

Auroville Bamboo Centre News Letter

January to March 2017



Our Service

Established in February 2009, with the aim to incorporate the following four aspects:

- ❖ Vocational training opportunities for the unemployed youth around the villages of Auroville and transforming them into craftsmen who can produce world class Bamboo products
- ❖ A technical and sociological research component to bring together Indian traditional craft with contemporary world culture
- ❖ Production and marketing of Bamboo craft for income generation and building stronger communities for sustainable living
- ❖ Unending research and development of Bamboo for the welfare of local and international communities.



Auroville Bamboo Centre as a pioneer in the creative development of sustainable bamboo products, the Auroville Bamboo Centre (ABC) is committed to generate awareness of environmentally sustainable applications of bamboo through research and education. Employing people from local villages around Auroville, from Pondicherry Union Territory and Tamil Nadu State. The organisation strives to support and revitalise the community in which it is located while serving both domestic and global markets that demand high-quality, eco-friendly bamboo merchandise. Through these initiatives the ABC aims to advance the vitality of the planet and it's people.

At the Auroville Bamboo Centre (ABC) we make training accessible to everyone. We invite individuals to participate in a wide variety of workshops, covering bamboo construction and bamboo product development. Architects, designers, students and entrepreneurs attend. They may be interested in new product opportunities, technologies, or designs that use bamboo, or they may simply be curious about bamboo and want to learn about this unique material. All are welcome to take part! We also train local women and have a special program that introduces children to bamboo and its uses. And you may be pleased to know that we can tailor-make courses for groups, even large ones.

Upcoming Workshop Dates

May

- 4 to 6** – Bamboo Construction Experience (Joineries techniques)
- 8 to 12** – Earth & Bamboo
- 17 to 20** – Bamboo Furniture Experience
- 24 to 27** – Bamboo Construction Experience (Split bamboo techniques)

June

- 06 to 10** – Bamboo Construction Experience (Full Bamboo Culm techniques)
- 15 to 17** – Bamboo Construction Experience (Split Bamboo techniques)
- 21 to 24** - Bamboo & Wood Furniture Experience

July

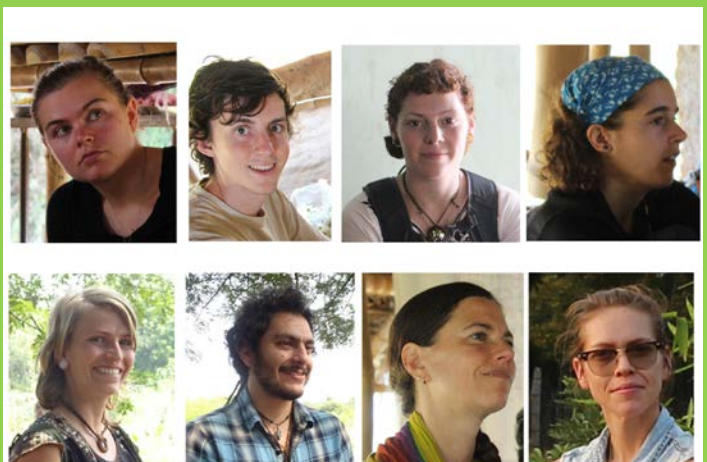
- 04 to 08** – Bamboo Construction Experience (Full Bamboo Culm techniques)
- 10 to 30** – Bamboo Summer Course

During January to March 2017 we hosted a number of groups workshop:

Optimistic Earth Spiritual Journey:

We organized a special one-month customized workshop from 6 January to 4 February for a group of eight people from the USA.

This workshop consisted of four different topics, namely: Bamboo Centre Bamboo Construction Workshop;



AVEI 'CSEB Intensive' Production and Masonry Workshop; Sacred Groves Community Planning and Recycled Materials Workshop, and Sadhana Forest Reforestation and Water Conservation Workshop.

To add to this workshop experience, we also offered different excursions for participants, for example: Kolli Hill visit; Tiruvannamalai visit; Bio region trip; Kolam workshop; Village Homestay, and participating in the Pongal festival.



Personal Experience from participant:

We had a wonderful time sharing Auroville's natural building and spirituality gems with people from around the world. The workshops with Bamboo Centre, Earth Institute, Mohanam, Sacred Groves, and Sadhana Forest were all really great. We learned so much and had incredible cultural experiences. A favorite moment for me was spending time with Menakshi as she shared her beautiful Tamil culture with us. It was a fantastic experience for everyone involved.

Bamboo Furniture Workshop:

On 23 to 26 January we offered a 4-day workshop for forty nine students from **LAD College**, Nagpur. The students developed and learnt various skills from around Auroville, for example bamboo furniture development and Pongy Experience.



Earth and Bamboo Workshop: On 11 March we offered a 5-day workshop together with the *Auroville Earth Institute (AVEI)* and *Auroville Green Practices (AGP)*. Twenty two students from various places in India and abroad participated and learned about bamboo construction and earth building development.



Auroville Bamboo Centre was happy to host BRICK College students from Pune on 16th of February. There were 30 students who came to attend two day orientation program with us.



We hosted a group of 60 students from Mumbai Schools visited on 21st of February.



A group of 70 students visited our centre on 3rd of March from CEFT university Ahmadabad.



Testimonials from volunteers and interns:

'For the past 7 weeks I've been staying at the Bamboo Land and supporting their experimental project of extracting from bamboo. The focus has been Bamboo Tea, with side projects of Bamboo Hydrosol spray and Bamboo Charcoal.

It has been a welcome retreat and I am grateful for this opportunity to learn from the experience of working with the local people. There is a strong Tamil force pushing the Bamboo Center forward, named Balu, with the support of locals from the nearby villages and both Indian and International volunteers.

Through my experiences here, I have been granted a deep journey inward. One full of challenges, much time spent with self, and plenty of time resting and sleeping. I am grateful to have had a subject matter to focus some of my energy on, I believe this provided a necessary balance or lever to allow for the depth of this journey.



There are many issues at the Bamboo Center, as may be common with establishments in Auroville. The ideals stretch far from the reality. That being said, I encourage anyone interested in having personal experience with some of the working people from the nearby villages, while learning about the many uses and purposes of bamboo, to visit and experience if you are drawn in to participate further.

Much energy has moved through me while staying here, and for the other 4 weeks around Auroville. It is a special place indeed.

Patrick Colvin

'I'm **Jade**, I'm from France and I've been working three months in Bamboo Center Auroville.

I just graduated in space design and I chose to come to Bamboo Center to have a first post-graduation experience. I found in this place everything I was looking for, I found a way to practice what I learnt at school in a peaceful and quiet environment. I had the opportunity to design, to share my ideas with the architects and the carpenters of bamboo center.

They gave me the opportunity to build what I created, for me it's amazing because at school you never get this kind of opportunity, everything is abstract. Even in the first experiences after school, in formal firm they never give you enough freedom to do things like that.

It was a complete bamboo experience because I stayed in one of the bamboo cottages of Bamboo Center, it was really nice, quiet and comfortable.



Humanly as well it was a very good experience, I had the opportunity get to know more about Tamil culture through the people who work in Bamboo Center and the diverse activities happening with Mohanam, for example I learnt how to make Kolams with ladies of the villages around, met a priest during Pongal festival for the celebration in the temple and many other things. I will keep very good memories about this experience, it gave me new inspiration about work and about life in general.'



'Hello, I am **Alex** from France and I am 23 years old. I have been studying Sustainable Building Engineering in France for two years and in Finland one year. I get there the basis about construction, the structural design with different materials as concrete, steel and wood.



Some Recent Activity photos

I also learnt to use different software as AutoCAD and PHPP. But I was not satisfied with this. To me it not sustainable enough!

I decided to learn with my own way about natural buildings in travelling the world. In 2015 I joined a wood construction company for two months. We built three wooden houses with only natural or recycled materials. Two years ago, I also discovered the beauty of Bamboo! I found a bamboo forest next to my place and I simply started to play with it to get to know the material.

I was also part of the construction of a festival and I joined the bamboo team. Together we built the main gate and after this experience it was clear in my mind, I want to learn more about bamboo.

But in Europe there is not so much about bamboo construction. I had to get inspired abroad. And the first destination is India. I did not know why but I knew I will love it. I arrived in Tamil Nadu, and while meeting people and new places, I arrived to Bamboo Center Auroville. Since two months I am working here with local people and other volunteers from different part of the world. It is a great experience and I am learning a lot.'

