dozen young architects undertaking challenging projects where the design process is an essential part of the product. A frugal minimalism expressed in simple and elegant forms, appropriate to the context – geography, culture, function, climate, building materials and technology is expressed in all our buildings. For, we believe that aesthetics in the built and natural environment is a given for a sustainable future.

Awards: Nominated for the Aga Khan award (1992); Hassan Fathy architecture for the poor award from Egypt (1992); Design Share Award USA for Educational buildings (2001); Design Share Award USA for Educational buildings (2006); Nominated for the ArcVision Prize, Italcementi, Italy (2015); Terra jury award for earth architecture, France (2016).
Jennie C. Stephens is the Dean’s Professor of Sustainability Science & Policy at Northeastern University’s School of Public Policy & Urban Affairs and the Associate Director of Strategic Research Collaborations at Northeastern’s Global Resilience Institute. Her research, teaching, and community engagement focus on social and political aspects of the renewable energy transition, energy democracy, reducing fossil fuel reliance, gender diversity, and strengthening societal resilience by integrating social justice with climate and energy policy.

Lara Davis, architect and masonry specialist, is co-director of the Auroville Earth Institute, academic representative for the UNESCO Chair of Earthen Architecture and member of CRAterre (the International Centre for Earthen Construction). She has 17 years of experience in masonry research, design and construction, and specializes in earthen construction and the structural design/ construction of thin-shell masonry vaulting. Having begun as a mason and foreman in landscape masonry construction in the US, she has a wide range of experience in the field linking the cultures of design, engineering, materials research and building craftsmanship. She holds a BFA from the New York State College of Ceramics (NYSCC), School of Art & Design and an M.Arch from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Lara has received multiple awards for her research at the MIT Masonry Research Group, the Institute for Lightweight Structures and Conceptual Design (ILEK/ University of Stuttgart), the BLOCK Research Group (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology/ ETH Zürich) and the Future Cities Laboratory, Singapore. Her professional projects include notable work for the Auroville Earth Institute and Ochsendorf, DeJong & Block structural engineering consultants, as well as field consultancy and training on four continents. Her work has been shown at the Modern Museum of Art, MIT Museum, Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum and Venice Biennale. She is now dedicated to the design and construction of the AVEI School of Earthen Architecture.

Bindu Mohanty, Ph.d, AIEMA, is a writer, educator and sustainability consultant based in Auroville. As a consultant, she has worked in the fields of rural development, environmental and social assessment, and waste management. As an educator, she has served as senior faculty for an international study-abroad program, and taught workshops and courses in India, USA and Europe. Her writings have been published in academic and other forums. She is passionate about social transformation and the evolution of consciousness on earth and is at her happiest when she is out in nature.

I am particularly interested in energy use, the grid system, and the potential for renewable energy. I am also interested in how Auroville is striving toward climate resilience. Thanks!
Ok Jeong Lee, born in Korea, has worked as a fashion designer, specializing in textile and colour (1983-2008, Korea) with various companies and clients. She settled in Auroville in 2008, and started what has become her life project: Upcycling.

She ran the Ok Upcycling Collection, consisting mainly of bags from discarded cassette and video tapes. Her first exhibition of this work was shown in Pitanga, Auroville, in 2012.

Currently she is creating Upcycling Art from a variety of waste products. Some pieces have been shown at the Auroville Film Festival (2013, 2015, 2018), the Auroville Singing Festival (2014, 2015) and Cripa hall. In June 2015, she opened Upcycling Studio in Auroville with Marc.

Prof. Dr. Mark Lawrence is managing scientific director at the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS) in Potsdam, focusing on a range of sustainable development topics at the science-policy and science-society interface, including mitigating the impacts of short-lived, climate-forcing pollutants (SLCPs), and on the potential impacts, uncertainties and risks of “climate engineering”.

Prof. Dr. Lawrence received his Ph.D. in 1996 from the Georgia Institute of Technology. From 2000 until 2011 he was a research group leader at the Max Planck Institute for Chemistry in Mainz. He served as interim professor for meteorology at the University of Mainz during 2009-2010, and moved to the IASS in 2011. In 2014 he was appointed Honorary Professor at the University of Potsdam.

Prof. Dr. Lawrence is author or co-author of over 100 peer-reviewed publications. He has led various international projects, has served as editor for two journals (Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics; Atmospheric Environment), and is on several international committees, including being co-chair of the International Global Atmospheric Chemistry program (IGAC).

Ramasubramanian, is the co-founder Director of Sustainable Livelihood Institute (SLI) a joint venture between the Government of Tamilnadu and Auroville Foundation. He has been involved with grass root initiatives on governance, sustainable agriculture and rural economy across Tamilnadu and other parts of the India. He has been engaged with the government and civil society initiatives and also created and launched several of his own social action. He has been involved with several auroville initiatives and institutions for almost 2 decades and also with the Planning Commission, Rural Development Department and other agencies at the State and National level.

Ravi Agarwal has an inter-disciplinary practice as an artist, environmental activist, writer and curator. He explores contemporary questions around ecology, society, urban space and capital. His work has been shown widely including at the Kochi Biennial (2016), Documenta XI (2002), the Sharjah Biennial (2013) and in several museum and private collections. Ravi is also the founder of the environmental NGO Toxics Link.

Why I accepted to be part of the Bridge: I feel that the spirit and ethos underlying Auroville can speak to the material world more than ever before. Besides, being an environmentalist, I know that sustainability issues are key questions of our times and ancient wisdom and cultures need to be revisited. Creating productive dialogues to enable new perceptions of our complex world, is the challenge we must undertake, but first we need to shed our fixed views. I believe that it is such new co-junctions that will create societies of co-existence of the future.
Sanjay Prakash, B. Arch., A.I.I.A., is an architect with a commitment to energy-conscious architecture, eco-friendly design, people’s participation in planning, music and production design. Over the years, he has integrated all his work with the practice of new urbanism and sustainability in his professional and personal life. He is Principal Consultant of his design firm, SHiFt: Studio for Habitat Futures, and was a partner of DAAT and Studio Plus, firms that predate his current firm. He is a co-founder of the Future Institute, a not-for-profit, multi-disciplinary applied-research platform seeking to undertake and enable initiatives towards informing how India shapes its urban future. His name and work is mentioned in the twentieth edition of one of the main reference works in architectural history, A History of Architecture by Sir Bannister Fletcher.

Ribhu was born and raised in Auroville, South India, with his sister and WasteLess co-founder Chandrah Nusselein. After high school, he studied and worked in the Netherlands for 10 years. During this time, he received an undergraduate degree in hospitality management and then went on to work for human resources at Shell International. The experience for working for Shell was a challenging one and Ribhu wanted to find meaning and purpose in life and work. In 2008, he decided to leave his corporate job and spent a year travelling around the world with his wife. His travels ended in Auroville, where Ribhu found his heart in garbage! He committed himself to waste-related issues, beginning with a creative anti-litter campaign targeting children. He then spent over three years working on grass-roots waste management projects with residents and local government, researching innovative and sustainable methods to increase resource recovery from Indian waste. Simultaneously, with a small team he developed Garbology 101, a creative activity-based educational programme on waste.

Ribhu does not accept the direction the world is going. He is a dreamer but deeply rooted in action. Fascinated with participatory action research and the power of educational experiences to drive positive behavioural changes, Ribhu loves this work.

A conscientious Development Practitioner and a firm believer of Experiential Learning & transformational leadership with 15 years of experience in the development sector with proven excellence as a certified regional level trainer; comprehensive knowledge in programme management; long experience working with tribes in India; efficient in community development and mobilisation; expertise in natural resource management, sustainable agriculture, policy research, advocacy and training.

She learned a great deal while working with the tribes in the Himalayas and Jharkhand. She is passionate about travelling and believe that nature and people are the greatest teachers. She believes in Peoples power and collective living and co creation. She is the founder of Anveshan - Experiential Learning & Unlearning Centre based in Auroville with an objective to design sustainable experiential learning & transformational courses for self-development and leadership development among the children, youth and adult of the world based on inner wisdom.

I am the founding Course Director of the Bachelor of Creative Intelligence and Innovation, at the University of Technology Sydney, a transdisciplinary, future-facing degree that combines with 25 different disciplines – one that explores creative thinking, problem-solving and complexity across all disciplines. I was lucky enough to earn my first two degrees in Social Anthropology from Cambridge University and was one of the first students to complete a Doctorate in Creative Writing from the University of Sydney. My career has straddled many creative domains. I worked through three decades in the creative industries across a wide range of fields and across a broad range of media. I am also a novelist and
An entrepreneur turned educator, Gitanjali’s passion is to create an environment of integral learning, which empowers students and facilitators to become the best versions of themselves. A multi-talented person in management, business, education, culture, performing and martial arts herself, she believes that human beings can continue to grow into multi-faceted individuals all their lives and the aim of education is to instill this quest of lifelong learning in them!

After her Post graduation in Business Management from the prestigious Xavier Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar (XIMB), she worked for 8 years in the corporate sector with various MNCs in India and abroad. Thereafter, she has been a successful entrepreneur for the last 14 years having started and scaled up ventures in various industries like energy, infrastructure, publishing and healthcare. Currently, as the founding member and Head of Academics & Development, she is helping the creation of Himalayan Institute of Alternatives, Ladakh (HiIAL), an ambitious project aiming to bring a revolution in higher education in India.

I was really interested in coming to The Bridge because I could sense that this would be a conference like no other. Apart from having a love affair with Auroville (I was sent here first in 1989 by my grandmother who was a follower of Sri Aurobindo) I’d like to connect with a worldwide community of researchers interested in making positive change, transforming education and perhaps even working with consciousness as a foundational principle for human endeavour. (My doctorate was on creativity and consciousness.) I am especially interested in the timing of The Bridge. I feel that Auroville has so much to offer the world – so much to teach us all from such a successful half-century experiment – and its 50th anniversary is an opportune time to reach out to engage and share its discoveries. In 2017 I brought a group of 21 students from my university on a global studio to learn about innovation in Auroville – the experience was transformational for them. Reflecting on the experiences of my students and myself, I continue to see the possibillionism of a flourishing global academic community to emerge from encounters such as The Bridge.

Larry Seidlitz, Ph.D. (lseidlitz@gmail.com), is a psychologist and scholar from the USA focusing on the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. He is presently associated with the Indian Psychology Institute (IPI), Pondicherry, and with the Sri Aurobindo Centre for Advanced Research (SACAR), Pondicherry, where he facilitates online courses on Sri Aurobindo’s teachings. He is also the editor of Collaboration, a USA-based journal on the Integral Yoga. He has authored two books on the Integral Yoga, Transforming Lives: An introduction to Sri Aurobindo’s Integral Yoga, and Integral Yoga at Work: A study of practitioner’s experiences working in four professional fields. His primary aim in participating in the Bridge programme ‘Auroville becoming 50’ is to exchange views about the research for his second book and the future possibilities for related research.

Jean-Yves Lung is a teacher-researcher living in Auroville. Part of the Last School team, he is a member of the Sri Aurobindo International Institute of Educational Research. With a background at the Sciences Po of Bordeaux, Jean-Yves is also active in the communal economic administration of Auroville. A writer and speaker, he is a regular contributor to “La Revue de l’Inde” and participant in research forums dedicated to the development of humanity, such as the 4th International forum of de Evolution of Consciousness, dedicated to utopias, and “Humanity in Transition,” in which Jean-Yves raises the question of what is the true development that we seek?
LUCAS DENGEL

Lucas Dengel was born and raised in Germany, and first visited India in 1973. A general physician, he practiced clinical medicine at the Auroville Health Centre from 1988 - when he finally settled in Auroville after several long visits - till 1998, and subsequently engaged in public hygiene and environmental health, organic farming, practices with Effective Microorganisms, and decentralized wastewater treatment systems. Lucas founded and co-managed the Auroville unit AuroAnnam and its farm from 2000 to 2007, then founded EcoPro in 2007, of which he remains the executive. EcoPro provides technical guidance in the use of Effective Microorganisms in all its application fields (agriculture, animal husbandry, hygiene management, bioremediation of polluted soils and eutrophic water bodies etc.) and conducts programs of water resource management, municipal waste management, ecological sanitation, sewage treatment, and organic and Biodynamic farming.

Much of Lucas’ work involves education, engaging with school and college students within and outside of Auroville, farmers, industrialists, municipal and governmental officers, non-governmental project partners and citizens in general. He has organized international conferences on Biodynamic agriculture (in 2012 and 2014), on eco-sanitation (2006), on planning for regenerative urban development (2013), and on the integration of sanitation waste into agricultural practices (2016). He is board member of the Sri Aurobindo International Institute of Education and Research (SAIiER).

SANJEEV RANGANATHAN

Dr. Sanjeev Ranganathan received his PhD from Columbia University in Electronics. He is the recipient of the Lewis Winner award for best paper at I55CC. He also volunteered for Asha for Education in various capacities and interacted with over a 100 NGOs in India working on education. He has worked at Silicon Labs, NXP, ST-Ericsson, Aura Semiconductor and has built chips used by over a billion people. Sanjeev is passionate about developing critical thinking skills with children and in helping them learn and connect with themselves.

Since June 2013 he has been working with children in Udavi School and Isai Ambalam School, both outreach schools of Auroville. In Jan 2015 he founded Aura Auro Design along with engineering graduates in and around Auroville and in Sep 2015 with them established STEM Land (Science Technology Engineering Mathematics Land) a space of learning for children and adults. He also conducts electronics classes to anyone interested.

Sanjeev maintains a person blog and of his experiences with working with children at smallisbeautiful.blogspot.com.

SONAM WANGCHUCK

Sonam Wangchuk was born in the trans-Himalayan region of Ladakh in J&K, India. Though a Mechanical Engineer by education, he has been mostly working in the field of education reform for more than 27 years. In 1988, just after he finished his engineering studies he founded SECMOL (Students’ Educational and Cultural Movement of Ladakh) www.secmol.org, which aims to bring reforms in the government school system. In 1994 he was instrumental in the launch of Operation New Hope, a triangular collaboration of the government, village communities and the civil society to bring reforms in the government school systems. The programme involved formation of Village Education Committees to take ownership of state schools, training of teachers in child friendly ways and rewriting and publishing localised text books for Ladakh. As a result the pass percentage at 10th grade (matriculation) rose from the dismal 5% to 55% in seven years and 75% these days.

For students who still failed in their state exams he founded the SECMOL Alternative School Campus near Leh, a special school where the admission criteria is failure in exams and not grades. However with the supportive and creative environment at the school, the so called failures have excelled in their chosen fields and risen to international acclaim as entrepreneurs, film makers, politicians, teachers and so on.

As an engineer Sonam Wangchuk has been teaching innovation at the SECMOL Alternative School, where together with the students he designed and built solar heated buildings that are low cost, made of earth/mud but maintain +15 C even when the outside temperature is – 15 C in Ladakhi winters.

In order to solve the water crisis facing mountain regions due to climate change and fast melting glaciers he invented the Ice Stupa artificial glacier which stores the wasting stream waters in winter in the form of giant ice cones or stupas and releases the water in late spring as they melt... just when farmers need water.

Having immersed himself in the world of sound over the last three decades, in research, experimentation, project works, performances and installations, Aurelio considers himself a listening soul following mysterious song-lines into unknown territories. His energy flows into innovative instrument building, cultural and educational programs, social outreach, theater sound-scape, song offerings and ceremonial music. Deeply listening, Aurelio’s life-long search and journey for the secret of our existence led the Austrian born Sonic Archaeologist on a spiritual journey across the world, exploring the phenomena of sound from many perspectives.

Combining the gifts of a musician, artist, socio-cultural activist and visionary, Aurelio has an in-depth understanding of the underlying physics of sound and has become a noted pioneer in the development of innovative musical instruments. He created the holistic modality “A Sound Approach to Life”, which would later inspire SVARAM’s new instruments and lately ‘New Waves’, a unique series of specially tuned instruments of his own invention. Among the more notable projects Aurelio was involved in, are his frequent collaborations with “Adishakti Laboratory for Theatre Arts Research”, and the awarded children’s film “Yatra”. He also guided the establishment of “Mohanam Cultural Center”, an initiative to reconnect the Tamil youth living around Auroville to their cultural roots.

After coming to India to pursue his MFA at the MSU Baroda, Lazaro became captivated with the historic painting traditions of Rajasthan and began a life-long journey of preserving them. He mastered miniature painting techniques by studying for twelve years under Jaipur Master Banu Ved Pal Sharma, one of the few living experts on this ancient tradition. Lazaro also submitted a PhD thesis on the Pichvai painting tradition at the Prince’s School of Traditional Arts in London. His honor of tradition does not stop at the painting technique but also extends to the pigments, papers and cloth that he uses in his creative process.

Goutam Das was born in 1963. He studied B.F.A from Kala Bhavana, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan in 1998. He is a recipient of National Scholarship from the Ministry of Human Resource and Development, India, the Lalit Kala Research Grant, the artist’s global history, it is fitting that the most ambitious work in Lazaro’s oeuvre is at the new Mumbai airport, an 80 x 50 foot artwork representing the gods and goddesses of South India using traditional woodcarving and re-imaging of the Tagore painting tradition. Airports are part of “the way home”, and Lazaro has been increasingly interested in house and home as part of a wider concern with identity and belonging. The artist elaborates that “sometimes I don’t know how to get home, so I constantly define and redefine it within myself. It’s the typical East-West dichotomy that has informed and continues to inform my work – often summed up with a simple object like a garden shed, a shack.” The artist lives and works in Pondicherry.
Charles Wallace Trust Scholarship to visit and work at the College of Art, Herriot, Watt University, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK, the Academy of Fine Arts Award and an International Award from the South Korea. He is a professor in Ceramics, Department of Design and currently the principal of Kala Bhavana, Santiniketan. Some of his important participations are: - A solo show at Birla Academy of Art & Culture, Kolkata, solo shows organized by the British Council in Kolkata, New Delhi and Chennai, a travelled exhibition organized by the Craft Council of West Bengal - One of the terracotta murals installed at the British Council Office designed by Charles Coriya, New Delhi

- Participated in the Asian Ceramic Network workshop and seminar in South Korea and Malaysia; International Triennial exhibition and workshop, New Delhi; Cultural Exchange workshop between Visva-bharati & Shilpakorn University held in the Shilpakorn University, Thailand and many other exhibitions and workshops in Beijing & Shanghai in China; Sri Lanka; Thailand; Penang, Malaysia; Jeju, South Korea; Rajamangala University, Bangkok etc. - A founder member and assistant secretary of Santiniketan Society of Visual Art and Design (SSVAD), Santiniketan

Coming from the University of Literature of Lyon, I have turned myself very quickly towards professional theatre and worked as an assistant besides great masters like Roger Planchon, Patrice Chéreau, Bob Wilson, George Lavandant, Jean Pierre Vincent...

Later on, I was at the head of great national theatres like the National Theatre of Strasbourg and National Theatre of Grenoble or the National Theatre of Brest of whom I’m the founder. At the same time I collaborated with the newspaper “Libération” and presided the Union of Artistic and Cultural Enterprises of France (the Syndeeac). I was also entrusted with a mission at the Ministry of Culture.

From 1980 onwards I became passionated of dance and have very much worked to introduce this art, especially at the birth of the great movement of contemporary dance in France in the theatres under my responsibility. Between Merce Cunningham and Pina Bausch with whom I have collaborated, I have invested myself in the emergence of the new artists of the body.

The question of the presence of the living body in the living arts and in the multiple representations became central.

Faced towards the development of the virtual culture (the desert of the real), we are attending an intensification of the physical presence in all the art forms, for example the appearance of numerous performances.

Today, my course continues in the african countries with dancers and in festivities as an artistic counsellor. And also in what is born in the society from the “diversity” in France like the hip hop, house dance, the rap, the krump, the voging...who participates in the same emerging movements from New York to Los Angeles, to the “Paris Suburbs” and Africa.

I have invested my life in culture and art, not feeling myself as an individualist or collectivist but at the meeting place and the fertilization of this two parameters, between the horizontality of the collective and the verticality of the individual, what we could indicate as the intersection point between culture and art.

We are again in a period where the concept of art and culture are again strongly questioned in Europe for example. And also we have to note important differences in one civilization to another, were the notion of artwork and creation as well as reproduction are very different. “the culture is the rule, art is the exception says Jean Luc Godard”

At the age of two in 1972 my parents brought the whole family to Pondicherry for our education at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram School. After having graduated from the SAiCE I went on to do my Bachelor of Fine Arts from Santiniketan, Master of Fine Arts from MSU, Baroda, had a 3 months stint in Paris specializing in painting. In 2000 I chose to return to Pondicherry where I live and free-lance as an artist, teach art, curate shows and events and run Tasmai, a Centre for Art and Culture which is a platform for supporting art understood in the broadest sense.

I am happy to be part of the Bridge Project for Auroville’s 50th Anniversary through Art. I feel Art is that universal language which cuts across geographical and language barriers and has the power to unite the people in a very simple and harmonious manner. The energy in Pondicherry and Auroville is conducive for nurturing creativity, since it allows time and space to introspect. Also there is a cross current of diverse cultures here which makes it a melting pot for interaction, learning and experiencing. As an artist I feel we need to have a broader collective vision. Get rid of our petty ego and concentrate more on the work we do, than on who does it. I hope the Bridge Project will open doors to people, helping to dissolve their personal identity into a collective aspiration as was done of yore while building the sacred Indian temples and majestic palaces. I look forward to this collective conscious aspiration.
Priya Sundaravalli has a background in allopathic medicine (India), biomedical engineering and industrial engineering (USA). She discovered ceramics as an engineering student at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, USA. She traces her ceramic roots to the Pueblo tradition of pottery, with her immediate guru being Felipe Ortega of New Mexico, USA, a master potter in traditional micaceous cookware, and of Jicarilla Apache descent.

Priya has had several solo shows, in India as well as in South Korea. Her work has become part of a few public art installations both within and outside Auroville, including the Gimhae Airport in Busan, South Korea. Her largest installation, a 36 square meter sea-bed like landscape, composed of over 350 ceramic elements, is on permanent display at the GVK New Museum at T2, Mumbai’s new airport.

Living in Auroville since 2002, she is a full-time ceramic artist practicing at her studio cum Auroville business unit, Pottery Sipapu. Her work is inspired by the poetry and visual beauty of Nature and untamed wilderness. She seeks to express the vibrations of life in matter, as well as discover the harmony of opposites. She exclusively hand-builds and high fires her work in a wood-fuelled kiln to 1250 deg. C.

Two grey/green eyes, one nose quite big, one mouth, few original teeth, but only two ears, 1m79cm height, no special peculiarities visible except two big mustache recently added. After I finish the Art School in Italy I start to travel in Asia, I never stop to paint but I'm not a painter, to make pictures but I'm not a photographer, to sing and play different instruments but I'm not a musician. Sometimes I do installations.

Born in 1949, Marco Feira joined Auroville in 1995. Marco, along with his wife Liliana, started the unit Miniature and is one of the executives and one of the trustees of Team Trust. An artist and a businessman with a passion for aesthetic, design, music and cinema, Marco is now one of the executives of MMC/CP (Cinema Paradiso), a City Service, one of the executives of AVArtService, registered under the Auroville Service Trust, and on the editorial team of MAGzAV, an art and culture magazine. Marco enjoys painting, singing in the choir and watching films and, in 2009, formed the team which runs the Auroville Film Festival and teaches filmmaking in the schools in Auroville and the bioregion. He’s a teacher of Tai Chi Chuan in Auroville for more than 15 years. Marco's previous experiences with working groups was in the Auroville Council and in the Working Committee.

Supriya has curated the “Deccan teapot show” in Auroville and “Ceramic Connect” - an Indo-Korean ceramic show in Chennai. In 2016, she curated “Creta Yuga” - with 15 Indian ceramists for ARGILLA ’16, a ceramics biennale in Faenza, Italy. She has exhibited her own work India and abroad; ‘Seedpods’ is part of the permanent collection at the Clayarch Gimhae Museum in South Korea. ‘Red Days-3’ is in the collection of MIC Museo Internazionale delle Ceramiche in Faenza, Italy.

After learning ceramics with Ray Meeker and Deborah Smith at the Golden Bridge Pottery in Pondicherry, and later with the Charles Wallace Award, Supriya further explored ceramics with Sandy Brown in Devon, UK. She has participated in artist-in-residence programs in Europe, South Korea and in India. All these have added experiences and increased knowledge to her works.

At GBP Supriya learned to make ceramics with the form in mind, and with Sandy Brown it was ‘Letting Go’ - as in let the form happen using the intuitive mind. She uses both these extreme ways of working which gets her on an adventurous journey. Supriya loves to paint in colours, so this element is added to the ceramics. Losing her studio to the tsunami in 2004, she began to study Ikebana with Valeria Raso Matsumoto. It has been an incredible opening and of disciplining of the mind, while creating with nature and learning the harmony and the shapes. The three mediums of painting, ikebana and ceramics interflow in the artworks. She works in her studio in Auroville, Tamil Nadu.
USEFUL NUMBERS

THE BRIDGE ORGANIZERS:
Aditi 8489761566 | Aneeta 9445100465 | Ann 9443790661
Bhakti 9499019389 | Suryamayi 9489457158
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SHARNGA GUEST HOUSE
0413 2622 338 / 0413 2623 532

TAXI
AuroCabs: 0413 2623 200
Moksha Transport: 9626481620
Unity Transport Service (UTS): 0413 2623 587 / 9443362218

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE
SANTE Health Clinic (Auroville): 0413 2622 803 / 0413 2623 937
Auroville Health Center: 0413 2622 123
Auroville Dental Clinic: 0413 2622 008
PIMS Hospital: 0413 2656 271

EMERGENCY:
Auroville Safety & Security Team: 9443090107
Auroville Ambulance: 9442224680
PIMS hospital Ambulance: 0413 2656271
India Emergency Response Service (24/7): 108