



# Auroville International

UNITED KINGDOM



Photo by Marco Saroldi

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## Acres for Auroville

The Land Board has added 5.18 acres via exchange in the Reve area (3 plots) and paid the cash costs for registration - 16 lakhs. In total A4A has contributed to getting 8.2 acres for AV so far - the 1.65 acres purchase near the Matrimandir, and cash costs for the 6.55 acres via exchange.

*"In order that Auroville may strengthen and manifest her potential of a far-reaching consequence, not just for the wider Auroville bio-region but also for Tamil Nadu, India and humanity as a whole, it is essential to ensure that land development in the Township area happens in a planned and orderly manner. I wholeheartedly endorse the efforts of the 'Acres for Auroville' and 'GreenAcres' campaigns which seek to raise financial resources for purchasing remaining lands in the City area and Greenbelt of Auroville. I request all people of goodwill to actively support and contribute towards the success of these two dedicated campaigns."*

A Message from Thiru Mohan Verghese Chunkath IAS (Retd.), Secretary of the Auroville Foundation.

# Sustainable Livelihood Institute (SLI)

Based on the previous experiences and expectations of the community, SLI have developed courses specifically for particular districts with conscious awareness of the districts' requirements and the availability of resources in their communities. According to the demand of the participants SLI has also redesigned some of its programmes with more value added subjects.

During the month of August SLI had training sessions on 5 specific programmes: Sustainable Agriculture-Advanced; Sourcing, production and logistics management; Community based enterprises: Marketing and Branding; Health food and Food processing; and Dairy: Value Addition, Ethno-veterinary practices & Clean Dairy Practices.

The institute was able to train a total number of 79 participants. SLI is also involved in a programme on Ecovillage Design Education. This programme

runs from 4th December 2016 – 8th January 2017 and is based in Pitchandikulam Forest. In conjunction with the youth of Auroville, it offers a course in ecovillage design based upon Auroville's vision and experience gathered over nearly fifty years of research and practical application. The programme includes: Gaia education, social, ecological, economic and worldview dimensions, design, and the training of teachers. It is evidence of the emergence of Auroville as not merely a place that can demonstrate success in its aspiration to find a new way for earth and humanity, but also to begin seriously growing as a center of education and a knowledge hub.

## Nadukuppam Training Center

The Training Center at Nadukuppam is a really beautiful asset to have and



*The new SLI meeting room at Nadakuppam*

it now hosts regular sessions and meetings organised with an emphasis on women's empowerment. Its position - right next to one of SLI's created waterbodies - teaches the importance of holding the rain water high up in the catchment so that by infiltration the ground water can be replenished. SLI's series of ponds interspersed amongst gardens, fields and forest patches make a beautiful productive water retention landscape.

# Year-End News From Sacred Groves

Notwithstanding considerable difficulties, setbacks and delays the Sacred Groves team have finished the construction of the building structure and roofs of Phase 1.

Currently the houses are being plastered outside with a natural lime plaster. The team are preparing technical and user documentation, which can be used as a standard for future projects using the same design principles as SacredGroves. EPMCR (an engineering company incubated in the Indian Institute of Technology at Chennai for structural calculations and testing); the National University of Singapore (for ecological life-cycle analysis); The Vellore Institute of Technology (for research on lime); JNCASR-Bangalore (for research

on sustainable power systems) and the Centre for Building Biology (for improving the quality of the indoor climate) are some of their associates.

SacredGroves started with a view to make affordable and ecological housing, but in due course it has developed into a community-oriented sustainable living experiment. Many volunteers have dedicated their energy in realizing SacredGroves, not for financial reasons, but for personal growth and a wish for a better world. This spirit is recognised by many who have visited SacredGroves. Older Aurovilians who spend some time here have also expressed their pleasure that



*Sacred Groves*

something of the spirit of the early pioneering days of Auroville seems to be slowly reviving.

The team welcomes any material support and help.



# Proposal for an International University of Integral Yoga

## From the AVI Europe meeting in Belgium, October 2016.

At the AVI Europe meeting in Louvain-la Neuve, Belgium, which took place shortly after the Brexit vote, we were joined by Marc Luyckx, who had served in a senior advisory role to the European Commission before becoming a member of Auroville's International Advisory Council for eight years. Marc has passionately supported the European project. First he was asked for his assessment of the current situation of the EU. He shared our opinion that people across Europe are very dissatisfied with the current state of the European Union and expressed his view that the original idea of the founding fathers has degenerated. The original vision was to create a peaceful and free Europe "for the people". Today, the EU has become more and more an economic instrument of "free markets". But Marc sees a kind of "Parallel society" emerging around the world, representing a paradigm shift. This still has no loud voice. Politically, it is still not visibly represented and is rarely perceived by the current mainstream media. Marc expressed the hope that the current crises stimulate a general concern that what we should aim at is the deepest underlying European unification.

On the topic of our meeting, Marc shared a dream, a vision with us: the foundation stone for an International University of Integral Yoga in the International Zone on February 28, 2018, as a gift for the 50th birthday of Auroville. He informed us that there is a Ministry of Ayurveda, Yoga and Natural Healing in the Indian Government. Support from this Ministry and from the Government of India at the highest level could play an important role in the founding of such a University. Sri Aurobindo

is very much appreciated by the current Government. As such, there could be a certain openness towards the concept of the University. In the following discussion, we agreed that this could be a good way to promote integral yoga amongst a greater number of people, as a powerful way to change the world by dealing with the causes of its problems through a change of consciousness, rather than the current paradigm which attempts to apply inevitably limited solutions to the symptoms and consequences of humanity's problems. Sri Aurobindo's principle that "All life is Yoga" with the objective that life itself is the field for fulfilment, is already the whole point of Auroville's being and action.

In the following discussion, we agreed that this University proposal would not be limited to teaching academic content but be a learning environment such as has already been created in Auroville. Already, many individual initiatives (e.g. CIRHU and the Campus Initiative / "Joy of Learning", Auroville Collaborative / "Green practices seminar", Youth Link / "Ecovillage Design Education", Auroville Institute of applied technology, Auroville Earth Institute) with their various programs and educational services call for a structural framework which could involve many more Aurovilians and provide a means to stabilize the economic base of the community.

The framework of an International University would make it easier for national Governments and supranational groupings such as the EU, to connect and to provide support. There's a new 'Erasmus study programme' (Erasmus +), which is aligned not only to academic education, but to diverse cross-cultural experiences and exchanges and is open on an EU wide basis. Universities in many countries now offer such 'exposure programs' which permit and fund students to undertake brief internships exposing them to different cultures and potentially life-changing educational experiences.

As a first initiative, we have agreed to try to implement in the International Zone a building with student accommodation, work rooms and

a large multi-purpose room as a first project and first module of a European House or Pavilion. We want to work this proposal out in more detail and present this in order to finance this project for and within the EU. This would respond to a need already existing in Auroville. According to Marc, it would be a financially viable project.

Through the realisation of this project, Auroville could be the practical starting point and driver for India's mission in the world as given to us by Sri Aurobindo and The Mother.

On India's Independence Day in 1947 Sri Aurobindo said:

*"India's spirituality is entering Europe and America in an ever increasing measure. That movement will grow; amid the disasters of the time more and more eyes are turning towards her with hope and there is even an increasing resort not only to her teachings, but to her psychic and spiritual practice."*

*The final dream (of Sri Aurobindo) was a step in evolution which would raise man to a higher and larger consciousness and begin the solution of the problems which have perplexed and vexed him since he first began to think and to dream of individual perfection and a perfect society... Here too, if this evolution is to take place, since it must proceed through a growth of the spirit and the inner consciousness, the initiative can come from India and although the scope must be universal, the central movement may be hers."*

*The Mother told us "The future of India is very clear. India is the Guru of the world. The future structure of the world depends on India. India is the living soul. India is incarnating the spiritual knowledge in the world. The Government of India ought to recognize this significance of India and plan their actions accordingly."*



*Krishna Tewari*

## In Memory of Krishna Tewari

On September 26th, Aurovilian Major General Krishna Tewari, in his house at Auromodèle and surrounded by his family and friends, passed away at the age of 94. Krishna was a highly decorated officer, who had joined the British Indian Army in early 1942. After India's independence, he continued to serve in the Indian army.

Krishna had received darshan of the Mother in 1972, together with his family. Shortly afterwards, he and his wife Kamla participated in the inauguration ceremony of the Matrimandir. So impressed were they that they wanted to join the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and Auroville immediately, but the Mother forbade him to do so - one presumes that She needed him as an instrument elsewhere. They joined Auroville four years later, in 1976 at a time when Auroville was having its disputes with the Sri Aurobindo Society. It was of great significance for Auroville to have

a high-ranking Indian military officer in its midst and Krishna's active presence during the resulting Supreme Court case was crucially significant and helped the positive outcome for Auroville.

Krishna had been involved in the war with Pakistan as well as the war against China and became the highest-ranking Indian officer to be taken prisoner by the Chinese. He was at the time Lt. Colonel and Commander Signals of the headquarters Eastern Command 4th (Red Eagle) Infantry Division, which had been assigned the operational responsibility for the defense of India's borders in Sikkim. But the division was ill-equipped to fight in high mountainous regions and to defend more than 1,800 kilometers of mountainous terrain.

In an interview with Claude Arpi, Krishna recalled the difficult circumstances under which his division was supposed to operate, facing shortages of every kind. He also mentioned his premonition that a severe test was in the offing to assess his faith in the Divine. "I certainly

had no idea that I would be taken a prisoner of war," he wrote in his diary. That event happened on October 20th, 1962.

After being captured by the Chinese, and suffering blows to the head that left him partly deaf for the rest of his life, Krishna and the other Indian PoWs were force-marched for three days to Marmang in Tibet, from where they were taken to Chen Ye [Chongye] in central Tibet. They spent over five months in a camp southwest of Tsetang. During this time Krishna kept his diary on sheets of toilet paper, and stitched them in the belt part of his trousers to prevent discovery by the Chinese. This was how his diary notes were preserved.

By the end of March 1963 they were informed that all Indian PoWs would soon be released. On March 29, they were driven in a bus to Lhasa and shortly afterwards flown to Sinning and were then given a long tour of China. On May 5, their ordeal came to an end when they safely landed in Calcutta. After six and a half months in China, he was back in India.

In Auroville, Krishna soon became part of various task forces and committees. He was instrumental in starting the Entry Service and took care of streamlining the paperwork for visitors and the visa work for Aurovilians with the Regional Registration Officer in Pondicherry. He also proposed to start the Auroville Archives, an idea which at the time had only a lukewarm reception. He was told to look at the space below the Sri Aurobindo Auditorium in Bharat Nivas, originally intended for cable ducts and air-conditioning. In an interview with Auroville Today Krishna recalled that the place was a dungeon full of dirt, rats, lizards and pests. Undeterred, he set to cleaning it, and by 1991 the beginning of the Archives was made.

Collecting documents was but a small part of the challenge. The major one was preserving them from humidity and excessive heat. Krishna did some successful fundraising to get a de-humidifier, an air-conditioning unit and basic office equipment. Meanwhile, archival material kept flowing in: documents from pre-Auroville days, photographs, slides, negatives, and photocopies of all



of Mother's handwritten messages on Auroville, made available by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Archives. Treasures such as the Book of Births, a handwritten book started in 1967 by Maggi Lidchi Grassi, one of Mother's secretaries, containing the details of the birth of a child, and leaving a space for The Mother to give the child's name, were handed over to him. Other treasures are the original silk scroll with the signatures of all the people who participated in Auroville's inauguration in 1968, and the copies of the Aspiration talks of the Mother with early Aurovilians in 1971. Apart from being a depository of hundreds of reports and minutes of various working groups, the Auroville archives also video-recorded Aurovilians describing what they have lived through and contributed to Auroville. These records, said Krishna, will be made available to future researchers to study the growth of Auroville as a living laboratory of Human Unity.

The Auroville Archives gradually expanded and occupied more underground spaces at Bharat Nivas. But Krishna realised that a new and separate building would be required so kept pushing the idea, with success. In 2015, the foundation stone for the building of the Auroville Archives was laid by Dr. Karan Singh, the Chairman of the Governing Board of the Auroville Foundation, thus crowning Krishna's long aspiration. The inauguration is scheduled for the end of 2017.

Krishna, in private discussions with Aurovilians, often expressed how distressed he sometimes was about the situation in Auroville. But he then also would recall the reply of Nolini Kanta Gupta, Sri Aurobindo's close disciple, to his question about why people were behaving so badly in this place which The Mother had created. "Nolini smiled and said, 'Wait and see'. The answer gave him confidence that "there is a purpose behind all this."

Krishna's body was cremated at the Adventure Farewell Grounds on September 30th.

## Photos from Auroville



*Picture of the first day of the Auroville month of Peace 21st September at the Unity Pavilion around the Peace Table*



*Members of the AVI Board and friends meeting at Unity Pavilion in February 2016*



*'The British Pavilion' at The Solar Kitchen, 2016 – Frances, Alan, Navoditte. Nearly every lunchtime, some Brits meet at this table and the atmosphere is full of a British way of looking at things and British humour.*

## Animals in Auroville's Forests

When we first moved onto the land in Auroville, the plateau was a desert. Pioneer Aurovilians planted 2 million trees and totally transformed the land. One of the results of the greening of

Auroville has been the return of the wild animals.

Photos curtesy of Pitchandikulam Forest and Joss.



*Bonnet Macaque*



*Jungle Cat*



*Spotted deer*



*Rusty spotted Cat*

## The EDE (Ecovillage Design Education) Programme in Auroville

The educational course described here is typical of a growing aspect of Auroville's work in creating educational and training opportunities in areas like ecology, sustainability,

village regeneration and women's empowerment. Auroville uses its expertise and wealth of practical experience, to give an immersive learning opportunity, set against the backdrop of its core purpose, to create the conditions for personal change within the context of a practical community experience, where the community itself is researching how a society can change and align itself with the new post-egocentric paradigm and find a way to a sustainable future of relevance to the bioregion, India and the world.

Pitchandikulam Forest is dedicated to the preservation and restoration

of the Tropical Dry Evergreen Forest. It was established in 1973 as one of the pioneering Auroville green belt communities engaged in the initial reforestation work that was necessary on the bare eroded township site. Since then the 70 acre site has been transformed into a complete ecosystem with more than 800 species of plants. Pitchandikulam hosts a bio-resource center and manages outreach programs for sustainable enterprises, environmental education and afforestation in Auroville's bioregion. It is one of the leading experts in ecological restoration and water conservation. In 2004,



Pitchandikulam Forest Consultants was created to implement restoration work in other areas of Tamil Nadu including the city of Chennai. The Pitchandikulam team has experience in working with state and national government, and has implemented a project called Sustainable Enterprise Development in the Auroville Bioregion (SEDAB). Pitchandikulam Forest has helped launch the Auroville Sustainable Livelihood Institute (SLI) in collaboration with the Tamil Nadu Government and is working to train rural development officials and community groups primarily from Tamil Nadu but also from other states in India in ways to enable sustainable livelihoods. Pitchandikulam Forest serves as the current base for the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) office in Auroville.

## Ecovillage Design Education

The Ecovillage Design Education (EDE) curriculum was developed by the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) and Gaia Education in recognition of the immense potential for growth in human consciousness and behaviour. Recognised by UNESCO, the EDE was specifically designed to enable people and communities coming together to reclaim responsibility for their living situations - at local and regional levels. A universal framework, adaptable to the local environment, the EDE offers an education that assesses the current state of the planet and local area followed by place-based solutions relevant to the local community.

The EDE Auroville program currently being designed has evolved from the recognition of the need to engage youth in Auroville and its bioregion in uncovering their purpose and engage them in meaningful work. It has emerged after the mini-EDE 2 day workshop held in Pitchandikulam in early January 2016 where the participants identified key issues facing Auroville and rural Tamil Nadu, expressing their wish to feel more empowered to act in face of these immense challenges.

This EDE will be 5 week course for youth from Auroville, its bioregion,

India and the world with the intention to immerse in transformational processes and experiential learning, encourage the design of locally relevant, paradigm-shifting projects, and empower through building capacities in youth as future trainers.

The Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) desk in Pitchandikulam is in the process of localising the Ecovillage Design Education (EDE) curriculum to be held in Auroville this December 2016. The NextGEN youth-branch of this network is at YouthLink, the Auroville youth service. This course is recognized by Gaia Education and UNESCO.

## From the International Advisory Committee's Report

7th - 9th September, 2016

**Housing Projects:** Our visit to Suhasini's Humanscape 1A was informative and inspiring. Using rock facing and a waste material the project combined innovations for greener building strategies. We strongly welcome the provision of housing for younger people using alternative materials. The Kalpana project coming up across the road is in stark contrast to these ecological ideals.

Auroville values of ecology and beauty must be reflected in the materials and aesthetics of every structure. The ideals of the community must be reflected in the built environment. We repeat our view that it is essential to establish green building guidelines compliance, which should be a mandatory part of granting permission to build.

We have concerns for the fair labour conditions and housing conditions of migrant workers. Poor living conditions create an environment where ghettos can develop with all the ensuing social concerns and are contrary to the principles

of Auroville. We are concerned that building projects should avoid unfair labour practices. Accepting tenders because their estimate is lowest can lead to socioeconomic consequences which are contrary to Auroville values. We therefore suggest that cost is not the sole criterion Auroville should use in the tendering process.

**The Life Education Center** has exemplified Auroville's philosophy of outreach to the women of the local communities. Built on budget and on time, the newest building in the compound reflects an organic growth over decades. There is a highly impressive range of activities they support. Even legal and educational guidance is offered to the local women. The project has great potential for increasing the scope and outreach of Auroville's work in the villages.

**Auroville Campus Initiative (ACI)** The International Advisory Committee commented: *"We were impressed by the consistency of their programs and the success of their launch of the Auroville Experience / Swadharma. Many students are returning and taking up roles as interns. As Auroville needs strategies to get younger people involved in their work, this outreach has many tangential benefits. We believe all such activities should come under SAIER (Sri Aurobindo International Institute of Educational Research)."*

Entrepreneurship must be encouraged. Little progress seems to have been made following our earlier discussions with the Auroville Board of Commerce about the need to create a business friendly climate with minimal regulations, adequate infrastructure and the ability to raise capital to make a meaningful contribution to the community. This must move forward if Auroville is to have a healthy diversified economy

# 'SQUEAK' is a Magazine Produced by the Youngest Aurovilians

## First Auroville Lands

**Nadir (12 years old)**

I was born here in Auroville in 2003 and until now I never thought: where was the first piece of land that was bought in Auroville? So then I thought, why not find out, and I went to talk to Aryadeep in the Town Hall. He said that the first piece of land was probably bought around 1964. It was bought by the Sri Aurobindo Society, from a farmer, and was named Promesse.

Promesse is located just by the tollbooth on the way to Sadhana Forest on the Tindivanam highway. At that time one acre cost 2,000 to 3,000 rupees and now it's a breath-taking 30 to 50 lakhs. It's amazing, the leap in price, but then there were no trees and no bushes, just plain dry hot crackling desert, so there are some reasons, if you really think about it. And if you ever wondered why they bought this particular piece of land, it was, explains Aryadeep, not only because it was empty (cheaper) and close to Pondicherry (good because back then there weren't many bikes or cars, so it was close to reach by walking), but especially because the actual planned location of Auroville was there, then. Actually, Aryadeep explains, the present highway passed right through the middle of the planned Auroville.

Auroville's chief architect Roger Anger suggested to the Mother to shift the planned township area towards the sea side, to avoid the highway passing through the future city, but some lands were already bought by then.

Back then it was much easier to buy land. You would just talk and on a blank paper write your name and the deal was done. Once the land was bought, people built keet (thatch) houses to protect themselves from

the wind, rain and sun. If you wonder if we will buy more, we will, because according to Aryadeep we need to finish Mother's dream, the universal town with 50,000 Aurovilian citizens and it will be partly up to us, the youth, to finish it.

## Courage Flats

**Surya (12 years old)**

I'm Surya, a boy, and I always wondered why there are weird rooms and random pillars in our flat. That is, until I got a school assignment: to write a story for the TLC magazine, so I thought "Wow I can write and find out why my apartment is like this." And I did.

Where we live affects us. Auroville is a place where we try to build houses nice and cosy, but for that we need to experiment with shapes and materials. That's why we find houses made with bamboo, wood, cement, earth bricks, metal, mud, tetra packs, ferro-cement, tiles, and roofs made with keet, straw, and tiles. There are also tree houses, capsules, containers, dismountable houses, traditional houses and apartments.

Most of the housing projects in Auroville are experiments for nicer spaces, which are in touch with nature, trying to use eco-friendly materials as well as affordable and nice materials. That's how Courage Community is participating: in each apartment there are six pillars, which make it possible to design (the interior of) your house however you want.

In our case, we didn't design our house; it used to be a Youth Apartment. Half of the building was an open terrace with a kitchen, two rooms and a bathroom. The housing service redesigned it. They closed the open kitchen and added large windows. I think there is still some misused space, though. The

apartment was experimental, so it's got some funny edges here and there, but what's really nice is the roof. One can lie at night and look at the stars. There are also two small terraces that come with each room.

It's good that there are projects like these, so the housing style isn't always the same. Also, Courage is a place that tries to use space as efficiently as possible, and at the moment they are building a new set of flats. After that there will be no more Courage flats, unless Auroville decides to buy the land in front of the community to build more apartments.

According to Eugen, the architect, Courage is the most compact community in Auroville. But even though the apartments are close together, there are individual gardens and a community garden.

## Nature Doesn't Create Waste!

**Lore (14 years old)**

Eco Service is managing the waste of Auroville. An Eco Service team goes around Auroville collecting waste from communities, guesthouses, households, schools, restaurants and units. Then a team of sorters sort the waste at the Ecoservice building or shed in Kottakarai.

60% goes to the recycling dealers, and about 40% goes to Auroville landfill (putting large holes in the ground and dumping waste that is not recyclable, and hoping that it will compost.)

Eco Service does not make profit from this work. The money that they do make goes back into the building, pick-up truck, staff and the landfill.

Nature doesn't create waste. Only people do. The most important



place to start to improve waste management within Auroville is with you.

Eco Service's primary goal is to minimize as much as possible the impact of Auroville's waste on the environment. It achieves this goal by recycling as much of the community's waste as it can, and land filling as little as possible. They hope to ensure that the community's waste has as little impact as possible on the environment and that in the future Auroville can be Litter Free! Also, they try to bring forth awareness among Aurovilians about the importance of responsible waste disposal and to create proper waste disposal systems in households and in communities. And to work to a "zero waste" policy.

Alex is a new newcomer with bright, good ideas for the Eco Service. He says: "For me, the stuff we use is an extension of our Self. The computer is used to enhance our mental, a music instrument helps us to get in touch with our emotions, whereas

the bike helps us to multiply the force of our body. I believe using stuff is a tentative to enlarge our Self so we feel less limited and feel better. So we are not just our little self but also the house we live in, the motor bike we use and the iPhone we own.

In the same way we relate to people, we relate to stuff. We fall in love with stuff, then do not always take care of it. Sometimes we feel lazy, take things for granted. Other times we are full of gratitude. Sometimes we share our stuff, but most of the time we want our stuff to ourselves. Long relationships are a lot harder... so when it doesn't serve our needs anymore we get rid of it, then it's someone else's stuff, right?

#### Interesting Fact:

Today Eco service collects about 2/3 of Auroville's waste. 1/3 chooses to handle their waste differently.

#### Interesting Fact:

The material most sent to land fill in AV is cloth.

#### Interesting Fact:

In January 2012, Ecoservice counted all their waste for only one month. They collected 6,057 kg of waste, and out of that 1,510kg (25%) went to the landfill.

You can learn a lot by observing the relationship that people have with their stuff and their waste. When people reconnect with it in Eco Service you can see so many different reactions, it's so interesting! Many spiritual seekers found their true Self while meditating on death. I believe meditation on waste can also be quite enlightening!

## Auroville's Population Now

This report includes: Aurovilians, Newcomers, Prospective Newcomers, and their children, on Dec 1, 2016.

**Adults:** 1954   **Males:** 965   **Females:** 986   **Children:** 677   **Total:** 2631   **Nationalities:** 52

#### Breakdown by nationality

Indian 1131	Japanese 15	Colombian 2
French 377	Austrian 13	Lithuanian 2
German 244	Chinese 12	Philippines 2
Italian 150	South African 12	Danish 2
Dutch 95	Argentinian 9	Irish 2
American 89	Brazilian 8	Taiwan 2
Russian 68	Hungarian 7	Bulgarian 2
British 52	Mexican 5	Polish 1
Spanish 52	Belarusian 4	Ecuador 1
Swiss 40	Latvian 4	Finnish 1
Israeli 38	Ethiopian 3	Algerian 1
Belgian 35	Rwandese 3	Norwegian 1
Korean 32	Iranian 3	Czech 1
Swedish 25	Tibetan 3	Romania 1
Canadian 23	Sri Lankan 3	Egyptian 1
Ukrainian 20	Iceland 2	Kazakh 1
Australian 17	Moldova 2	

# Auroville Water Management Plan

Auroville has drafted a 2-phase Water Plan, conceived within the context of the Bioregion (the whole area of the aquifer), which considers the water problem within a proposed integrated multi-sourcing approach to water management. Phase 1 involves setting up a team and planning the strategy which will combine surface water harvesting, ground water conservation, desalination and wastewater recycling, then communicating the strategy to stakeholders and users. Phase 2 will be the implementation of the plan. Given the precarious state of the existing aquifer, the dangers of salt water intrusion and the crucial nature of water within the current existence and future of Auroville, it will be interesting

to see to what extent the plan will affect the policy of implementing the galaxy concept without adaptation.

Auroville is requesting funding for one year for the team members, all of whom will work on a voluntary basis, but whose annual expenses for accommodation and food, etc. are budgeted to be £2,940. All donations are welcome for this essential and critical work.

## Poems From Auroville

A true poem with spiritual inspiration and vision is, like Auroville itself, or human unity, something that pre-exists. It waits to be received or uncovered, before being materially manifested, brought down to earth. The process is a yoga, at once mystical and practical. To the extent that one can be open, the One can

be palpable, here, now. Poems therefore can be a barometer of the extent to which the true consciousness is manifesting.

Vikas, on behalf of AVI UK, is preparing an anthology of poems written in the last 50 years by Aurovilians, former Aurovilians and those involved with Auroville. It is intended to be presented to Auroville as a 50th anniversary present and would also involve a presentation of poetry readings in Auroville in February 2018 and later, here in the UK. Vikas would be grateful for any donations, poetic or monetary for the realization of this project. Poems should be sent to [vikas@aviuk.org](mailto:vikas@aviuk.org). Cash donations should be sent as detailed below. Thank you so much.

## The Proposed European Centre in the International Zone

Among the proposals put forward are a Music Hall (330 seats), Cinema (500 seats), a European library with a small café, and an Art Gallery. Further suggestions include a

Multi-Purpose Hall for rotating exhibitions, an Internet Café, an international restaurant/food Court, as well as space for offices, storage, and staff amenities for living accommodation on site, but as this project is subject to continuing study and evolution detailed requirements are likely to change.



International Zone – European Centre Location



# Auroville Village Action Group

## From the Director's Note, in the AVAG 2017 newsletter.

2016 was a very fulfilling year for us with, among other things, the successful financial support for the education of 1,197 girls, the completion of a six-week summer program for students, a women's festival that had a record attendance of over 5,500 people and an ever growing women's federation and men's/youth clubs

We accomplished a flood relief campaign that reached 31 villages and benefited 17,000 people directly and 54,000 indirectly and two major medical camps reaching 1400 patients. Our promotional materials have advanced with a new website, a Lookbook, and catalogue for our women's group products.

2017 has begun with the challenge of a failed winter monsoon with a shortfall of 66% in rainfall in Tamil Nadu which will impact drinking water and the supply of food in coming months. There has been the growing national phenomenon of farmers who have committed suicide due to crop failure and debt. Despite this, Pongal, or harvest festival is being widely celebrated with its traditional four-day homage to the earth with the cleaning of household and work materials, the discarding of old and purchase of new clothes, family feasts, and village level traditional games, the honouring of cows and bullock cart racing in the streets. The resilience of people is as strong as ever and we feel honoured to be of service.

## Committed to Supporting Local Education

The team at Auroville Village Action Group carry a commitment to the well-being and fullest potential of the villages in our area. Children and local schools are at the heart of any community. Therefore, AVAG is concentrating efforts and resources in the direction of the local

government schools, many of which have substandard facilities and are in need of curriculum enhancement.

November was an extremely busy month with the distribution of educational materials to over 6,000 children in 50 government schools. The materials included stationary supplies in beautiful pouches that were hand crafted by our AVAL ladies social enterprise, with English dictionary and copy books. The copy books carried an image of the inauguration of Auroville, a copy of the charter and words of the Mother on education.

This distribution was part of the AVAG, AVVAI program, a sustainable model of significant financial support for the education of girls from the poorest families in Villupuram in Tamil Nadu which has been made possible through corporate social responsibility funding. In 18 months, since its inception mid-June 2015, AVVAI has supported the education of a total of 1,193 beneficiaries.

Our team is currently carrying out a needs assessment of government schools in our area. In recent years, there has been a reduction in enrolments with many students choosing private schools. This often leads families into debt as private school fees are high. AVAG wants to support the local school systems by strengthening their infrastructure, facilities, and educational content thus making them an attractive option. We are currently seeking funding and writing project proposals.

## Celebrating Women "The Annual Women's Festival"

There was a resounding call for societal change with advancement in equality and respect during the 20th annual Auroville Village Action Group Women's Festival attended by over 5,000 women and men from the bio-region on October 2nd. 2016, in AVAG headquarters in Irumbai.

As well as a cultural celebration, it was a space of growth and learning as it was a unique opportunity

to address the entire women's federation at one time. This year's special guests were local activists in the fields of child protection and trans-gender.

The day was interspersed with a vibrant cultural program in dance, drama, and debating. There was special emphasis on local folk dance and practices which are dying out.

The festive air was enhanced by adults and children jumping to their feet on numerous occasions to dance. The month-long pre-events were supported by teachers from the local Government schools who offered their service as trainers and adjudicators at competitions. One senior teacher remarked that he had never seen a local event where so many people were so attentive until the end and so free in themselves.

## Sports

AVAG is happy to announce that the Auroville Bio-Regional Sports Association has formed and is currently being registered with the Government. The association will structure the current casual, ad-hoc sports network into a cohesive body that will develop the level of sports facilities and skills in 20 villages and in Auroville through a program of local sports events, facilities development, and coaching that will lead to regular competitions on local, district and regional level.

This project will further be a bridge to creating career opportunities for local women and men by providing linkages to scholarships and sports colleges for further education. It is expected that the association will have at least 1000 members from 20 villages and Auroville and each member will pay an annual subscription. The association is a collaboration between Auroville Village Action Group, Auroville Sports Resource Centre, Dahashakti Sports and Paalam bio-regional youth network.

# Sri Aurobindo's Humour

*"The mystic Muse is more of an inspired Bacchante of the Dionysian wine than an orderly housewife."*

Letters on Savitri

*"In course of this trial there was a marvellous illustration of how sharp and correct human memory could be. Thirty to forty people would be kept standing, one didn't know their name, hadn't known them at all in this or any other life, yet whether one had seen or not seen someone two months back, or seen such and such person at three places and not*

*seen in the other two; maybe one had seen him brush his teeth once, and so his figure remains imprinted in the brain for all time. When did one see this person, what was he doing, was there anyone else with him, or was he alone? One remembers nothing of these, yet his figure is fixed in one's mind for all lives; one has met Hari ten times, so there is no probability of forgetting him, but even if one has seen Shyam only for half a minute, one would not be able to forget him till one's last breath, and with no possibility of mistake, such a power of memory is not to be found frequently in this imperfect human nature, this earth wrapped up in matter and its unconsciousness. But not one, not two, every police*

*chap seemed to be the owner of such uncanny, error-proof accurate memory. Because of which our devotion and respect for the C.I.D. grew more profound day by day."*

Tales of Prison Life

*"Worse than the narrowness and inefficiency, was the unreality of our culture. Our brains were as full of liberty as our lives were empty of it."*

The Bourgeois and the Samurai.

## How to Donate

Cheques payable to 'Auroville International UK' should be sent to our Treasurer:

John Mulrey, 7 Cubb Field, Aylesbury, Bucks HP19 7SJ.  
Please make reference to 'AVIUK Newsletter'.

For online banking contributions: Lloyds Bank, sort code 30-90-86, account number 00110988. Please confirm your name as sender and 'Newsletter' as the reference.

A donor to Auroville wrote, *"I want my money to be used exclusively for conquering the causes of our sufferings and miseries."* The Mother replied:

*"It is for this that we all work here, but not in the artificial way of philanthropists who work on the exterior effects only. We want to eliminate for good the cause of suffering by divinising matter through the integral transformation."*

## AVI UK Open Meeting

Probably 27th May 2017, to be confirmed. See AVI UK website [www.aviuk.org](http://www.aviuk.org) for details of timing and location.

Sri Aurobindo:

*It is only divine Love which can bear the burden I have to bear, that all have to bear who have sacrificed everything else to the one aim of uplifting earth out of its darkness to the Divine.*

**Live in and be the Truth you aspire to.**

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