AUROVILLE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION FRAMEWORK

FINAL PRESENTATION
Introduction – Who are we?
Our final product is a Community Participation Framework that is to be used for planning projects.

This project involved:

- Comprehensive research on Auroville, its context and current situation,
- Research of international best practices,
- Consultation with Aurovilian individuals and groups.

The developed framework was tested on a Pilot Study based on a planning related issue.

The learning outcomes of the Pilot Study refined the framework and tailored it to Aurovilian context.
Presentation Outline

• What is Community Participation?

• Methodology:
  – Work Completed Prior to Coming to Auroville
  – Work Completed While in Auroville

• The Initial Framework

• Testing the Framework: The Pilot Study

• Next Steps

• The Final Product: A Community Participation Framework for Auroville
COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION
Community Participation is when an organisation consults interested individuals or groups before making a decision

- Useful when a project is contentious
- The community must be able to impact the decision
- Various participation techniques available
- Often targets specific groups
Why Community Participation?

**Strong Communities:**
Understanding opinions / resolving tensions

**Better Decisions:**
Local knowledge is important for decision-making

**Reduces Long-term Costs:**
Reduces conflicts and barriers

**Empowers People:**
Communities shaping outcomes
METHODOLOGY
Work Prior to Coming to Auroville

• Literature Review:
  – Aurovilian documents
  – Planning theory
  – International best practices
  – Case studies

• 6 semi-structured interviews

• Questionnaires: 87 responses
Literature Review: Aurovilian Documents

- Auroville Vision, Charter & To be a True Aurovilian
- Auroville Universal Township Master Plan Perspective: 2025 (2011)
- Integral Sustainability Platform (ISP) Document 2010-11
- Auroville City Area- Land Suitability and Land Use Proposal April-May 2014
- Directions for Growth (Asia Urbs) Document 2003-4
- Retreat 2015 – “Elephants in the Room”
- Full Report 2015 “Auroville Retreat”
Literature Review: Aurovilian Documents

- Detailed Development Plan for Sector 1 & 2, L’Avenir d’Auroville, Luis Fedduchi
- Residential Zone Brainstorming Session 2014
- AVSIS: Auroville Sustainability Indicator System (2013)
- Capturing the Spirit of the Crown: Considerations for Social Spaces in Auroville (2012)
Work Prior to Coming to Auroville

- Background research on:
  - Community participation theory
  - Legal requirements for community participation
  - Case studies
  - Research practices and ethics
  - Community participation frameworks
Work Prior to Coming to Auroville

- Surveys/Interviews: Identified themes that helped guide our research:
  - Techniques,
  - Reporting feedback,
  - Transparency,
  - Respect,
  - Consensus

Although Auroville’s community participation challenges are unique, strategies to overcome such challenges can be informed by the techniques employed in other communities.
Work While in Auroville

- Focus group with key individuals
- 11 semi-structured and unstructured interviews
- Site visits
- Advertisement of community engagements
- Information kiosks
- Focus group with youth
- Questionnaire re: Pilot Study
- Workshop
- Refining of the Community Participation Framework

*We will discuss this in further detail during the discussion of the Pilot Study*
THE INITIAL FRAMEWORK
What is a Framework?

Practical guide to creating successful community participation plans

• Helps determine:
  ▪ Interested groups and individuals
  ▪ Strengths and challenges of the participation
  ▪ Participation techniques
  ▪ Collecting and reporting feedback to the community
Who is this Framework For?

• Individuals or groups who will be undertaking a planning or development project, or helping with a community consultation plan for such a project

• Examples of planning and development projects include, but are not limited to:
  – Community Plans
  – Building Developments
  – Road Projects
  – Much more…

• Developed for use in planning and development projects, technically could be used by any individual or group who whose projects have an impact on members of the community
Guiding Principles

- Be Inclusive
- Build Capacity
- Be Proactive
- Make it Enjoyable
- Provide Structure and be Transparent
- Be Accountable
- Be Adaptive
Steps in the Initial Framework

1. Set Intentions
2. SWOC Analysis
3. Identify Interested & Impacted Groups
4. Choose Participation Techniques
5. Communicate the Plan
6. Implement the Plan
7. Monitoring & Feedback

Typical Timeframe: 6 months – 1 year
PILOT STUDY
The Purpose of the Pilot Study

• In order to test the initial framework, a pilot study was conducted

• Utilised the Initial Framework to develop a Community Participation Plan, of which we implemented a small portion
The Pilot Study

Identifying Community Features desired by the community within Residential Sectors 1 & 2

- In order to develop the Community Participation Plan for the Pilot Study the Initial Framework was used.
- This led to the development of multiple techniques, and methods of advertising the community participation events.
In order to complete the Pilot Study we undertook many different events, and techniques:

- Focus group with key individuals
- Advertisement of community engagements
- 11 interviews
- Site visits
- Information kiosks
- Focus group with youth
- Questionnaire re: Pilot Study
- Workshop
Focus Group with Key Individuals

- Focus group with key individuals
  - Presented framework and Pilot Study
  - Audience made up of many Aurovilians likely to use the framework
  - Aurovilians worked with project team through the framework to inform the Pilot Study
Focus Group with Key Individuals Outcomes

- Alter wording and descriptions for clarity
  - Edited framework to be more step-by-step
  - Added sections:
    - What is a framework?
    - Who is this framework for?
  - From theoretical language to accessible language

Diagram:
- Inform
- Consult
- Involve
- Collaborate
  - Tell
  - Listen
  - Discuss
  - Work Together
Interviews & Site Visits

Interviews
- 11 semi-structured/unstructured interviews conducted in Auroville
- Approx. 1 hr. in length

Site Visits
- Tours of Auroville, possible workshop sites, and services
- Gain understanding of context of Auroville and site feasibility
Interviews & Site Visits Outcomes

Interviews
• Different techniques to reach different Aurovilians
  – i.e. Youth → Informal Conversation
• Added more techniques to framework so diverse groups could be included
• Added section on effective facilitation

Site Visits
• Context of Auroville
  – i.e. Visit to Matrimandir better understanding of spiritual nature of Auroville
Advertisement of Community Engagements

- Used a variety of methods to inform individuals of the team’s upcoming events, including:
  - Radio interviews,
  - Radio ads,
  - Posters and,
  - The newsletter

What community features do you want in Residential Zone Sectors 1 & 2 for holistic living experience & enhanced social interaction?

What is a Community Feature?
Any feature or facility that is in a shared space. It could be ...

Spaces for Social Interaction & collective activities
Come & Share your Ideas

Walking Distances

Current Use of Area

Future Community Needs

Existing Community Features

A collaborative "Community Participation" effort by L’avenir d’Auroville & Resident Assembly Service

Information kiosk
Saturday, 5 Dec
10 AM to 12PM at PTDC & 12 PM to 2 PM at Solar Kitchen
Sunday, 6 Dec
10 AM to 12PM at Hall of Light, Creativity

Workshop on Tuesday, 8 Dec
3 to 6 PM
Unity Pavilion

Final Presentation
Saturday, 12 Dec
4 to 6 PM
MMC

Who are we?
We are a group of post graduate students from Canada exploring community participation in Auroville & working with RAAS & L’avenir d’Auroville.
Advertisement of Community Engagements Outcomes

- Advertisements Outcomes
  - Influenced people to come to events
  - Lessons learned for framework:
    - Advertise full community participation plan before starting any events
    - Prevents confusion
• Project team set up booths that asked: “What Community Features do you Envision in Residential Sectors 1 & 2”
• Conducted at:
  – Solar Kitchen,
  – PTDC, and
  – Creativity
13 Themes Found:
1. Retail**
2. Active Transportation**
3. Recreation Space**
4. Parks/Green Space
5. Multi-Use Common Space
6. Entertainment/artistic space
7. Space for youth
8. Roads
9. Community Services
10. Other Dedicated Space
11. Public Private Space
12. Infrastructure
13. Health Services

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<th>Community Feature</th>
<th># of Responses</th>
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<td>Laundry</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycling Paths</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming Pool</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Space</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Transit</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Café</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bike Parking</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No cars/parking only at edges</td>
<td>5</td>
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Influence on the Framework:

- Increased understanding of practical and logistical challenges in Auroville
- Allowed for the refinement of techniques section
Focus Group with Youth

- Conducted with 10 youth in Auroville, ages 12-15
- Unstructured conversation where the youth discussed what features they envisioned within residential sectors
- The team wrote their suggestions on sticky notes that were stuck onto a table so they were visible by all
Focus Group with Youth Outcomes

Themes Identified:

Safety
- Streetlights
- Nighttime spaces

Transportation
- Create and connect walking paths

Entertainment
- Sound proof music room
- Wifi

Recreation
- Swimming pools
- Basketball court

Gathering Spaces
- Star gazing platform

Green Spaces
- Restoration of fields

Impact on Framework:

- Increased understanding of practical and logistical challenges in Auroville
- Allowed for the refinement of techniques section
In conjunction with the RAS, e-mailed a questionnaire to community members living in the Residential Zone

Used to gauge community views regarding pilot project, and inform community about the workshop

**Community features in Residential Zone Sectors 1 & 2**

Please select the Community Features you envision in Residential Sector 1 & 2 from the following list which was suggested by community members at the Sound Board Kiosks. Please note that this list is a work in progress and by no means complete.

- Laundry
- Cycling Pathways
- Parks/Green Space
- Business Services
- Snack corner
- Café
- Restaurant
- Hangout Space for Young People
- Bakery
Pilot Study Questionnaire Outcomes

Impacts on Framework:

• Increased understanding of practical and logistical challenges in Auroville

• Allowed for the refinement of techniques section

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Community Features</th>
<th># of Responses</th>
</tr>
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<td>Cycling Pathways</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks/Green Space</td>
<td>54</td>
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<td>Pathways</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children playground</td>
<td>31</td>
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</table>

This questionnaire allowed for further confirmation that items and themes identified were representative of community opinions.
Engagement Workshop

• The Workshop utilised two techniques:
  – **Open Spaces**: used to get diverse groups of people to work together to come to consensus around key themes of community features
  – **Dot Democracy**: where attendees decided what they felt like talking about by placing a dot on those themes
Engagement Workshop Outcomes

Themes Discussed:

1. Entertainment/Artistic Space and Multi-Use Common Space
   • i.e. sound-proof performance space
2. Community Services
   • i.e. shared tool/handyman centre
3. Roads and Active Transportation
   • i.e. collective transportation
4. Spaces for Youth
   • i.e. multifunctional use space

Impacts on Framework:

• Increased understanding of practical and logistical challenges in Auroville
• Allowed for the refinement of techniques section
Next Steps
1. Clarify and communicate intentions for how this data will be used
2. Analyse participation data and synthesise with planning knowledge
3. Create an implementation strategy
4. Create a rough draft report that includes information about how participation data was used
5. Utilise feedback to refine document into final report
6. Implement the plan
A COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION FRAMEWORK FOR AUROVILLE
Guiding Principles

- Be Inclusive
- Build Capacity
- Be Proactive
- Make it Enjoyable
- Provide Structure and be Transparent
- Be Accountable
- Be Adaptive
Facilitation

Facilitators lead the event in a smooth manner to ensure productive and meaningful results

Keys to success:
• Come prepared
• Communicate the objective
• Establish ground rules
• Be flexible
• Provide closure and summarize results
• Be thankful
Steps in the Framework

1. Set Intentions
2. SWOC Analysis
3. Identify Interested & Impacted Groups
4. Choose the Type of Engagement
5. Choose Techniques
6. Communicate & Implement the Plan
7. Evaluate the Process; Monitor, Report, Feedback

Typical Timeframe: 6 months – 1 year
Initial Framework

1. Set Intentions
2. SWOC Analysis
3. Identify Interested & Impacted Groups
4. Choose Participation Techniques
5. Communicate the Plan
6. Implement the Plan
7. Monitoring & Feedback

Final Framework

1. Set Intentions
2. SWOC Analysis
3. Identify Interested & Impacted Groups
4. Choose the Type of Engagement
5. Choose Techniques
6. Communicate & Implement the Plan
7. Evaluate the Process; Monitor, Report, Feedback

A Community Participation Framework for Auroville
1. Set Intentions

Purpose and Outcomes

- Why do you want to engage the community?
- What information are we looking to get?
- What are the roles?
  - Decision Makers
  - Project Team
  - Community Participants
2. SWOC Analysis

1. Set Intentions
2. SWOC
3. Identify Interested & Impacted Groups
4. Choose the Type of Engagement
5. Choose Techniques
6. Communicate & Implement the Plan
7. Evaluate the Process

A Community Participation Framework for Auroville
3. Identify Interested & Impacted Groups

- Interested & impacted groups are identified using brainstorming.

- In order to understand more about these groups and how they might be engaged, you must identify:
  - Level of interest
  - How they are impacted
  - Geographical proximity
  - Expected level of interest in project
  - Needs/accessibility concerns
  - Resources/skills
4. Choose Type of Engagement

We will...

1. Set Intentions
2. SWOC
3. Identify Interested & Impacted Groups
4. Choose the Type of Engagement
5. Choose Techniques
6. Communicate & Implement the Plan
7. Evaluate the Process

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT & POWER

TELL
To inform you about what is happening

LISTEN
To include your thoughts and feelings

DISCUSS
To create and share ideas

WORK TOGETHER
To find a solution and make decisions

A Community Participation Framework for Auroville
5. Choose Participation Techniques

Step One → Step Two

Step Three → Step Four

Techniques for Participation

A Community Participation Framework for Auroville
5. Choose Participation Techniques

Choose Techniques: Step One

- Create a comprehensive list of all techniques that could be utilised for your project

- Considerations when selecting techniques:
  - What is the level of the community impact?
  - What output do you require?
  - Should there be specific techniques for select groups?
  - Does the technique utilised need to be used to assist in making the decision?
Choose Participation Techniques

Choose Techniques: Step Two

Refine the list of techniques from Step One, using the following criteria:

• What are the requirements and capacity of the group(s) involved? Will they be able to fully engage in the selected technique?
• Where will meetings be held? What are your space limitations?
• What resources and capacity does the technique require? Do you have those readily available?
5. Choose Participation Techniques

Choose Techniques: Step Two

**TOWN HALL or PUBLIC MEETING**

- An organized large group meeting, usually used to make a presentation and give the public an opportunity to ask questions and give comments.
- People who attend the Town Hall learn by hearing other’s questions and comments.

**Capacity Requirements:**
- Costs are usually minimal.
- Need to consider what type of visual aids you will be using and prepare those.
- Staff resources are usually minimal, need to prepare, attend and analyze the feedback.

**Tips:**
- Facilitators need to create an open and neutral environment for all views to be shared.
- Emotions can be high and one perspective can dominate a discussion if facilitators are unprepared.
5. Choose Participation Techniques

Choose Techniques: Step Three

• Review the selected techniques for accessibility considerations. Think about your community and their needs. How can you ensure that, regardless of the activity, everyone is able to fully participate?

• Things to consider:
  • Document production
  • Venue
  • Childcare
  • Timing
  • Sense of Belonging
5. Choose Participation Techniques

Choose Techniques: Step Four

- Ensure that the technique(s) are representative of your larger objective, work towards your intentions and accurately incorporate the required number of participants.
6. Communicate and Implement the Plan

1. Set Intentions
2. SWOC
3. Identify Interested & Impacted Groups
4. Choose the Type of Engagement
5. Choose Techniques
6. Communicate & Implement the Plan
7. Evaluate the Process

Tell
Listen
Tell
Tell
Discuss

Tell the community what you’re going to do, and be sure to do it!

A Community Participation Framework for Auroville
7. Evaluate the Process

It is necessary to monitor, evaluate, and report on both events, and the entire community consultation plan.

Criteria is given to:
• Evaluate individual events,
• Evaluate the overall process

A Community Participation Framework for Auroville
A Community Participation Framework for Auroville
DISCUSSION
Thank you!