

## THE INTEGRAL PROJECT

A ten hour capsule workshop on THE INTEGRAL PROJECT was conducted as a part of the Annual Basic Course in Integral Education - Theory & Approaches in Pondicherry from 12th to 18th May 2014, for school teachers and school/education management professionals. This included both the theory and a practical trial followed by presentations. All participants were given handouts they could take back with them to refresh their memory, refer and organise their approaches in the school setting.

THE INTEGRAL PROJECT offers a holistic and integrated approach to learning and growth, diverse from compartmentalized, linear and stand alone subject approaches. At its core is self development and expansion. It goes beyond knowledge and gives a practical road map for transformational education that is practical, growth-oriented and learner centric. Centered around a topic chosen by the learner, it seeks to move into various branches of knowledge and develop related values and powers of the mind. The learning is multidimensional. The approach involves self-reflection, self-development, self-direction, research, planning, practical work, team work, problem-solving addressing the immediate surroundings and moving to the yet undiscovered dimensions of self and the world. The facilitator plays the role of the guide enabling and creating learning opportunities, and doesn't 'teach' as in traditional approaches.

The mini-workshop involved the following sessions delving on the main aspects of THE INTEGRAL PROJECT in a systematic and phased manner:

Introduction of the concept in the light of Integral Education - how it is deeper and wider than the more commonplace concept of project which involves any one practical activity (model, field trip, interview etc.). The following points were discussed and highlighted:

### **1st Session**

How to select a topic - Helping and guiding the children to explore their deeper areas of interest.

How to brain storm regarding content possibilities.

The importance of eliciting response rather than giving information upfront.

How to encourage research at various levels and from varied sources rather than a single text book.

The possibilities and challenges of an inter-disciplinary approach.



SELF DIRECTED GROUP-WORK - The group was divided into smaller groups in the first session and were asked to select a topic, brain-storming regarding the content possibilities and subject avenues.



## **2nd Session**

How to fine-tune, plan and execute the sessions. The practical dimensions of conducting such an exercise in a school situation were discussed. The important sub-points were:

How to divide the class in groups.

How long should a project be?

How many projects should be done in a year?

What can be given as 'home-work'?

How much time should a project take?

How can we fit it in the time-table?

Can we diffuse this with other stand alone subjects?

SELF DIRECTED GROUP-WORK - The groups discussed and planned out their project plan presentations for the next day

### 3rd Session

The final session involved a presentation by each group which was followed by a critique and group discussion. The topics/themes that the groups chose were - water, earth, toys, and bicycle. The groups shared interesting modules and planned to conduct these in their schools and share feedback.

