

AVEI NEWSLETTER



Office of the Auroville Earth Institute (AVEI)

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Discover Green Casbah, our new housing project in the city center of Auroville with 50 apartments planned to host 110 residents.

Read about our partnership with the Aurovillage in Burkina Faso and the future earth constructions to be built there.

Keep in touch with our activities (training courses, seminars and outreach activities) and read the summary of the latest events.

Our team is growing! Meet our four new volunteers on page 5.

Check out our training dates and the job opportunity on the last page.

Do not hesitate to disseminate this newsletter to your network and spread the knowledge on earth architecture.

Earthily yours.

Construction Project Green Casbah

The Green Casbah project aims to build a high-density habitat for Aurovilians and Newcomers, taking into account the Auroville Master plan, the Galaxy concept and the existing dense vegetation.

Our primary objective was to preserve the maximum number of trees within a relatively dense urban environment.

The greener aspect of this habitat is also based upon using planters on parapet walls and creating some areas for green roofs on open terraces.

Common amenities are also planned with a common hall, a commercial space and a crèche.

Type of construction

Green Casbah aims to promote sustainable and green practices in architecture by employing Compressed Stabilized Earth Blocks in walls and roofing.

Rainwater harvesting and wastewater recycling are also part of the scheme to make the community self sufficient in its water needs. Ample covered and open terraces are an integral part of the design.

Phase of construction

A total of 50 residential units will be made available over a period of five years. The first phase of construction is slated to begin in March 2012 and will provide sixteen apartments by December 2013.

Green Casbah will comprise 50 apartments of different sizes:

2 BHK apartment : 103m² (9 units)
1 BHK apartment : 96 m² (12 units)
1 bedroom studio: 77 m² (14 units)
Studio: 55 m² (15 units)

Common spaces have also been planned with one 95 m² community hall with kitchen, one 80.6 m² crèche, one 24.2 m² commercial space and a 77m² office space.



Project in Burnika Faso

In February, representatives of the Aurovillage in Burkina Faso visited the Auroville Earth Institute with the aim to establish a partnership between AVEI and the Aurovillage.



Meeting at the Earth Institute

The Aurovillage in Burkina Faso is a project started in 2008 to create an international site of experimentation and exemplary achievements to embody an overall evolutionary approach.

All the activities undertaken by the Aurovillage are oriented concretely and creatively to peace, African and Human unity and inventing a new future. Along with the creation of a forest, the Aurovillage will see the construction of the Aurokemis Pyramid and the Mirafrika Institute, both designed by AVEI.

The Aurokemis Pyramid will be 18 meters high and dedicated to African and Human unity. There will be a permanent exhibition dedicated to the great African spokesmen: Kwane Nkumah, Nelson Mandela, Cheikh Anta Diop, Mamadou Dia, Amadou Ba Hampaté, Ki Zerbo and many others.

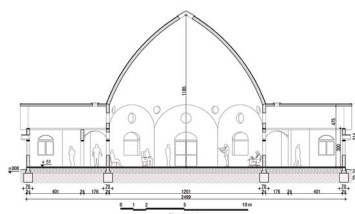
The pyramid will also be a tribute to Egypt (Khem) and the African sources of this cradle of civilization. Directly inspired by the architecture of the pyramid of Guizeh and combining sculptures of West African influences, the site will showcase the artistic and spiritual connection and continuity of African cultures. It will be a twelve column circle with the central hall being a place for silence. In the center, a stone urn will contain a handful of earth from many sacred places of the world.

Both these buildings will be made of earth and one of Aurovillage's long term goals is to become an important West African center of earth construction featuring various buildings and offering training courses and seminars.

The first step of this promising partnership between AVEI and the Aurovillage will be the acquisition of an Auram 3000 manual block making press and the training in Auroville of Mahamadi Compoaré, a young man passionate about architecture and building techniques.

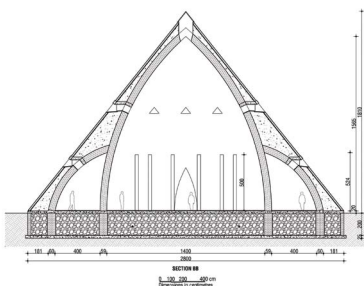


Learning about the blocks



The Mirafrika Institute

For more information, visit the Aurovillage website at <http://www.aurovillage.org/home-en.htm> and the Orange Bleue website (in French): <http://blog.lorangebleue.org/>.



The Aurokemis Pyramid

The Mirafrika Institute will comprise a library on African history and cultural traditions with resources on the S en e Movement on personal and social change. There will also be a seminar room, a shop of Aurovillage products, a Touareg tea room and Aurovillage home offices.

They are talking about us

Municipalika

In January, the Earth Institute participated in Municipalika Expo in Chennai through the Auroville Town Planning Body, l'Avenir d'Auroville.

Municipalika is an event incorporating different categories of product sectors related to urban development and municipal solutions. Companies and public administration can meet and discuss present and future best practices in wastewater treatment, transportation and environmental building technologies.

The Earth Institute presented several of its projects and earth blocks as examples of low cost alternative technologies for sustainable development.

<http://www.municipalika.com/municipalika/index.html>

Visit of Maharashtra's Government Delegation

On March 5th, a delegation from the Government of Maharashtra along with representatives of Pondicherry and Tamil Nadu Governments, visited the Earth Institute.

They visited our exhibition room and Satprem gave them a presentation of our Compressed Stabilized Earth Blocks (CSEB) technology. They were very enthusiastic and would like to explore a possible partnership with us.

Conference in Florence "Domes of the world"

From March 19 to 23, Satprem, our director, is participating in an International Scientific Congress in Florence: "Domes in the World".

He is part of the Scientific Committee and will present a paper, "Building Optimised Domes without Formwork" detailing the stability method developed at AVEI to optimize arches, vaults and domes.

For more information, visit <http://www.domesintheworld.com/>

Thermal sensors

In January, a team led by Prof. Lakshmi Reddy and Dr. Andrew Yun installed thermal sensors monitoring temperature and

humidity in the apartment above the office.

These sensors will collect data for one year and will provide research data regarding the thermal behavior of earth buildings. This study is funded by the National Science Foundation (USA).

Training courses' summary

In February, AVEI organized 3 weeks of training course.

The two first weeks were dedicated to the production and use of Compressed Stabilized Earth Blocks (CSEB), AVEI's most popular earth construction technique.

The training course consisted of a practical approach for the production of blocks, from determining soil characteristics to quality control and hands-on exercises for masonry with CSEB and other stabilized earth techniques.

37 people attended the course: 1 Australian, 35 Indians and 1 French.

During the third week, trainees learned how to cast ferrocement channels and various ferrocement pieces and were shown examples and applications of ferrocement (doors, water tanks, slabs ...).

The course was attended by 14 people: 3 Canadians, 1 Dutch, 6 Indians, 2 French, 1 German and 1 Chinese from Hong Kong.

Meet our new volunteers !

Maud

Maud is a French 4th year student in urban engineering from the University of Technology of Compiègne. She heard about AVEI through friends who were with us for their internship last year and advised her to apply.

Maud wanted to go abroad to improve her English and to experience a new way of life. The uniqueness and philosophy of Auroville particularly attracted her.

Auroville, a city under construction, is very interesting for her as an urban specialist. However, Maud wanted to work in an architecture firm to be able to follow the work on an everyday basis.

She is eager to learn about earth construction and sustainable development, is interested in different building techniques and that projects in Auroville incorporate green architectural elements as early as the conception stage.

During her 6 months in the institute she will be in charge of a survey of the baffle reactor wastewater treatment systems used in Auroville in order to determine the most efficient system for our new construction project, Green Casbah.

Maud will also work on a dry composting toilet for a project in Spiti and research green materials such as paint, thermal insulation, solar energy ...

She is looking forward to travelling in India and is planning to visit Chandigarh.

Nikhil

Nikhil is a young architect who graduated from Mumbai JJ Architecture College. After working in Bangalore for 9 months, he wanted to travel and went to Himachal where he backpacked during 3 and half months.

When travelling in rural villages, he was asked by the local people to design houses for them that they could build when they have enough resources.

In Spiti he worked with an NGO on solar passive houses and in Comic, where there is no electricity, he volunteered in a project to implement parallel energy sources.

During his travels in Tamil Nadu he wanted to see Auroville where he met people from AVEI who offered him the opportunity to join and work on our project in Spiti. Nikhil wanted to learn about earth construction techniques and structural aspects of earthen architecture.

While at AVEI, Nikhil will work on the Spiti project and on the extension of the institute: a new

building with a laboratory and a dormitory.

Nikhil enjoys the cultural life in Auroville where many events are regularly organized and feels the city is very welcoming for volunteers and anyone wanting to contribute through work. However, he believes there is a lack of coordination

After Auroville, Nikhil wishes to go back to Himachal and learn more about the different earth construction techniques.

Prassun

Prassun studied strategic design management at the National Institute of Design in Ahmedabad.

After working on different projects in Ahmedabad, he felt he didn't have enough hands-on experience and decided to come to Auroville after learning about the job opportunity.

Prassun works on the Auram Press 6000 as a project manager. While Aureka is in charge of the technical aspects, Prassun manages the overall project, from research and development to launching the final product.

He has been interested in indigenous techniques such as earthen construction and believes indigenous architecture can provide design solutions. The work done at AVEI appeals to him and he feels he can make a valuable contribution.

Prassun had come to Auroville 4 years ago and thinks the place has a good atmosphere and offers an enjoyable surrounding in which to live, with endless learning possibilities, from farming to scientific processes. He hopes his stay here will clarify his direction in life.

Prassun traveled widely throughout India and South East Asia and enjoys trying out local food.

Ambalavanan. K (Amba)

Amba is a chartered professional in civil engineering with 21 years experience in India, Horn of Africa, East Africa, South Asia and the Caribbean islands.

He has been specializing in structural and civil infrastructure engineering in consulting, humanitarian and post conflict/natural disaster construction, management fields. Amba gained experience working with UN agencies and NGOs.

Amba worked with UNHCR in Eritrea to introduce ferrocement water reservoirs in war zones to replace the Oxfam tanks.

With UNICEF, he implemented household rainwater harvesting techniques in tsunami affected Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Amba worked in Uganda as a project manager to provide domestic water supply with communal water points and storage mechanisms for the

whole city of Iganga.

Amba decided to join AVEI because he admires the wonderful relationship Auroville maintains with nature and wishes to be inspired by different ideas from people from all over the world.

He seeks to meet with many entrepreneurs and stakeholders as well as benefit from mutual technology transfer and current practices.

Amba is working as a project manager on the SEDAB project.

Training Courses in 2012

April

2nd to 7th - CSEB Production
9th to 14th - CSEB Masonry
16th to 21st - Designing with CSEB

June

4th to 9th - Ferrocement
11th to 16th - AVD Theory
18th to 23rd - AVD Masonry

July

2nd to 7th - Designing with CSEB
9th to 14th - CSEB Intensive
16th to 21st - AVD Intensive
23rd to 28th - CSEB Intensive

September

3rd to 8th - CSEB Production
10th to 15th - CSEB Masonry
17th to 22nd - AVD Theory
24th to 29th - AVD Masonry

December

10th to 15th - AVD Theory
17th to 22nd - AVD Masonry

Extra training courses can be organized upon request. In addition to those listed above we also offer training in earthquake resistant construction.

For more details on the content of the training courses, please visit our website.

Job Opportunity

We are looking for an architect who will have responsibilities in costing, construction schedule, follow-up of site work, client relationship etc. We ask for a minimum commitment of 1 year.

Send CV (in .pdf) to jobs@earth-auroville.com with "Architect" as subject.

AVEI Newsletter

Issue 3 - March 2012
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