



Researched and developed in Auroville for the world

6-5-2022

Aurogames mid-report

Full project duration February to September 2022

Dear team at New Creation International,

We would like to thank you for your support to make game sessions and research happen for children in Auroville and from the bioregion, as well as the training of new Aurogames facilitators.

Please read our sharing about the work so far, about game sessions and facilitator training:

Game sessions

In our two regular sessions we have two different group locations. One in TLC, a Learning Community in Auroville, and one in Thamarai, an after school project for children of the bioregion.

In TLC the sessions are open to any child of Auroville that can commit for at least 3 months. Additionally a group of children, from an underprivileged background, coming from an orphanage in Killianur, joined. This gives an opportunity to Auroville's children and the children coming from the bioregion to build new interactions and relationships. The age ranges from 3 years to 17 years.

We introduced the games progressively, from the easiest level to the more complex one. In this way the level of concentration, attention and focus of each individual child was strengthened gradually.



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Most of the games require a high level of observation skills and focus attention. The atmosphere in the space was always very quiet, we could see that the span of attention was increasing during the weeks, we particularly saw this in a child with autism and with concentration difficulty. With this child one of the facilitators needed to have some individual classes before including him with the rest of the group. This child had enormous benefit from this activity. His level of concentration and self confidence has increased remarkably.

In Thamarai, we also focused first on a smaller group of regular students where we could give attention to their individual progress and understanding.

After two months with this regular students we again invited more children for the activity “Colour and Create your own pattern” which took place for four consecutive sessions.

We could have done another group of children for the same activity but as the school year is ending they could not commit to the same as they have to focus on the school's exams.

The feedback received from the teachers at Thamarai was that they noticed an improvement in the childrens’ concentration, engagement and independence.

They wish us to continue for the next school year (July). (Thamarai centre is closed most of the summer break). They also asked for Teacher Training.

We observed that these children are coming from a school environment that is result oriented. Giving them a space where they do not feel stress to do anything “correct” and fast, where they can take their time to find out, by themselves, the “solution” to the games, gives them a new perspective of their own capacities, it builds self-confidence and they can feel that learning and understanding is not associated to stress and “success and failure” polarities.

During the crafts mela that was held in February at TLC, AuroGames were presented to the wider public. There was the possibility to purchase the different games. A table was installed where activities were held for a whole day and approximately 20 to 30 children participated in the activity.

Apart from concentration and building observation skills, the games are also aimed to strengthen independence and to build a space of collaboration instead of competition.



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This has been done by respecting each child's different learning ability, respecting their own time and pace, without comparison.

The children learn how to cooperate as some games are cooperative games and this gives them an opportunity to nurture team spirit.

They also learn how to ask for help whenever they need it.

For some children it is quite simple to see patterns and reproduce them, for others it is a big challenge. For that reason the material is designed to work in a progressive way. Some children need a lot of time before they can reproduce a very simple pattern, and they need a lot of support in the process. The facilitator offers the right amount of help, enough to encourage them. We let them explore by trial and error to allow them to integrate the skills needed to accomplish the activity independently.

Facilitator training

After many years facilitating games sessions, this year shifted to train new facilitators. As we have seen the great benefits people experience working with Aurogames, having more facilitators would help spread the games to a greater number of people.

What was discovered:

- Facilitator training in Aurogames was similar to facilitating a game session- to be present to support learning and understanding, while allowing space for mistakes. Prior to holding a game session, one needs to have experienced the game through play in order to understand it themselves. Therefore, training provided an opportunity for the people to look, see and understand the patterns, and make mistakes. Then they took the games home to practice and begin sessions with children.
- Support through questions rather than giving solutions: Whether facilitator training or a game session, when faced with difficulties posing questions rather than providing answers if helpful. For example: is that way of doing it working? Are you being flexible? Can you do it differently? (when stuck in one way of placing a piece).



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3. Experiment in the facilitator training – Since game sessions do not have a set step by step order to follow, they flow following the needs/abilities of the child – training became more experiential. Practically this meant that in a facilitated game session using games neither trainee had been exposed to. One trainee was an active “player” while the other observed. Then they switched roles and another game was presented. This allowed the observer to silently imagine what she might do playing the game and see how the process was facilitated. Afterwards we talked about what happened, how they felt (e.g. when facing a difficulty) and to get creative together and see what other ways we could use the same materials. These discussions were lively and many new creative ideas unfolded to try with the children.
4. Playing and using Aurogames one is constantly learning. Aurogames are not static games with one way to solve them. The more one engages in play, the more possibilities of play emerge. Therefore, training is never complete. But once the fundamentals of a game and how to support someone are clear – training really becomes an open space to learn and be creative together. There is not teacher or trainer- just people open to learn, understand and create.

Second half of the project

As schools go on summer break now, the project will pause and restart in July-September.

We will send you a full report at the end of the project time.

With Gratitude,

Maya

for Aurogames



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