

Deepam shines @ 25

On Friday February 17th, Deepam, Auroville's therapy centre for children with special needs, celebrated 25 years.

It began in January, 1992, in the Kulapalayam tamarind grove beside the Auroville bakery. Concerned at the plight of the mentally-challenged and polio-affected children from the village, Aurovilians Marika, Franca and Appie started a play centre three afternoons a week. They were soon joined by Angelika, an experienced occupational therapist from Germany who had come to visit Auroville for a year to offer therapy to Auroville children at the Kindergarten and Transition School. "The playground's location was far from ideal," she remembers. "It was next to the village's defecation ground and out in the open, except for a small dark thatched room with a veranda where we could do a little something with the children." While the others gradually dropped out, Angelika continued – to this day.

Around the same time, Dr. Lucas and Dr. Assumpta developed plans to start a children's hospital as an annex to the Auroville Health Centre. They invited Angelika to join. The Children's Home materialized three years later and the project for children with special needs moved into a beautiful large room and became part of the Auroville Health Centre.

Selvi, who was a nurse at the Health Centre, joined a few years later. "There were many children with hearing aids and articulation difficulties and Angelika needed a Tamil-speaking person who could do speech therapy," she says. "She invited me to join, on the condition that I had to be committed." Selvi accepted, though working with children with special needs was an unknown area for her. She received training and soon developed the required expertise and has meanwhile taught many children to speak, read and write Tamil.

In later years, the Children's Home no longer functioned as planned and the management of the Health Centre changed. There were ideas to turn the space into an Auroville hospital, but Angelika and Selvi, after a long struggle, managed to convince the Auroville authorities that all donations had been specified for the benefit of children from the villages and that the donors wished the entire building to be allocated to the project. In 2003, the project became an independent Auroville service unit with the name Deepam, meaning 'light', "a symbolic name chosen because we intend to bring light into the lives of differently-abled children," explains Angelika.

As the facilities expanded, so did the work. That same year Deepam got its first school van, which made it possible to provide a door to door service for pickup and return as many children cannot walk. Deepam's day-care programme began to cater to the individual needs of over 30 children. The subsequent years saw several additions, such as a dining hall, an upstairs space and covered terrace for group activities and a caretaker's apartment. More recently, thanks to SAIER, 'Super School', a building from the former Last School compound, was added. It will become Deepam's vocational training centre.

Really special

Asked if Deepam is unique, Angelika and Selvi smile in response. "It is," says Angelika. "And not only because it is probably one of the most beautiful



Deepam children with the building blocks they made

places for this type of work in India. Also some of the work we do is unique and of high quality. Broadly speaking, we have three fields of activity.

"The first – and the one as yet largely unknown in India – is the work with babies and very young children. This is a very specialised work. Early intervention is important, for at that age the nervous system still develops, new synapses are forming and the brain is still growing. When a baby is brought in, we observe if it is alert, if it has good muscle-tone, how the head position is. If it is a young child, we see how it moves – a child of 8 months should crawl, of 12 months should walk and by the latest at 2 years should say its first words. Then there are the routine medical examinations such as a blood test, the stool test and the check-up of the ears and eyes. When the problem has been diagnosed, we immediately start our intervention programme. The child then comes with its parents or grandparents for one or two hours a day. Hopefully, if the condition is something that can be treated, the child need not come to our school later. Most special schools elsewhere in India start dealing with children at a much later age – but for many children, this is already too late."

Deepam's second area of activity is providing day-care.

Here it aims at a holistic approach. "In our day-care programme we only take older children," says Selvi, "those who can be without a caretaker for some time and who can – to some extent – feed themselves, go alone to the toilet, and be mobile in some way so that they can participate in group activities. This programme is like a school and caters to those with a broad range of disorders – severe types of epilepsy, cerebral palsy and mental retardation, hearing impairment as well as children

with autism and socially-impaired behaviour. About 30 children and youth are currently enrolled in Deepam's day-care programme. We provide specialised education and individual therapies, such as physio-, speech-, and occupational therapy. Plus there is a social skills improvement component through teaching handicrafts, and involving them in group activities such as singing, dancing and painting. And one day a week, a yoga teacher gives Hatha Yoga exercises."

As the children grow older, appropriate activities need to be made available for them, and it is for this reason that Deepam has started its third area of activity, vocational skill development. "We teach all of them basic manual skills, for example how to use scissors, brushes, paint and different tools, in the hope that some of them will be able to join the outside work-force. The techniques we use are clay, candle-making, greeting-cards of different kinds, woodworking, stitching and jewellery." The training has seen successes. One boy has joined a local carpentry workshop. Another boy now helps at the puncture repair service as a mechanic; a hearing-impaired girl who came as a toddler has now, at 20, become a tailor trained by Auroville's Life Education Centre. And then there are those who remain with Deepam and become part of the team, such as the deaf girl who came in 1993 undernourished with a dislocated hip and a host of infections, and who today has grown into a bright young woman who helps with the younger children.

The parents

When approached to take in a child, Deepam takes its time. "We observe the child, its family, and we try to understand what's going on. This can take five or six sessions. We ensure that a medical examination is done and that we get the medical records. We look at the psychological aspect – is the child properly taken care of, is it given affection? For most families it is extremely hard to have a child with special needs, particularly when the child has multiple disorders. Often, we have to do a lot of family-counselling. Many parents hesitate to come, even if they know something is wrong. They are ashamed; they are afraid to admit that the child

has a problem. They've often gone from hospital to hospital and visited temples and priests, most of it to no avail. And, of course, family relations get fragile and couples break up, the husband accusing the wife and so on. We could write a book on some stories," says Angelika.

"But we demand an absolute commitment from the parents – we don't want them to dump the kid and go," says Selvi. "They have to take responsibility. For example, if they come with an undernourished child, they will have to ensure that it is properly fed before we can even start physiotherapy. And if a child shows bad behaviour, is aggressive, or hyper active and difficult to guide, and cannot be integrated in a group, we may need months of individual sessions and also guide the parents about how to deal with the child. At Deepam we have a rule of 'no-beating', which is still common in Indian schools and families. But how do you deal with such children? For some, it can take a long time before they can be with others in a group without harming themselves or others or destroying the toys. We have to patiently teach the parents that they should give the child not a negative but a positive attention."

The staff and volunteers

Deepam now has a team of 15, including four Aurovilians and one Newcomer. The team lacks Indian professionals – few are interested because of the low salary Deepam can offer and many don't like to work in rural areas – but this is compensated by an intense cooperation with the paediatric department of PIMS, a nearby Pondicherry hospital. "It's quite a relief that the Pondicherry hospitals have developed so much," says Angelika. "We refer our children to specialists and help in arranging for surgery or providing medical appliances, such as hearing aids, callipers and wheelchairs. Earlier, for any specialised medical check-ups such as audiometry you had to go to Chennai. Now all this can be done right here."

Over the years, scores of extremely motivated volunteers have helped Deepam, particularly through the German Weltwärts programme. "What was especially beneficial was our exchange with highly committed professional volunteers, such as occupational therapists and psychologists who joined our team for a year or longer," says Angelika. "Most keep contact with us and help raising funds and bringing materials. Those who left last year at the end of summer are now back again – they have fallen in love with Auroville and Deepam. It has become a large extended family."

The future

Like many Auroville projects, Deepam functions largely without financial help from Auroville. So far, Angelika has managed to raise sufficient funds mainly from her donor network in Germany. "Most of the donors are not particularly interested in Auroville; they want to support us in our work. They consider Deepam a sustainable project as we have been able to manage it for so many years," she says.

"But we are concerned about the future," says Selvi. "This project must run for decades to come. Donations from Europe may dry up as India is no longer considered a developing country. We hope that, increasingly, donations will come from within India, for we cannot drop the kids when the money runs out. Some of them may be able to continue their lives without our support, but the majority will not. This long-term sustainability has to be assured. Today, Deepam shines for all these children. It must continue to do so."

In conversation with Caryl

For more information visit:
www.deepam-auroville.in



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Appeal process approved

By a vote of 214 'yes' against 23 'no', the Residents Assembly approved that affected individuals can appeal against decisions of some working groups.

Judging by the presence of three conflict resolution methods for a population of barely 2,500 people, children included, one could argue that Aurovilians are a quarrelsome lot. To the triad – mediation, restorative circles and arbitration – a fourth has now been added, that of appeal against decisions of some major working groups.

The new appeal process is the baby of the Auroville Council and Koodam, Auroville's conflict resolution centre. It wasn't an easy birth. The gestation period was long and tiresome, even though all the working groups agreed that there is a need for an appeal process. Objections were raised mainly against the appeal body's ultimate right to overturn a working group's decision. Would the appeal process become something of an objector's charter? The issues were discussed for almost two years.

Two reasons impelled the Council to introduce an appeal process. One is to improve the working groups' decision making processes. If a working group knows that its decision can be appealed, it will take care that all processes are duly followed, such as giving a proper hearing to an affected individual, making a properly reasoned decision, and ensuring that a member of a working group who might be in a conflict of interest position will not take part in the decision-making process. The other reason is that individuals whose views went against that of the working group, now have a right of appeal if the working group doesn't hear them or persists in its decision.

The main authors of the document, Auroville Council member Elisa and Koodam coordinator Niva, are lawyers with extensive experience in French and Israeli law respectively. They soon realised, however, that they had to put their legal education aside if something new was to emerge befitting the ideals of Auroville.

Collaboration

That 'newness', they say, is the concept of collaboration, of finding solutions together. "We need to go beyond our individual perceptions," explains Elisa. "That's why the first step of an appeal involves an attempt to find a mutually-acceptable way to resolve the conflict. We have to learn to work out our difficulties in harmony. The working group must get away from the 'we have the power and can impose' attitude and individuals should no longer feel they can oppose a working group's decision by ignoring or obstructing it. A collaborative approach needs to be cultivated."

Isn't this wishful thinking? "No," says Niva. "Our existing conflict resolution systems, which were created to deal with conflicts between individuals, are already being used to resolve conflicts between working groups and indi-

viduals. They come on a voluntary basis. So the willingness to find solutions together is there."

Necessity

The incentive, however, may come not just from the desire to seek harmony but also from necessity. Many working groups experience that it is sometimes difficult to implement a decision or uphold it in the face of strong opposition. It is more practical to find an integral solution in a meaningful process that respects the positions of all involved. It has the additional advantage that there would be no loss of face of an individual who might lose the appeal, or that a working group wouldn't feel judged and somehow punished if its decision is rescinded.

The appeal process, then, will only start when the attempt to find an amicable solution fails. This job falls to the pool of arbiters, an existing group of Aurovilians which has been constituted under the Conflict Resolution Policy. Is it competent to take up this work? "Over the years, this group of 30 people have developed experience in handling arbitration issues," says Niva. "They've spent a lot of time interacting with the parties, evaluating issues and processing the outcome, both on the level of the mind and the heart. After each arbitration there is a collective evaluation of the process – what worked, what didn't, and how things can be improved so as to provide a learning for the next time. They are definitely up to the task."

"But when we asked them if they were willing to take up appeal issues, there was a lot of hesitation and humility – precisely because they were concerned about how their 'power' to take decisions would be perceived," says Elisa. "It is very important for them as well as for the process that they are not seen as 'authorities with power' but more as 'double-checkers' of our processes. The appeal should give strength to our processes, not dilute them."

Neither the working group nor the individual can ignore the decision of an appeal body. "The axiom is that if you don't respect the system, you can't be part of the system," says Niva. "The working groups have no choice: they are part of the system. The individual has to sign that he or she will accept the appeal decision before an appeal process is initiated. If subsequently he or she does not respect the decision and refuses to collaborate with its implementation, there will be consequences which have been defined in the appeal process. One of those is that this individual would not be allowed to hold a public role for a certain period of time."

No further appeal

The appeal process states that the appeal body's decision is final and binding. There is no possibility of a review of the appeal body's decision, for example by the

Secretary or the Governing Board. "If the Board is to promote the ideals of Auroville, this includes promoting the principle that Aurovilians resolve their conflicts among themselves," says Elisa. "Neither the Secretary nor the Board should become an ultimate appellate court. In any case, it is a function they probably wouldn't want to take up and most likely, the Aurovilians wouldn't appreciate it if they did."

But there is one area where direct involvement is possible. The Auroville Foundation Secretary was recently appointed as 'estate officer' under the Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Act, which gives him quasi-judicial powers to decide on issues of occupancy of land and houses belonging to the Auroville Foundation. It is in this function that he is at present dealing with the occupancy of a dilapidated house in Fraternity community. In 2015, the Funds and Assets Management Committee had issued a vacation notice to the occupants, so that the house could be demolished because of structural defects. This notice was ignored, the occupancy continued and the FAMC was powerless to intervene. "If this would happen today," says Elisa, "this conflict would be brought to the appeal process. The Secretary should only be asked to deal with occupancy cases if both parties request his intervention, or if one of the parties refuses to go for appeal. This, of course, apart from his power to take action *suo moto*."

Going for appeal also ends the possibility that a person can try to canvas support against a working group's decision by going to the Residents' Assembly. "We are aware that some people will try all avenues to get someone or some group to decide in their favour. If an issue is very emotional, the person can call for a General Meeting to vent frustrations or hear the views of others. But one cannot ask for a decision of the Residents' Assembly where appeal is possible," says Niva. "The appeal applies to issues where one or a few individuals only are directly impacted and it does not apply on collective issues which are the responsibility of the Residents' Assembly."

"The Residents' Assembly can only come in if the arbiters refer an issue to it in because they feel it is beyond their scope," says Elisa. "But a decision of the appeal body cannot be overruled by a vote of the Residents' Assembly, for if that would be the case, politics would come into play."

The new appeal process has been approved as a one-year experiment and the Council will now study how the process works in practice to see what needs to be improved or changed. After this trial period, it will be reviewed and fine-tuned and the decisions of more working groups may become eligible for the appeal process.

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Highlights of the Appeal Process

"The true spirit of Auroville is collaboration and must be more and more so. True collaboration paves the way to divinity."

The Mother

Intention

The intention of the Appeal Process is to create a framework to meaningfully address occasionally occurring serious dissatisfactions of individuals with Working Groups' decisions. It answers to a pertinent need in our community to restore a balanced collaboration between Working Groups and individuals.

Aims

The Auroville Appeal Process intends:

- * To support fair, open and transparent decision-making processes.
- * To encourage accountability from our Working Groups (WGs).
- * To enable WGs to revise or change a decision.
- * To encourage the Auroville community.
- * To move towards shared responsibility.
- * To provide a framework to meaningfully address serious dissatisfactions of individuals with WGs' decisions and thus harmonise and improve the relationship between WGs and the community.

Who can appeal?

A person who is directly, personally impacted and affected by a WG's decision or non-decision, and who is either an Aurovillian, a Newcomer, a Working Group, an Auroville Unit, Trust, Service or registered Activity, or a registered Friend of Auroville.

Whose decisions can be appealed against?

Decisions of:

- * The Working Committee.
- * The Auroville Council (in which case, the Working Committee shall oversee the process).
- * The Funds and Assets Management Committee (FAMC).
- * L'Avenir d'Auroville also known as the Town Development Council (TDC).

What kind of decisions can be appealed against?

A decision which directly and personally impacts and affects the person requesting the appeal (this to differentiate it from collective impact that is to be reviewed through the RA process), and which shall be either:

- a) A decision made by an Auroville WG.
- b) A refusal of a WG to take a decision. Or
- c) A decision that was not taken by the concerned WG within a reasonable time period, as evaluated by the Auroville Council (AVC) on a case by case basis.

Registration of the appeal

The person appealing submits an appeal request to the AVC. The AVC checks if the appeal request is valid. If found valid, the AVC informs all parties that the appeal can go ahead.

A friendly attempt to solve the disagreement

Within one week from the AVC's communication to all parties that the appeal has been accepted, the AVC appoints a qualified facilitator to initiate friendly discussions between the WG concerned and the person appealing in order to reach either a new decision or a common understanding of the initial decision. The AVC refers to Koodam or other skilful facilitators in order to give a real chance for a restorative process to solve the disagreement. If no agreement is reached, the process proceeds and an Appeal Body is constituted.

The Appeal Body

The Appeal Body will be composed of 3 (or more) Appeal Arbiters. Before nominating an Appeal Arbiter, the AVC will verify that s/he is not connected to any of the parties or the issue. The Appeal Body is bound by all Auroville policies, guidelines and decision making processes. Its decision cannot be against them. However, they may recommend a WG to change a policy.

The Appeal Arbiters will make an effort to reach their decision by full consensus, with Auroville's Charter and ideals as a common ground. If, after prolonged efforts, full consensus cannot be reached, the decision will be taken by simple majority vote. The Appeal Body is the final authority and its decision is binding.

Functioning of the Appeal Body

The Appeal Body:

- * Obtains all necessary information and documents pertaining to the case from the AVC (meeting minutes, reports), WGs, Units and individuals.
- * Assesses the WG's decision and decision-making process (i.e. impartiality, alignment with Auroville's values, mandate, policies and guidelines).
- * Assesses the validity of the appeal request according to specified criteria.
- * Makes sure that all parties (including any third party who may be affected by the appeal process) will have a fair hearing.
- * Acts impartially.
- * Takes a decision within one month after the hearing process has been completed and will announce the decision to AVC immediately after that.
- * Shall consult or obtain the approval of a concerned WG before deciding on a specific action that require its prior consultation or approval. For example, in the case of a decision involving financial aspects, the Appeal Body will give its recommendation/decision after approval of the FAMC and BCC. In case it's a decision of the FAMC that is being appealed, the Appeal Body will refer to the Working Committee and obtain its approval. The same counts for appeals regarding other WGs.
- * Shall nominate, before the announcement of the final decision, an Implementation Monitoring group, including an AVC representative, and define steps of implementation and timelines for its functioning.

Decision of the Appeal Body

The Appeal Body may decide to:

- * Validate the Working Group's initial decision.
- * Recommend the Working Group to change its initial decision. In this case, the WG has 10 days from the receipt of such a recommendation to make a new decision which is mutually agreeable between the WG and the Appeal Body. At this stage, the person appealing will be consulted but the decision will remain between the Appeal Body and the Working Group.
- * Take a final decision in case the WG maintains its initial decision and is not willing to review.

Closure of the appeal process

The AVC will publish the outcome of the appeal process unless it decides that confidentiality is still required. The AVC follows up on the implementation of the final decision.

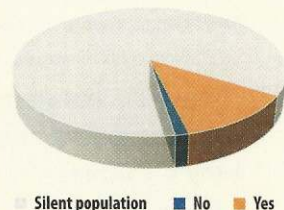
Implementation of decisions

Decisions reached through the Appeal process are binding. In case the decision is not respected, the AVC, if necessary in consultation with other Auroville WGs, will decide on an appropriate course of action in relation to any individual or group who refuses to cooperate with the decision, which may include but is not limited to:

- * Removal of a person as member of a Working Group, Unit or Project and/or ensure that s/he does not take any such position for a specified period of time.
- * Ending monetary support from Auroville or from any of its units and trusts to a resident, unit or project for a specified period.
- * Advising the Working Committee to start a review process which may lead to the removal of the person's name from the Register of Residents and/or Master List.

If you didn't vote ...

Only 237 people (13.8% of Auroville's population of 1718 registered residents aged 18 and above) voted on the appeal policy. This is 90 people less than voted on the new Entry Policy and the new FAMC mandate in April 2016. The Council has called for feedback to understand if this low participation is due to lack of interest, or because the appeal process is difficult to understand, or if the entire decision-making process of the Residents' Assembly should be overhauled.



You need a currency constellation based on your value system

Jean-François Noubel recently visited Auroville. He assisted key working groups and gave public workshops and presentations on collective intelligence and a new form of economy.

Auroville Today: You say that in Auroville a great deal of development happens at the personal level, but at the level of the collectivity we keep building the old world. What do you mean by this?

J-F Noubel: I mean that many Aurovilians have worked intensively upon themselves but when they come together they tend to repeat old patterns of thought and behaviour. This points to 'invisible architectures' – hidden structures that shape our worldviews and our actions. Language, for example. In early times, language would point to very basic things like naming an animal or situation. While language evolves, it keeps elements of the archaic consciousness that no longer fit the modern world. So modern language still tends to focus upon objects interacting with objects, while systems theory and quantum physics have broadened our reality and make us see it in terms of energy, of waves and flows. Current language cannot adequately describe this as a shared reality in the social field.

Also, some of the words we use do not necessarily cover the full spectrum of our experience. For instance, to describe gender we only have 'he' and 'she', whereas we recognise today many more forms of gender identity.

Once we realize the hidden architectures of language, we can decide to evolve it, to "hack" it, in order to overcome some of these limitations. Techniques like Nonviolent Communication try to change some protocols in the conversation so that they don't trigger archaic forms of violence in the way we express ourselves. I use e-prime, which removes the verb "to be" (implying "this I how it is") from the English language. Instead I say, "I believe that" or "I have the opinion that..." etc. to make clear that I express my own experience, not a projection of reality that I confuse for a fact. In this way, it is difficult to impose my view upon others.

You have identified the conventional money economy as another form of invisible architecture. Why?

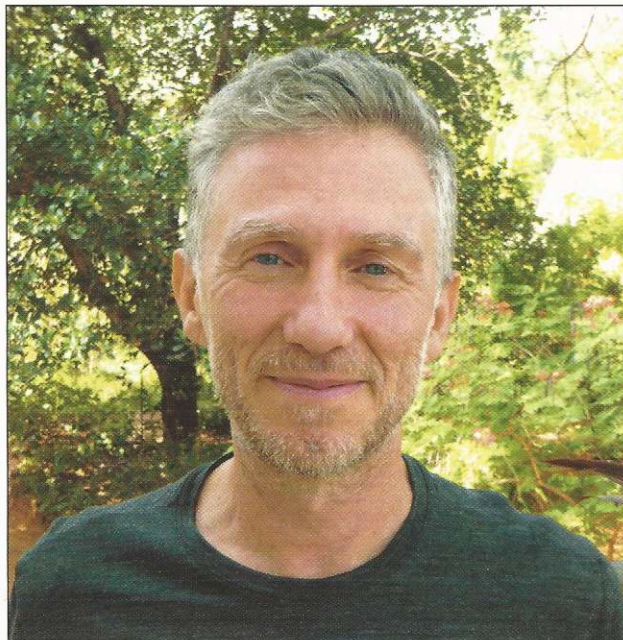
If you play the Monopoly game, you will understand how conventional money works. Although everybody begins equal, you end up with one person who has everything while the rest have nothing. This happens because of the 'Pareto Principle', a law of condensation, accentuated by money. Hence the reason why, in economic terms, we call money a 'scarce currency'. All conventional currencies – dollars, euros, yen, rupees, etc. – operate in the same way.

So if you use conventional money in Auroville, you will import an artificial scarcity into the living system, rather than one of abundance or sufficiency; inequality rather than equality. This can lead to entire systems and philosophies of scarcity, competition and conquest. Hierarchical societies need scarce currencies because of the correlation between concentration of money and concentration of power. If you want to build a new society based upon human unity and distributed collective intelligence, conventional money becomes a poisonous and inadequate technology. This is why the next collaborative societies will create currency constellations based upon their value systems.

We can create other currencies to build different kinds of economies. For now, complementary currencies (like local currencies) exist alongside the conventional system. In the near future, 'free' currency constellations will flourish everywhere. They will free humanity from the dependency on conventional money, and will allow the rise of massive gift economies. For this, you need to understand currency as 'current-see', a language that tracks flows in a living system so the system can balance itself. Currencies can also track flows of gifts in a large gift economy so it can sustain itself in the same way a small local community does.

Until recently, two challenges existed to designing an alternative system to money. Firstly, there was the power and absolute monopoly of the banks that also control the Nation-States. However, the present global banking system no longer functions well and will likely collapse soon. Sooner or later it will lose its monopoly on money – even

some CEOs of big banking groups admit this in private. Secondly, the technological threshold. If you wanted to create an alternative currency just for buying and selling, no technological barriers existed. However, if you wanted to build 'integral' economies that factor in different forms of wealth (material and immaterial) and which work globally



Jean-François Noubel

as well as locally, no previous technology could handle the complexity of this. But now the technology exists to build massive gift economies. In fact, we already have it in examples like Wikipedia or Couchsurfing or the Open Source movement.

How does a gift economy differ from a market economy?

In a gift economy, we give what we can give and receive what we need, but not necessarily from the same person. So I may spend three hours fixing someone's roof, then go somewhere else to get my groceries. After that, I may teach a class at the school while somebody fixes my computer. All this happens without any kind of monetary exchange. In this way, energy flows around the community.

The conventional market economy, on the other hand, operates on the basis of direct reciprocity: I give you something only if you have something to give back. If you have something I need but I have nothing to exchange, I don't get it.

Then again, we can distinguish different types of wealth:

- * 'movable', that moves from hand to hand
- * 'measurable', like the diversity of an ecosystem or the number of hours offered to one another in the community
- * 'rankable', that speaks about the performance of the system. For instance, the quality of life in Auroville compared to other cities in the world
- * 'acknowledgable' which speaks to our subjective inner experience, like peace and joy
- * 'potential', that makes us aware of what we can attract that hasn't yet materialized.

The conventional money economy tends to value only certain kinds of wealth – the movable and a little bit of the measurable (it can measure how much land we bought, but certainly not how many birds live on it). A gift economy, in addition, can find ways of valuing more subjective qualities, like peace and joy, or useful activities to which the conventional economy gives no monetary value. In this way, a gift economy can encompass a more integral concept of wealth. This is why we talk about 'integral economies' and 'integral wealth'.

How could we set about moving to an Auroville economy that values more integral forms of wealth?

First of all, I do not think Auroville works through a market economy, although money plays a role in it! Auroville works mostly through gifts. People don't come here for the paycheck; they come to offer themselves to something higher.

To build that economy more consciously, integrally, is one of the most burning challenges. How? I don't know exactly; I don't think anybody knows. But a few things I do understand. You can't accomplish that with money; you need information about

the flows in the system; and you need Aurovilians to do their integral yoga.

You could begin by brainstorming what kinds of wealth – movable, measurable, rankable, acknowledgeable, potential – you value in Auroville. When you understand this, you can design currencies that track these different forms of wealth. At this point, you don't need conventional money any more. You can use any kind of token or unit to allow people to express something subjective like joy, or how many hours of service they gave to the community today. Money represents just one form of currency among many others we can devise. Currencies are a way of tracking and organizing flows. In living social systems, you need to see the flows and to organise them in a systemic way so that the system remains in balance.

In a small community, you can see who does what, you know who does a good job, and you can sense the state of the whole. In larger communities, the difficulty of knowing this increases, so you need to devise tools to measure eco-diversity, how many hours somebody puts in, how happy people feel etc. In this way, you build a system that enables individuals to become aware of the whole. In collective intelligence we call this "holopticism". Every individual action modifies the whole which, in return, informs the player about what to do next: in a holoptical context, the individual knows what to do because he/she gets informed by the whole. Then actions don't need to come from a chain of command.

But in such an economy, how does one ensure that all the necessary tasks are performed? What if everybody wishes to give time to education but not, say, to waste management?

In a money-based economy, people are paid to do the less desirable work. Won't there need to be some form of directing agency in a gift economy to ensure the system is balanced and not abused?

It depends upon the level of agreements you make to balance the system. For example, the community may ask you to perform certain tasks for some time. Sometimes you may find yourself doing things that do not match what you want to do, but holopticism enables you to see how it contributes to balancing the living system in which you live.

Also, like any living system, Auroville needs 'membranes' to make sure that the people who enter have enough spiritual, intellectual, physical and emotional maturity to participate in such an experiment. The gift economy represents a deep shift in our minds, consciousness and vision of the world. It connects us to the integral yoga as an essential part of this shift. Whereas archaic forms of consciousness tell us, when we need something, to just "take it", and more evolved forms employ systems of exchange, the gift economy requires us to give and receive only from a place of offering and faith: the trust that you can give and receive without the mind telling you that you need some kind of guarantee. It should be easier to do this in Auroville than in many other communities because Aurovilians have already accomplished so much through faith, through deep listening to the call of The Mother.

In September 2011, I decided to shift personally to a gift economy and it has taught me so much about myself and about how living systems work. It showed me that the gift economy works as a cosmic principle and has a very deep spiritual component. In a joyful state, when I only do things that make me blissful, I find that peace manifests.

Going into the gift economy, I had to take responsibility not only for my immediate needs but also for my dreams. I had to affirm to others what I desire to fulfill my life in all its richness and to offer my work in a spirit of service. When you do this, you touch people's hearts and give them the opportunity to become generous. And people feel happy when they give out of generosity.

Are there stepping-stones, like complementary currencies, that can be used to move from a conventional to a gift economy or does it have to be done in one leap?

In many communities, people may still need to operate in a market economy through complementary currencies before they get the courage to shift. In the case of Auroville, I doubt that you need complementary currencies as a stepping-stone because

you already have the elements of a gift economy here. At a personal level, Aurovilians could prepare for shifting to a gift economy by doing acts of kindness and seeing what happens.

If Auroville was successful in creating a gift economy, what would be its relationship with the larger world that would still be using conventional money? Auroville would still need inflows from the conventional economy. Would this not jeopardise the gift economy experiment?

If Auroville opens itself completely to the external market economy, this will tend to kill the project. However, if it closes itself off completely, it will also kill it because you need an exchange with the outside world. Most of the flows of wealth, in the widest sense, can happen inside Auroville without the use of conventional money, although we need currencies to track them, balance them, and holopticism so that Aurovilians so can make informed decisions. Auroville could keep using conventional money exclusively for what comes in and what goes out of the community, not for what happens inside.

In the larger world, some communities and organizations, like Vipassana retreats and Karma Kitchen, already operate on the basis of the gift economy. Auroville could also play the gift economy with the larger world. Some big organisations may offer things to Auroville, not as sponsors but in a spirit of gratitude.

How would this work?

Firstly, you have to clarify to yourselves and to the world what Auroville can offer and what it requires to flourish: the 'desired riches' (not the 'poorism' of basic needs). Then you could build personal relationships with executives of big companies interested in Auroville who want to learn or gain something from this unique experiment. If they feel they received a 'gift' from Auroville in a spirit of generosity – without a price tag attached – they may want to express their gratitude in some way or another, monetary or not. This can come through something that Auroville puts on its desired riches list, like the provision of specialised technical assistance, or supply of technology etc.

I function like this as an individual in the gift economy, and it works. Firstly, I only offer my time to companies that have meaningful things to do. Then, when I first meet CEOs, I ask them what gets them out of bed in the morning. This enables me to relate to them as individuals and connect with their soul's journey. We don't have a commercial relationship; we build a human relationship. Then they may ask me to give, say, a presentation to their senior management. I'll say yes if they agree to make it open source and express a willingness to continue the chain of generosity. In other words, they don't have to express their gratitude by giving anything to me: they can make a gift to someone else. And if they want to gift something to me out of a sense of gratitude, not debt, they can go to my webpage where I have a list of my desired riches.

I really believe that most people in the market economy know how to express generosity, even in the restricted legal system within which they have to operate. Moreover, many people in the world would manifest gratitude to Auroville if they had an opportunity to do so. Of course, it already happens: Auroville would not exist without the world's generosity.

But when you speak of CEOs of companies being ready to help Auroville, they can do it because their company is based in the conventional economy. So doesn't the gift economy you speak of really depend upon the conventional economy for support? Doesn't the gift economy feed off the conventional economy in some way?

One should understand that the market economy represents an epiphenomenon of the gift economy rather than vice versa. The apple that you buy or sell in the market economy originally was 'gifted' by the tree.

So the gift economy actually reflects the way that nature works. We should remember that naturally we come from the gift economy because we grew up thanks to the care provided by our families. Can we put a price on that? So far, Auroville has grown exactly because of this too.

From an interview by Alan

More information at noubel.com

Exploring partnerships

Sunlit Future, a unit offering solar technology expertise and Mason & Co, a unit producing high quality chocolate products, are exploring the possibilities of entering into partnership with non-Auroville organizations.



Sunlit Future

I wandered upstairs into the Sunlit Future offices and could hear the pleasant sounds of people at work. I found myself in front of “*blessings for effectivity*” signed by The Mother, which Divya later told

project, they’d discover that the vision in action wasn’t the same, for example in the way that the people in the organization were treated. True commitment to the project and perseverance are also important values concerning which



Rishi at a solar power plant

me was the original given by the Mother to their mentor, Chamanlal Gupta from Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

Rishi and Divya are the executives of Sunlit Future, a solar technology unit of Auroville that started in 2010. Sunlit Future is an offshoot of Aurore, which is a unit registered under the Centre for Scientific Research (CSR). Divya describes Sunlit Future as a “boutique” business. What this means is that instead of making a product “one size fits all and take it or leave it”, they offer solid technology and superior expertise tailor-made to a client’s particular needs. Divya says that without all the experience they got right here, in the Auroville greenbelt, they could not have branched out into India in the way they have. Their primary clients are non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and repeat customers and word-of-mouth referrals demonstrate their success. They are held in high regard in the field. “Especially Rishi,” Divya adds. “He connects with people. And he cares a lot about the work he is doing and the people who benefit.”

Sunlit Future is currently partnered with the Denmark-based Grundfos Foundation to install 100 pumps in 100 villages throughout India. The project commenced in early 2015 and they’ve completed the installation of 88 pumps. The final stage of the work will begin soon. The Grundfos Foundation’s goal – to provide water to rural people in Africa and India – was a perfect match for Sunlit Future’s vision to provide solar technology all across the Indian subcontinent. The two technologies, the Grundfos pump and Sunlit Future solar system, are improving the quality of life of thousands of people. So far, this project operates in rural areas only. Divya paints me a picture: “To get to most of the places we have to take a plane, a train, a jeep, and quite often have to walk to reach our destination.” This work is hugely rewarding to the team. It’s apparent in the way Divya expresses the importance of providing drinking water with this technology to these far-flung places and out-of-the-way people who have had to struggle for years to obtain water. “Watching the women go down the hill to get a bucket of water and trudge back up the hill: that is something! These women are incredible. The men will not go to get water.”

Have they explored other potential partnerships? Divya explains that they have but they didn’t take off. For example, they would meet a corporate client with whom there was a shared vision and plans would be made to do a project together. But during the execution of the

Rishi and Divya aren’t willing to compromise.

Divya says that the main challenge they are facing at present is human resources. She explains, “We need solar technicians. The technicians we have are highly respected but we don’t have enough: there’s a big demand for them both inside Auroville as well as outside.”

While Sunlit Future intends to retain the boutique-style business model they also want to grow. Instead of scaling up as a regular market-driven business, they have decided to diversify. Now they are exploring a partnership with a large Indian corporation. Divya explains, “There is a huge market, a high demand, there are few providers and there’s not a ‘quality brand’ in solar technology yet. It’s an excellent opportunity to enter the on-grid solar market. The state government has made favourable policy changes and we’re perfectly placed to take this step in the changing environment.”

At present, they are exploring a partnership with a large Chennai group. Divya explains, “The Chennai group has a brand, is an established corporate presence, has funds to invest and has a reputed management team and they want to make a solar company.” But why is the Chennai group interested in Sunlit Future? “Their team is in agreement with us on so many levels, including commitment, business values, and personal contact, all of which are so critical in a partnership.”

The Chennai group is also concerned about training solar technicians, which would allow Sunlit Future to develop the training programme they’ve been dreaming of to meet the emerging demands of the Indian market. And they both have a vision of providing solar technology all over India.

Sunlit Future could opt to form the partnership in terms of equity, consultancy, vendor/supplier, or training. However, the role they’re exploring is as a ‘services supplier’. Sunlit Future is poised to be the sole technology partner of the Chennai group. “Think of it this way,” explains Divya, “A computer has many parts, RAM, mother board, sound card, CD reader and all those pieces that need to be put into a container. When a technician puts those pieces together, you get a system that runs optimally. We’ll be providing the expert technicians to make the solar systems run optimally.”

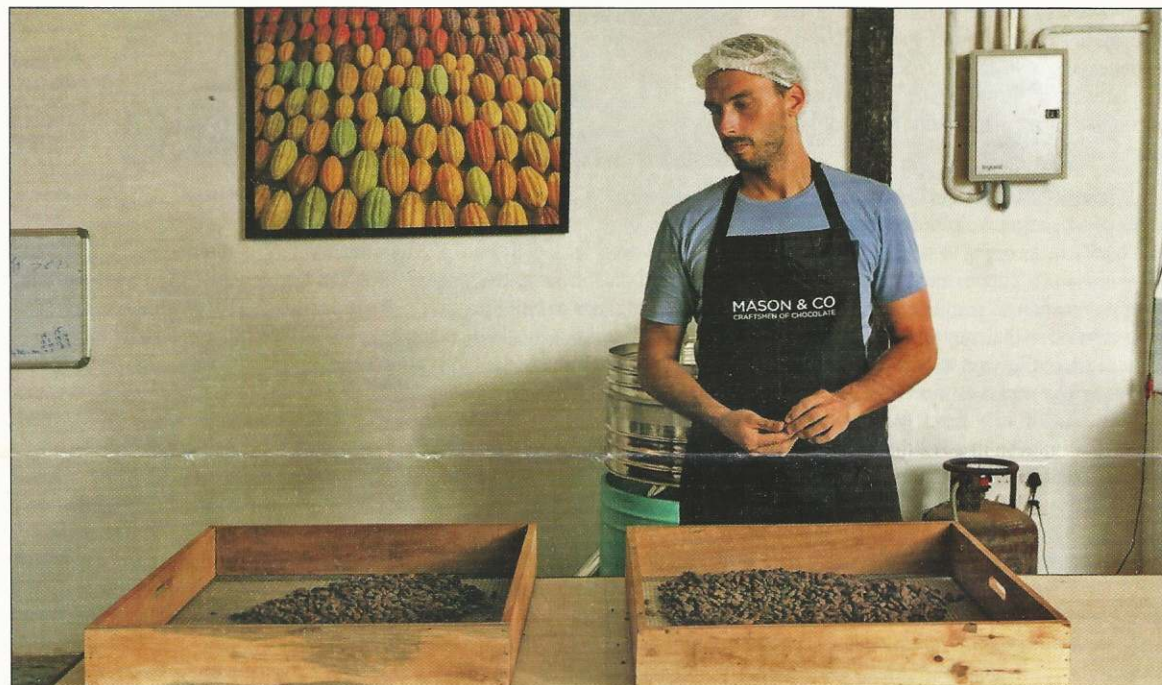
Divya is hopeful that Sunlit Future will see the financial results of such a partnership in three to four years.

Amy

Mason & Co

Fabien is a young Aurovilian entrepreneur who has co-founded, together with his partner Jane, the Auroville unit Conscious Living, of which the tasteful Mason and Co is the brand name. A few years ago, frustrated by the lack of good quality chocolate in India, the couple began to experiment with regional ingredients. Jane, who has a background as a raw chef in Bali, ordered roasted cocoa nibs from Kerala and made a few batches of chocolate. Soon enough, more and more friends were visiting in the hope of tasting her delicious vegan chocolate treats. This was when the idea of providing chocolate to a wider range of people emerged, and it began to appear in Pour Tous and Foodlink. In parallel, a friend of Fabien and Jane’s from South Africa began to work on a logo and brand name, and that’s how Mason & Co., craftsmen of chocolate, was born.

Mason & Co are a single origin bar, which means that all the beans they use originate from a single region. Fabien explains that this allows for a high quality chocolate as it ensures control of processing and traceability. They have also started the production of cacao butter and powder that has allowed them to expand their product range with the addition of new products such as drinking chocolate, a product that has rapidly grown in demand and benefited from the single origin bean to bar concept.



Fabien at work in Mason & Co

Now, there is an ever-increasing demand for their products. Fabien says that since their inception, there has been a steady rise of bean-to-bar chocolate manufacturers starting up in India, and they are no longer the unique concept they were a few years ago. This has pushed the unit to grow. The famous Bread & Chocolate eatery on the Auroville Main Road has materialised because of Mason & Co partnering with another successful Auroville unit Wild Yeast Bakery to form Artisan Revolution.

Upon entering Bread & Chocolate and the factory of Mason and Co there is a distinctive “western” atmosphere. Large framed pictures hang on the impeccably clean white walls, heavy wooden chairs sit along equally beautiful wooden tables, the counters are sparkling, the glass window is shining, and the temperate is relaxingly cool. For a moment, one even forgets the noisy traffic and the humid air outside. Fabien and Jane wouldn’t have it any other way; they are proud of the safe haven that they have created. Fabien says, “I grew up here, I have a strong connection with Auroville that is difficult to explain. It goes far beyond just being my home and the place I grew up in. I connect with the Mother and Sri Aurobindo’s vision and Auroville’s ideals. Although I believe you can be an Aurovilian anywhere in the world, being in Auroville pushes you to grow faster because of all the difficulties you face, both from within and from without. I have realised, though, that being an entrepreneur in Auroville is one of the most difficult of things I have faced so far. In fact, it feels like the more I want to do, the more blockages and walls I hit. It takes a lot of perseverance to keep going.”

The challenge of commerce

Against the backdrop of commercial units constantly struggling to contribute financially to Auroville, Fabien feels that unit holders are often portrayed as being only commercially minded. He says that various people have expressed that this goes against the ‘spirit of Auroville’. “But, there is a need for commercial units for Auroville’s growth and sustainability, and commerciality and spirituality are not mutually exclusive. Money is not the problem, it is how it is made and how it is spent that matters. Subsidizing products made in Auroville units for Aurovilians can be done when you reach a certain size. We are getting close to that and are looking at different options to do that with our own products in the near future.

Having conscious businesses in Auroville should be a focus.”

He feels that the current economic climate of Auroville doesn’t offer the much-needed support for start-ups or established units. He says, “The unit holders work and generate income and people think it’s only for ourselves. But, the reality is that I don’t own anything.” He looks at his sunglasses on the table in front of him and adds: “Apart from my sunglasses, and maybe my bike, everything can be taken away from me – even the visa on which I am here. And I accept that, I have chosen that.”

In the wider context of Auroville’s economy, he adds, “Auroville does not have its own economy. This became only more apparent during demonetisation, for we are linked to India’s economy whether we want it or not. We are not self-sustaining; we depend on outside donors and the Indian government for a large portion of our income. That is not a good thing; I feel that Auroville needs to generate its own income.”

Fabien sees the need for new ideas, more guidance and better communication from the working groups to promote and help units. As a direct result of their experiences in growing the unit the couple are planning to start a youth support group to help young entrepreneurs that have ideas but are not sure about how to realise them within the context of Auroville’s set up.

He believes that accounting and tax advice, as well as

providing start-up capital and loans and discussing contribution waivers would go a long way. “If you are an established business you can surely afford to pay 33% or even 50% of your profit, but if you are a start-up then this is an extremely counter-productive move. It may be a quick-fix in the short-run for Auroville’s cashflow but it is definitely not a long term solution and ultimately will dampen the entrepreneurial spirit and reduce the chance of success for these start-ups.”

Talking about his own unit’s recent challenges in looking for a place in which to expand their activity, he shares: “As far as I know, there isn’t a list of Auroville assets available, nor any idea about the utilisation of our spaces. I see that there are a lot of empty spaces, and yet we are told that none are available. In my opinion only the working groups who hold the bigger picture should allocate space.”

He also believes that outside help is needed because Auroville lacks the manpower and the unbiased objectivity that professional auditors and accounting firms can offer. “Although we are all supposed to be moving in the same direction, conflict of interest exists in Auroville.”

Unblocking the deadlock?

Besides the struggles of dealing with the internal structure of Auroville’s administrative and bureaucratic processes, Mason & Co have to answer the question: are the disadvantages of remaining under the Auroville Foundation outweighed by the advantages? From an economic point of view, Fabien says: “Definitely not.” He adds, “And yet we know that a win-win solution can be found. That solution would not only satisfy our willingness to grow but also be able to generate much more income for Auroville.”

Consequently, for the last six months or so Fabien has been knocking on doors in the Town Hall and inquiring about the possibility of an alternative model for Auroville businesses that would allow them to have some kind of partnerships with outside companies. An ad-hoc think-tank has been considering how this could be made a possibility, for example by the creation of a holding Trust in which outside private limited businesses could operate. There needs to be a fail-safe model that guarantees safety for investors and Auroville alike.

Nothing concrete has been presented to the community yet, but the churning process has definitely begun.

Inge van Alphen

Swadharma students speak of their experience

Auroville Today published an interview of the Facilitators of the Swadharma programme in September 2016. Manas met recently with the participants of the 2016 and 2017 programmes to understand it from their perspective.

The Swadharma programme welcomes groups of young adults to help them find their unique gifts, or their swadharma. Watching the final presentation by students of the January 2017 programme, I was struck by the diverse styles of storytelling. Clearly, this was an interesting group of people, and I decided to meet them to understand the Swadharma programme through their eyes.

Diverse backgrounds

The participants for Swadharma 2017 came from extremely diverse backgrounds. Meedhu trained to be a journalist and worked for some time with *The Hindu*, but was disillusioned with the lack of ethics in journalism. She had always loved performing arts and moved to an NGO that taught ballet to HIV positive and street-rehabilitated children.



The 2017 Swadharma participants

Ishan, on the other hand, was a capital markets trader working with interest rates in Brazil. Gaurav is a graphic artist and Ayush works as a software engineer. What happens when you put such different people together in an intensive experiential learning programme?

For Ashwin, the biggest asset of the programme was the “extraordinarily talented” group of participants. “60% of my learning was from my peers,” says this young Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) graduate who has been on two other yatras, or learning journeys. It was on one these other yatras through Himachal Pradesh in 2012 that he met Siddharth, who joined him in Swadharma 2017.

The Auroville experience

For Isaac, who has never stepped out of Hyderabad, Auroville is a dream come true. There is a tattoo on his arm that he got two years ago, which shows mountains and forests – a reminder that he needs to be in nature, not in a city. “This is where I belong,” he says. I am curious about another tattoo further up his arm, which shows a cross and a crown of thorns. It’s a reminder of when he was an orthodox Christian. He’s moved on since then, not willing to live in constant sin. “I want to un-complicate life,” he says. He wants to be himself, do what moves him, and not worry about too much else. He thinks Auroville might be the perfect place for him.

Like Isaac, Ayush has always lived in one place – Cochin. He had thought about ideal societies, but had brushed them aside as childish dreams. He finds some parts of those dreams reflected in Auroville. He is fascinated by the PTDC experiment and cannot believe that it works without enforcement. He is a big fan of Mitra hostel and sees it as a microcosm of Auroville and a window into Auroville for new volunteers.

For many participants, the favourite part of the programme is meeting Aurovilians and hearing their stories. Meeting people who are passionately living their swadharma makes the programme come alive. They find it truly inspiring that such a diverse group of people could be living in harmony.

Participants also notice challenges in Auroville. Looking for a place to eat lunch on her first day here, Meedhu met a woman from a neighbouring village who took her home for a meal. But she instantly felt the tension between local Tamilians, like her host, who are employed in Auroville and Auroville residents. When she talked about this with Aurovilians, she was told that the villagers do not fully understand the ideals of Auroville. She is still wondering if there is more to that story than just ideals.

Programme feedback

For most participants, Swadharma has the right mix of structure and flexibility. The morning sessions of yoga and Awareness Through the Body (ATB), and the evening journal writing provided a consistent framework of exploration and articulation. At the same time, the programme has enough time and opportunity for thinking and introspection. The Facilitators were always available for discussion and for counselling. “There is a well-defined process of introspection and reflection,” says Ishita.

“ATB was the most awesome thing that happened to me,” says Sushmitha, in her characteristic high-energy, super-fast speech delivery. This was after a full day of ATB in the Tibetan Pavilion, a full day of guided meditation and listening to the ‘inner GPS’. She learned to remember feelings and notice changes. And this ability to notice changes might be the most important thing she is taking away from the programme.

“The journey has been very meaningful,” says Ishan, who has discovered the spiritual side of himself that he had not

acknowledged before. He likes this new amalgam of scientific temper and spirituality.

Gaurav talks about the underlying elements of the programme that are not always talked about. For example, the idea of beauty. He sees beauty in the programme in the way things are done, the way flowers are arranged and how a plate of salad is prepared. This insight, that beauty is not just ornamentation, is an important learning for him.

Some participants felt that there needed to be a little more exploration of the ideas of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother. In many of their interactions with Aurovilians, they heard references to the foundational philosophy, but did not quite understand the linkages. At the same time, the session in Savitri Bhavan on the topic was not particularly popular, so there might be a need to inject some creativity into a topic that can quickly become very heavy and didactic.

Impact of Swadharma

“I feel much more confident after Swadharma,” says Siddharth. His confidence was especially low after two failed start-up attempts. That was on a back of an unfulfilling engineering job with a mining company, writing the entrance exam for the Indian Institutes of Management and deciding not to join, and dropping out after going through the seven-day selection process for the Indian Air Force. Siddharth feels he can be himself now, without worrying about what others might think. A few days after the programme ended, Siddharth went to meet some friends in Chennai. Sitting with them in their hostel room, he decided to practice mindfulness, something he had learned in Swadharma. He was aware of everything around him – everyone’s voices, the sound of the fan, the noise of traffic – and his own responses to questions he was asked. “It was a wonderful experience,” he recalls.

For Neha, the change was felt at a very deep level. Coming from Jhunjhunu, a small town in Rajasthan, Neha had withdrawn into herself. For the past few months, she had not spoken with anyone, not even her parents. “I could not imagine a place like this existed,” she says, where she is not judged, but accepted as she is.



In the Botanical Gardens

She wants to stay much longer in Auroville, learning and growing into her confident self.

For many participants, Swadharma was the first time that they connected with their spiritual dimension. Isaac had never done yoga or meditation. Siddharth was always rational. And Gaurav considers himself an agnostic. But each of them had a profound experience that opened new possibilities. “I can feel the energy of people around me and my intuition is more dominant now,” says Gaurav, not quite sure what the new experiences mean.

And what about finding that true calling? Is Swadharma helping people find their paths? Meedhu already knew she wanted to work in the performing arts, particularly in theatre and dance. But what she learned in Swadharma was the why and the how. She now knows that her art must be socially meaningful and that it must encourage and support traditional art forms and traditional knowledge.

Sometimes it is not about finding a path, but making a very significant and fundamental shift. Shivam, whose ancestral lineage includes both traders and healers, is beginning to be more “functional in society.” Widely read and deeply curious, he lived entirely in the world of ideas in his head, jealously guarding and hoarding his knowledge. The ideas discussed in Swadharma were not new to him. But he now has practical insights. And a deep desire to communicate and share his understanding.

For others, such as graphic artist Ishita, the shifts are much more subtle. She came with little expectation and found ways to be a little more comfortable in her shoes. She has always questioned her intuitions, but is now learning to trust herself. She is also learning to ask the right questions. Working on a programme on menstrual hygiene for rural girls, she realised that she doesn’t even know these little girls. Who are they? Do they even want to talk about menstruation? Who will they talk to? How will the years of prejudice be washed away in one programme session? This skill of questioning will be invaluable in her work.

Gaurav said no to a client (something he has never done before) on the second day of the programme. That must surely rank among the fastest changes ever in experiential learning. Things did become clear for him very quickly. For example, his realisation that the need to make money comes after the need for fulfilling work.

Next steps

Most of the participants are staying back in Auroville after completing the programme. Apart from just exploring the place, each one of them talked about solidifying their learnings from Swadharma. “I want to further develop myself here,” says Ishan, “before I try to transfer my learning to the external world.” He had come with the intention of getting involved in Auroville’s work, so staying back is a natural choice for him. In fact, he had worked on a business plan for a ‘library of things’ in college, so he will probably get involved in that project in Auroville.

Others are planning to stay for a few weeks and see how things work out. Some have clear ideas of where they will work, while others want to explore a wide range of activities. For Gaurav, a lot depends on his own effort. So, he is going to give himself time and experiment.

This idea of Auroville as a protected place where one can experiment and learn is echoed by almost everyone. And so is the risk of moving out before they have had a chance to ingrain their new habits. As Ishita puts it, “Will it last outside the bubble?” Does this mean that the Swadharma programme needs to be longer? The 2017 programme is a week longer than the 2016 version, but is the five-week programme long enough to create lasting change?

The previous group of participants

Going through a programme like Swadharma is always going to be energising for young people. But does the effect last beyond the few weeks of the programme itself? To try and answer this question, I caught up with the five Swadharma participants from the 2016 group who have stayed back in Auroville.

Garima found her purpose through Swadharma and continues to follow it by working with waste materials. For Siddharth, the focus is much sharper now with fewer distractions. Also, the peer learning and group bonding that emerged in 2016 continues to this day and is a source of tremendous support. For Som, Swadharma was the most intensive programme she had attended. “The feeling is still there,” she says.

But staying with the habits is not easy. “There was a push from the programme,” says Pranit, but now that there are no structures and habits such as journal writing have fallen by the wayside.

Their perception of Auroville also has changed somewhat. Aishwarya, who now works with Earth & Us, thinks that the Swadharma program pushed open doors in Auroville. But once she was out of the programme and “merely a volunteer,” residents are no longer as open and welcoming.

Being a volunteer, it turns out, is not so easy in Auroville. There are challenges with housing, expenses and community interactions. One participant even reported an Aurovillian saying that volunteers are the worst things to happen in Auroville. Another challenge that seems to come up often is the unstated but powerful role of hierarchy in Auroville organisations and units.

“But in spite of all this, I feel at home here,” says Divyanshi. She wasn’t even planning to stay back after Swadharma, but has stayed for five months now. Her true Swadharma journey started after the programme.

Would they change anything in the programme itself? Most of the earlier group of participants felt that the way people are evaluated needs to be a little more open and flexible. Also, the comments and feedback could be more sensitive. They felt that some of the comparisons that are made between people are not always helpful. “Evaluating people based on a micro project is not the point of Swadharma,” says Som.

Another issue that came up is the shallow introduction to many activities in Auroville. “Perhaps we can spend a little more time working at a place rather than merely listening to an introduction,” says Pranit. He feels that fewer activities with more depth might lead to better understanding.

The Swadharma programme ended on a high, but there has not been much follow up after the programme. The 2016 group feels there could be some system put in place to remind them of key ideas and reinforce the habits. I ended my conversation with a



Awareness Through the Body (ATB)

final question: “Imagine that before the programme you knew everything that you now know about Auroville and Swadharma; would you still enrol in it?” The answer was a unanimous “yes”.

Culture abounds

The month of February is culture month par excellence. Auroville Today selected three performances and one exhibition for a brief review - acknowledging that many other events deserved to be reviewed as well.

The Peacemakers

On 17th and 18th February, the Auroville Choir Youth Choir and Instrumental Ensemble combined their formidable forces to present extracts from Karl Jenkins' *The Peacemakers*. *The Peacemakers* is a choral work which, in Jenkins' words, "is dedicated to the memory of all those who lost their lives during armed conflict". The seventeen movements set to music texts from 'messengers of peace' that extol and evoke the essence of peace. The 'messengers' include figures like Gandhi, Martin Luther King, the Dalai Lama, Nelson Mandela and Rumi as well as extracts from the Bible and the Qur'an.

This is the second time that the Auroville choirs have performed extracts from the piece, the intention being to perform the full work next year to celebrate Auroville's 50th birthday. Last year, one of the performances was somewhat marred by a misbehaving microphone, but this year the full texture of the music could be appreciated.

While, in some ways, Jenkins' is a traditional composer, he experiments with many different instruments and sound effects. The music ranges from the hauntingly mellifluous *Healing Light: a Celtic Prayer* to the insistent chant rhythms of *Let There be Justice for All* to the thrilling conclusion, 'Anthem: triumphant peace'. At times, perhaps, Jenkins compositions do not fully evoke the innermost qualities of some of the passages he chooses but, in compensation, his music has both a lyricism and a dynamism that is a source of inspiration.



PHOTO: MAR COSMIK

The Auroville Choirs, under the directorship of Nuria, have matured since last year. The various layers and textures of the music emerge more readily now and, while the high registers still appear a little thin, the basses are a wonderful foundation. The Instrumental Ensemble, directed by Matthew Littlewood who also composed two original pieces as bridge passages, provided a beautiful accompaniment, weaving in the various 'voices' of flute, keyboards, piano, double bass and percussion, as well as some more exotic instruments.

More than anything else, the sight of over one hundred Aurovilians of all ages singing and making music together, was an incredibly powerful evocation of human unity. It summed up what Jenkins, echoing the words of Rumi, the 13th century mystic poet, described as the defining ethos of the work,

'All religions, all singing one song: Peace be with you.'

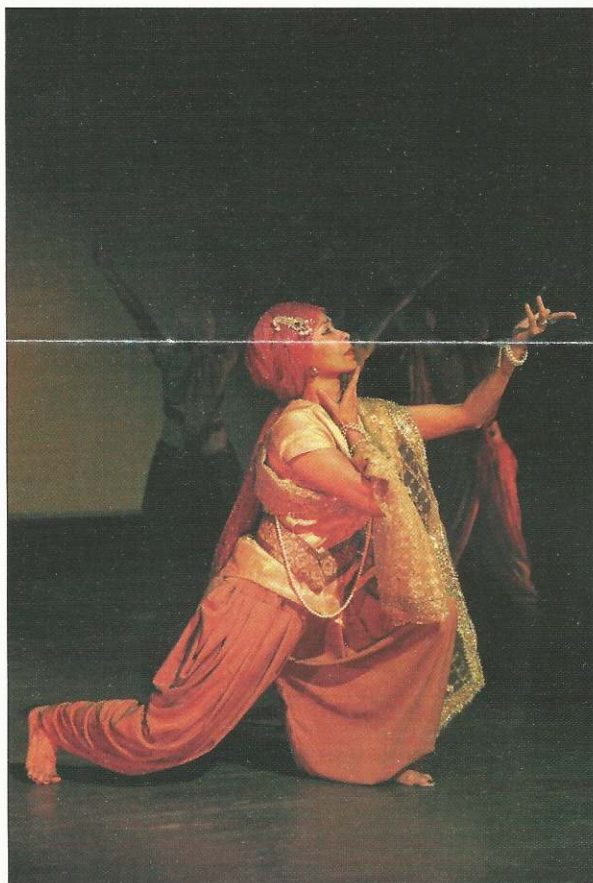
Alan

Sambhavami Yuge Yuge - I Am Born From Age To Age

The *Bhagavad Gita* is a seminal, psycho-spiritual work that is deeply rooted in the collective consciousness of the Indian (Hindu) psyche. Practically every Hindu household, at some point or the other, reverberates with the melodic hymns of the *Bhagavad Gita*, literally the *Song of the Lord*. And from the 700 verses, there are few that singularly define the deep-rooted beliefs of the Hindus, such as the concept of the "Avatar" - the incarnation of the Godhead on earth. As verse 8 of chapter 4 states, "For the protection of the good and also for the destruction of the wicked, for the establishment of Dharma, am I born from age to age."

It is this verse that lent its name, "Sambhavami Yuge Yuge - I Am Born From Age To Age" to the poetic dance-drama choreographed by the sisters Devasmita and Madhumita Pattnaik. Given my Hindu background, I was inexorably drawn to attend the performance. Just as the *Gita* holds that eternal spiritual truths need to re-interpreted anew to suit the needs of the time, similarly I was curious to see what innovations and interpretations the two sisters, seasoned Odissi dancers, would bring to bear on their choreography.

Spanning over an hour, the performance was a *tour-de-force* - boldly conceived and executed with style and grace by Madhumita (as Krishna), Devasmita (as Arjuna) and a troupe of dancers (Odissi students of Madhumita). In keeping with the needs of our contemporary international audience, the Sanskrit hymns that accompanied the performance were also translated as English narrations.



Arjuna (Devasmita) beseeches Krishna

This recital in two languages arguably lengthened the event but, for the most part, I felt that this was skilfully handled: often Krishna and Arjuna would enact, with slow dramatic moves, the English narration, while the accompanying dancers would break out in dance in tune to the corresponding poetic Sanskrit hymns. Secondly, the performance made a clear link to the needs of our times by pointing out that Auroville is like Kurukshetra (the battle-field which is the backdrop to the *Gita*) in that each individual soul has to find the meaning of one's life through one's field of work. In other words, the *Karma Yoga* that the *Gita* espouses will always be of relevance to Auroville. The other major message of the *Gitas* is that everything that happens is determined in advance by the Will of God. Krishna is asking Arjuna to become a perfect instrument without doubt, without confusion and with complete surrender.

Odissi was the base form of the dance, but I appreciated the innovations on the traditional forms - innovations in the costumes, in the dance sequences, which had echoes of another martial dance form from Odissa called Chhau, and in the use of visual slides as a backdrop. Also, what was quite unusual, and arguably the most spectacular dance sequence, was the moving human sculpture formed by all the dancers, called *Vishwarupa*, as together they portrayed Krishna, the human charioteer, as the multi-dimensional Godhead. This depiction was further enhanced by the adroit use of lighting, which created a perfect shadow sequence on the back screen.

In a performance of this length, there are naturally some scenes that stand out more than the others. For me, while the lyrical pieces of pure and swift dance sequences were admirable, the depiction of the three "gunas" or qualities of our human nature was skilfully conceived and portrayed both in the movements that were used and in the colour of the costumes of the dancers.

It is hard to be critical of performances in our small community of Auroville, especially if one knows the choreographers as friends as I do. Yet, if I were to give a balanced perspective of the performance, I would suggest that the extras, such as the backdrop slides and props were not fully interwoven with the dance sequences that were unfolding on stage. The additional characters - a sage and his disciples - initially also appeared superfluous but, on reflection, provided a clever way of bracketing the beginning and the end of the performance, just as the *Bhagavad Gita* is a bracketed text within a much longer epic, the *Mahabharata*. Overall, I was duly impressed by the creativity of the choreographers who had the courage to conceive and execute a performance of this length, with multiple actors enacting scene after scene with changes in pace that kept the audience engaged.

Bindu

My Autopsy



PHOTO: MAR COSMIK

Marlenka, who saw the piece twice, writes, "Hamish is a one-man show. Imagine: for 75 minutes, non-stop, this man performed energetically and continuously. He spoke, he sang, he played two musical instruments, he imitated bird and animal and motorbike sounds as well as various accents, so very smoothly transitioning from one to the other without missing a beat,

Autopsy is a poetic dark comedy, written, enacted and conceived by Hamish. Hamish's multi-layered performance, arguably drawn from his auto-biography, has been staged at multiple venues and won rave reviews of the audience. *My Autopsy*, directed by Fif, was recently performed on three successive nights in February in Auroville.

one wondered when and where and if he had time to take a breath. And all of this while moving about on stage. No, he never stood still. The range of emotions Hamish expressed, humour, pathos, fear, outrage, fear was thrilling and touching. He reminded me of the brilliant Charlie Chaplin in his footwork and body movements. In my opinion, Hamish has raised the bar for theatrical talent in Auroville. It's really a privilege to see such work." Bindu

Dots of Life

Life... in a light-abounding, gravity-free, petal-drenched world where one can walk the cloud or walk on it, or tumble down the starry sky, or have a little birdie perch on your snowy head while you look back at it all...

Over the last 10 days of February, appropriately coinciding with Auroville's Birthday week, Eva's magical world burst open to a popping world of colour at Citadines' *Galerie d'Arts*. This is Eva's second showing at Citadines, and she seems to continue the story from where she left off two years ago. What comes through is a deeper optimism and a resounding "Yes" to life - both individual and collective. Eva quotes a line by Einstein from a biopic she recently saw. "Either everything is miraculous or nothing is!"

"Ever since I moved to Citadines, every day is a joy and gratitude," says Eva. "It is as if I am given so many gifts."

Here is another Auroville artist who is collecting and connecting the dots of life, while



visioning and revealing our world already unfurled in another dimension.

Priya Sundaravalli

Art for land auction



Paul the auctioneer holding a painting

Throughout February, the walls and spaces of the Unity Pavilion were filled with over 300 artworks donated by over 70 artists from Auroville and around the world. Paintings, photographs and prints ranging from colourful portraits to subtle monochrome abstracts adorned the walls, and the open spaces were dotted with dramatic large sculptures and delicate ceramic pieces. Some artworks from an earlier time had a special significance: they were seen and touched by the Mother. Viewers were encouraged to take their time to wander through this showcase of Auroville's creativity, and to place a bid for their desired artworks via the *Art for Land* website.

Art for Land is a dedicated action commenced last year by Jasmin, Aravinda and Mandakini of A4A to raise funds to secure land within the Auroville Master Plan area. This year's activities expanded to include a month-long fundraising campaign of daily activities at Unity Pavilion, such as concerts by popular Auroville band *Emergence*, film screenings and talks – events that inspired many supporters to donate for the land. Aurovilians were enticed to sign up for a recurring monthly land contribution via the offer of a photo of their choice from Loretta's rare photograph collection.

The month of activities culminated in Auroville's second *Art for Land* auction on 25 February. Winning bids for the artworks were determined at the event, with auctioneer Paul's entertaining banter keeping the audience chuckling. The art lovers quickly learnt that their casual nose-scratching would be interpreted by Paul as a generous bid. Successful bidders walked away with their desired artworks tucked under arm, knowing their purchase had

supported an excellent cause. Disappointed bidders resolved to return next year with greater determination and a few extra coins in pocket. The artworks will remain on display throughout March, and unsold items can still be bid for at the venue or online.

The event raised an impressive amount that exceeded last year's total. "We were so pleased to have raised so much to help Auroville's goal of securing the land in the Master Plan area," says organizing team member Jaya, acknowledging the input of many people who generously assisted (including helper Swaha, musicians Nadaka, Amando, Gordon and *Emergence*, sound engineers Rolf



Krishna
by Emanuele Scanziani
(Watercolour on paper)



Lotus bud
by Dilip Patel
(Watercolour on paper)



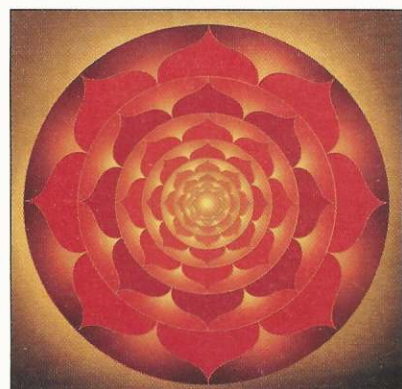
Siblings
by Michel
(Stoneware)

and Joel, Suresh's website support and other contributors like the African youth, and tea ceremony presenters, and Loretta for her donated photos). Mandakini adds, "We are all grateful to the Unity Pavilion team for their extraordinary work!"

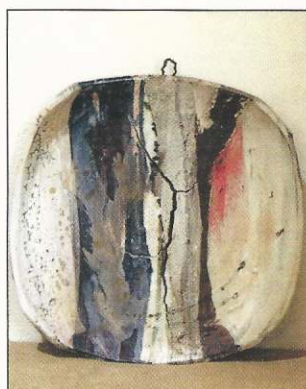
The Unity Pavilion team of Jaya, Devasmita and Rema, with Mandakini as treasurer, intend to continue the *Art for Land* initiative, along with the *Art for Land* website as a dedicated showcase. The success of the first year's initiative and its high standard of artworks sparked the team's realisation that fundraising is not the sole purpose. They became inspired about the project's long-term potential to establish awareness and manifest support, and they decided to proceed on a larger and more collaborative scale in future. "Securing the land Mother envisaged for Auroville needs a very sustained collective effort," says Jaya. "This is possible through an aspiration of unity – in attitude as well as material effort. The Mother said that she'd rather have one million people give one rupee each than one person giving one million rupees! It was great to see so many people come together to help secure the lands needed for manifesting The Mother's vision for 'the City the Earth needs'."

Lesley

for more info visit:
<http://artforland.auroville.org>



Radiating Mandala, by Vivechana
(Digital print on canvas stretched
on a wooden frame)



Ceramic Platter by
Anamika
(Stoneware)

Brief News

Dominique Darr photo exhibition

From 4 to 14 February there was a photo exhibition at Citadines "And the adventure begins ..." in homage to Dominique Darr. Dominique was selecting the photos for her exhibition in December when she passed away on the 25th. This exhibition was composed primarily of black and white photographs from the early years, showing the pioneers working on the Matrimandir. It also captured the texture of everyday life in photos of flute lessons, Aikido on the beach, playing sports etc. as well as the birth of one of the first Auroville babies.

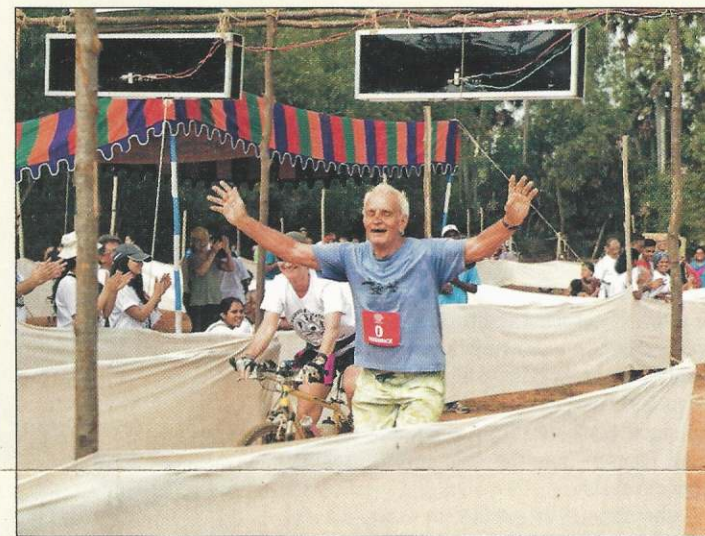
Create Auroville Together

Members of the Residents Assembly Service and Auroville Council have been hosting Create Auroville Together (CAT) meetings. The stated intention is to offer "a space to unleash our creative energies, to respond with discernment, respect and a spirit of collaboration instead of reacting through likes, dislikes and distrust." The latest offering was entitled "The City - We Forgot" where the speakers explored the following: "Auroville is a dream for all humanity. It does not look like other cities, has different priorities. It was designed to change us and change life. How did the city happen and why does it wait to be realised?"

Entry Policy on Hold

The new Entry Policy approved in 2016 has been put on hold. An Entry Task Force has been created to work towards the resolution of the concerns that have been expressed within the community about the way it was being implemented. Some of the areas being worked upon include conditions for becoming a Newcomer; review of past and present cases; the respective roles and responsibilities of the Mentors and the Entry Service; and the membership of the Entry Service.

Auroville Marathon



Frederick finishing the full marathon

Auroville hosted its tenth annual marathon on 12 February. Approximately 3,000 running enthusiasts came from all over India and ran either a full marathon (42km or 26 miles), half marathon or 10 kilometres. It was accompanied by a 2-day market in which Auroville units and activities offered their creative wares.

Shared transport

A Shared Transport Service 'abundance through sharing' was launched recently. In an effort to bring down the cost of travel while reducing the environmental impact and traffic in the city, individuals are encouraged to share a ride. The Auroville unit, Earth&Us, in collaboration with Auronet, Auro Cabs, and 260dpi (Suresh, Surrender) has started this not-for-profit adventure. In the first four weeks, the organizers reported that the sharing platform saved 22 trips, approximately 1 tonnes of carbon emissions, and about Rs. 22,000.00.

Ultimate Frisbee

The Auroville Ultimate Frisbee club held its 7th annual Auroville HAT Tournament recently. Players from Auroville and across India came together to play, and to share their skills, ranging from beginner to world-class. Aurovillian players see this as being a sport in the true spirit of Auroville: building bridges between varying social and cultural backgrounds as the participants learn to work and play together.

Passing: V. Gnanavel

On the evening of February 3rd, Aurovillian V. Gnanavel of the Matrimandir Nursery left his body due to a stroke caused by high blood pressure. His family, wife Geetha and children Madivanan and Kalaiyaran were with him, just a week before he would become 53 years old.

In the early 1970s, Gnanavel had come from Kottarakai to work as young boy in the Matrimandir Nursery, readily learning about plant life and attending Ilaigarkal school. After running his own nursery in Kottarakai for some time, he eventually came to live in the Matrimandir Nursery in the early nineties, and he joined Auroville in 1992.

Gnanavel was known as a gentle, introvert family man, who loved his work and was dedicated to the Matrimandir gardens. In recent years, it was Gnanavel who quietly took up the management of the Nursery, having started there as a kid so long ago.

Gnanavel's remains were buried at Adventure's burial grounds on Saturday February 5th.



Reconnecting with Spirit through Nature

Aikya has lived in Auroville for the past twenty two years. Here she describes how her quest to understand the meaning of life led her to a deeper understanding of the natural world.

As a child, while I felt like a stranger on this earth I did have a profound experience of the infinity of the Universe. I knew that I would have to wait until I was grown up to have this mystery unraveled.

I had a very normal upbringing in the north of Belgium. We had a lot of animals at home and I could relate with great joy to the simplicity and purity of animals and the natural world.

When I grew up I thought psychology would give me some clues to the mystery of life but I soon discovered the answers didn't go very far. Nevertheless, I studied it for five years. Then I decided to travel to the Far East for eight months.

Some years later, in 1990, I got introduced to Auroville where I lived close to nature in Revelation and Samridhi Communities. Although touched by The Mother's words, still I did not get the answers I needed because here nothing was structured: you had to find your own way. Then I met a Tibetan Buddhist teacher and was invited to study in a newly-opened International Buddhist Institute in New Delhi, which I did for three years.

This is where I started to get answers. But I began to wonder, 'Where does life fit into all this?' That's when I got a 'vision' of Auroville in a rainbow of colours.

Return to Auroville

By now I felt I understood a little better how to bring spirit and life together.

Before coming here, I had worked as a psychologist in Belgium: I was the director of a centre for suicide prevention. We were dealing daily with existential issues. It was interesting work and I had a wonderful team.

But when I came back to Auroville I did not think of taking up this kind of work. Instead what presented itself to me was the flowers - there were so many flowers here! It brought back my early love of the beauty of creation. And when I heard that Mother had given significances to the flowers and met Richard Pearson from the Ashram, it added another dimension.

At that time, if you wanted to work with flowers you went to work in the Matrimandir Nursery, which is what I did for some time.

In 2000, I met Barbara who introduced me to energy and consciousness work using the essences of Mother's flowers. This was the start of diving deep into the mysteries of life.

Then I was invited to do flower arranging in the Solar Kitchen. This opened up a whole new field for me because now I could create a particular atmosphere. I aspired to sensitise people to beauty through flowers and their silent vibrational influences.

People were very happy with this initiative and some of them began to bring flowers for me to arrange. In the early days there seemed to be many more flowers in Auroville and the children knew Mother's names for them. Now that knowledge seems to be less present.

Reawakening Wonder

At that point, I felt I wanted more contact with people again, so I initiated nature projects at Deepanam School to support the sense of wonder in children. I also started the World Game (or Sandplay). In this, the children are given small objects representing people, trees, animals, houses, etc., and are invited to create their own world by arranging them in a tray with sand. The objects are, of course, symbolic, and in one way this drew upon my psychology background, but I did not want to go into analysing the children. I wanted to offer them a magical space where they could express their dreams and, if need be, their concerns.

When they are older they often remember the

secret memories of childhood. Mother said that the dreams of the children of today are the realities of tomorrow, and she encouraged the children to believe in their dreams.

I was invited by SAIIR to research this topic and this resulted in a book called *Glimpses of Wonder*. I am still doing the World Game, now with the children of The Learning Community (TLC). For the past eight years, this has happened in my place in Anusuya, which is like a fairy house and forest garden full of secret connections made over time. I feel this fits perfectly to the vision of TLC of using Auroville as a place of learning.

However, after a time I began to feel some limitation with the sandbox play, and wanted to open the World Game out into the natural world. So I started nature and spirit sessions, letting nature guide us into its mysteries and secret laws as we make flower mandalas, collages and small movies etc.

Animal communication

The next chapter, which came as a continuation of my love for nature, came when one of my dogs was in pain. I was at a loss about what to do but I knew of somebody who was doing animal communication and wrote to her. I sent a picture of my dog and she wrote back telling me that it was his time to leave and giving me some advice about how to ease his passing.

I recalled that Mother had deep connections with animals and trees and did a lot of research with cats. But it was natural for me to want to learn more about animal communication. Nancy Windheart, who had given me advice about my dog, invited me to participate in two online courses. Later, in 2014, I got the chance to go to South Africa and study for a

few days with Anna Breytenach, a famous animal communicator.

we already know intuitively, although very often the mental intervenes and then we get it wrong. I don't think my role is to become an animal communicator. Although we learned that everybody can do it, you have to devote a lot of time to it and be really centred all the time. But still, it is very present in my daily life and I feel the connection to the messages of nature as living symbols. It has also inspired me to incorporate intuition games into my sessions with the children. Since then, several Aurovilians have asked me to give an introduction and share my experiences and I will surely do this in the near future.

The White Lions

Recently I returned to South Africa for one month because I received a scholarship from the Linda Tucker Foundation (with additional support from Auroville's MT&D programme) to participate in the 'White Lion Leadership Academy'. Here I was plunged not only into the world of animal communication but also into collective and shamanistic dreamwork, evolutionary astrology etc.

It all began when I read a book called *Mystery of the White Lions: Children of the Sun God*, which is Linda Tucker's first-hand account of her journey into the mysteries of the most sacred animal on the African continent: the White Lion.

It's a true story which begins when she was saved from lions by a local woman who walked calmly among them. Linda went back to England and resumed her successful modelling career, but at a certain point she wanted to understand what had happened and returned to South Africa to look for this woman. She discovered it was Maria Khosa, who was known as a 'lion shaman'. In an initiatory process supervised by a high African shaman, Maria told Linda that she would be the next 'Keeper of the White Lions', that this was her mission and she had to be ready to die for them.

The white lions appear only in one region of South Africa called 'Timbavati', literally 'the place where the star lions come down'. African elders look upon the white lions as the 'king of kings' and there are many legends about them. According to local indigenous knowledge, the white lions have returned now to give a message to

humanity: that it is the end of a period, a critical moment, and people must go back to the source for wisdom.

When Linda met Maria, all the white lions were in captivity in zoos, circuses and 'blood lion' camps where they were raised to be trophy-hunted. But Maria had a vision that a white lion would be born to be released into the wild in the Timbavati region. Soon after, Linda heard that a white lion cub called Ma-Ra had been born on Christmas Day, 2000, just outside a small town in South Africa called Bethlehem...

After a huge struggle, for the cub was born in a 'blood lion' camp, Linda obtained Ma-Ra who, by this time, was an adult lioness with three cubs. Linda purchased land, and now she has managed to reintroduce three prides of white lions into the wild in a protected area.

However, this is much more than a conservation project; it is also about leadership and addressing the most urgent crises of today. After observing lions for a long time, she decided to set up her White Lion Leadership Academy. Here she started to train



Aikya

people in the thirteen laws of LionHearted leadership, which are based on nature's laws.

It is very easy for us in Auroville to relate to these because of the links with the Integral Yoga. The thirteen laws are related to the fact that you must go deep into yourself to discover your purpose and what you must become and stand for.

When I returned, I spoke to the children in The Learning Community about my experience and invited them to make videos for an international Talent Challenge which Linda was organizing last August. The background to this is that these lions are still trophy-hunted in South Africa: hunters pay up to 100,000 dollars to be allowed to make a kill and there is no statutory protection for the lions. As there was an upcoming meeting of CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) Linda wanted to put pressure on delegates to stop this practice by getting children around the world to 'Roar' for the lions through videos that highlighted their plight.

This really resonated with the kids from The Learning Community. With eleven of them we made videos, which we managed to send off just before the deadline. Two of the kids, Asia and Yam, are among the international winners. As their prize, in March they, together with one parent, will be visiting the White Lion Heartlands in South Africa and will experience the White Lions themselves.

This shows that children who grow up here have a strong potential to express their heart qualities in things that matter. They are very concerned about the disappearance of wildlife at a rate that might leave us without free-roaming elephants or lions by the time these kids grow up.

Where I am now

Now my dream is to spread the message of 'Nature and Spirit' to children and adults in Auroville, and to continue learning from and cooperating with fellow Aurovilians who are also exploring and deepening the links between nature and spirit. I am grateful to get the opportunity to learn together with the children of The Learning Community in a joyful, spontaneous way. And I'm in a long inspiring relationship with Barbara (Ritam), learning about truth rhythms which, like earth rhythms, are applicable to all levels of life.

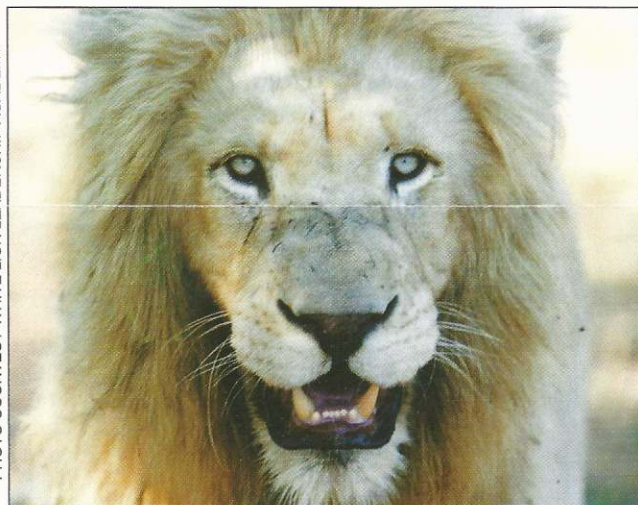
'Nature and Spirit' is about reconnecting with spirit through nature and its multitude of expressions through sacred, protected spaces like the one in Anusuya forest where the activities are based. It is an invitation to deep silence from where expression can flow.

In terms of the yoga, the next step we need to take is to access the intuitive consciousness and nature is a very good way to develop these faculties. Mother also showed us how nature can help us come into contact with our psychic heart centre.

Today, we tend to forget the sacred that is in everything. I feel my mission is to bring glimpses of remembrance of the vibrant aliveness and wisdom of all that surrounds us to inspire us to build together, with a Lion Heart, the 'New World' for which Auroville aspires.

From an interview with Alan

PHOTO COURTESY WHITE LION LEADERSHIP ACADEMY



White Lion

few days with Anna Breytenach, a famous animal communicator.

The indigenous people, like the San people, know very well how to connect with animals and Anna was in close connection to them. On a scientific level, Anna explains animal communication in quantum terms. At this level everything is connected and part of a common field, so if you access this field, you can receive telepathic communications.

Anna taught us that to enter into communication, firstly, we have to get rid of all our preconceptions regarding animals, then we need to become very still and make a clear intention to connect, through the heart, with a particular animal (or plant). Then the actual communication can be extremely fast and can come through an image, sound, word or feeling.

I experienced this in an exercise she gave us. She brought us to an animal dropping and asked us to identify the animal. Initially, I had no idea but I focussed and at once I saw very clearly the face of an ostrich: it was an absolutely clear image. Through exercises like this, we learned how much

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