

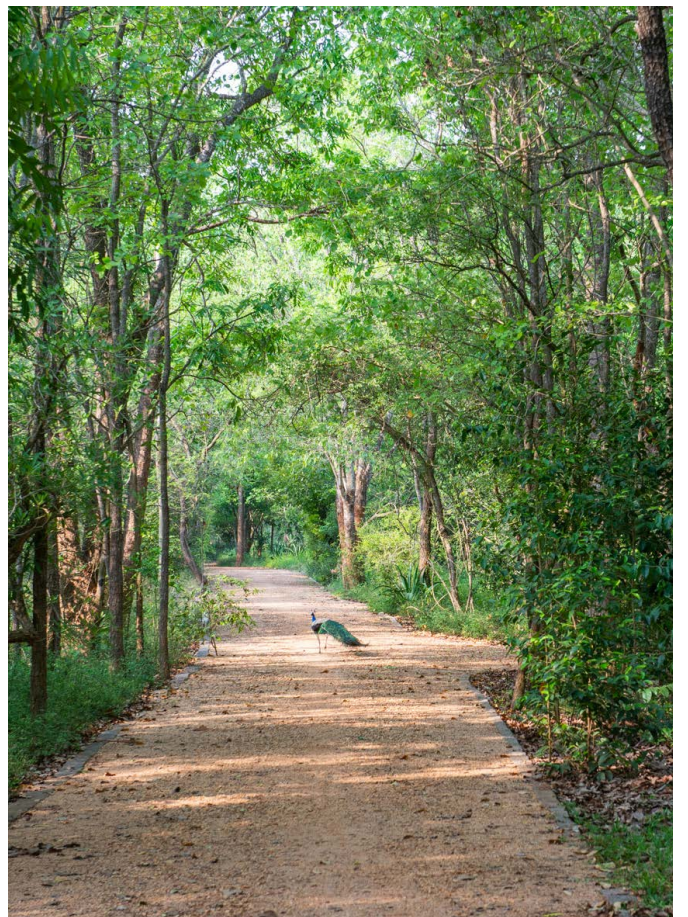
THE DEVELOPMENT OF AUROVILLE'S ASSETS

*Decades of Dedication
by the Auroville Community*



WORKING COMMITTEE
of the Residents' Assembly
AUROVILLE FOUNDATION

December 2023



Decades of dedication from Auroville's residents and well-wishers from across India and around the world has resulted in the development of this unique, globally recognised and acclaimed international, spiritual township.

Auroville was founded in 1968, on a barren plateau of land, with an invitation to all people 'of goodwill'. The development of the township was a challenging endeavour, due to the desolate environmental conditions and financial scarcity. An immediate focus was on the ecological restoration of the area, and progressively the development of the community enterprises to finance the project, as well as services to provide for the needs of community members, extending to the surrounding population. Aurovilians worked, invested and fundraised to buy the land, create the enterprises, services, residences and infrastructure that exist today, seeking support from individual well-wishers, as well as from international or Gol grants, and the project is still growing and evolving.

THIS DOCUMENT OFFERS A GENERAL OVERVIEW AND HIGHLIGHTS SOME SPECIFIC CASE-STUDIES OF HOW THE COMMUNITY WAS DEVELOPED TO DATE, ACROSS KEY AREAS:

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Thank you to all the Auroville photographers whose pictures have been used in this report



1. LAND & ENVIRONMENTAL REGENERATION

All of the land belonging to the Auroville Foundation was purchased by Aurovilians and other individual well-wishers in the name of Auroville.

The Government of India has never made grants available for land acquisition.

Auroville's Master Plan Area comprises 4849 acres (approx. 20 km²), of which the internal, 'City Area' comprises 1213 acres (approx. 4.91 km²) and the surrounding Green Belt 3636 acres (approx. 15 km²). Auroville established its own Land Board early on, to

take care of the purchasing process, and protect land from encroachment. To date, Auroville has succeeded in purchasing:

- 1072 acres in the City Area, estimated at 1072Cr.
- 1114 acres in the Greenbelt, estimated at 557Cr.
- 1000 acres outside of the Master Plan area, estimated at over 500Cr.

(Source: Auroville Land Board)

THE TOTAL LAND HOLDINGS PURCHASED WITH FUNDS FROM THE AUROVILLE COMMUNITY AND ITS WELL WISHERS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOWNSHIP IS VALUED AT OVER 2000 CR.

100% of these land purchases are donations to Auroville, as they are legally owned by the Auroville Foundation. As the first point of Auroville's Charter states that "Auroville belongs to nobody in particular",



but to “humanity as a whole” (Auroville Charter), this ownership of immovable assets by the Auroville Foundation is understood to mean that the Auroville Foundation holds these assets in trust for humanity as a whole. All purchases have been made thanks to the voluntary sale of land by their previous owners. There has been no government involvement or funding in this process (Source: Auroville Land Board member, 2022).



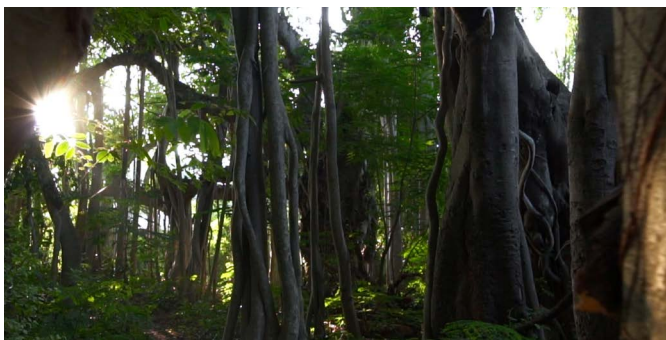
For more information:

α See the website of the Auroville Land Board: <https://land.auroville.org/>

ENVIRONMENTAL REGENERATION OF THE LAND

Auroville land is stewarded by Aurovilians with deep care, and over the years has **successfully been restored from a barren plateau to a healthy ecosystem, including the regeneration of the almost extinct, endemic Tropical Dry Evergreen Forest (TDEF)** in collaboration with the Foundation for the Revitalization of Local Health Traditions (FRLHT) and the European Commission (EC), with guidance from the French Institute in Pondicherry and Pondicherry University.

To this day, half a million TDEF saplings of over 200 species have been planted, with more than half the species reaching maturity and regenerating. This vibrant growing forest, with its rich biodiversity has become a **valuable gene bank for the TDEF, securing these rare species for the future.**



The annual financial value of the carbon sequestration and the absorption of air pollution by Auroville’s trees alone is estimated at 3.9Cr (Introduction to the Forest Group – June 2023, p. 15).

In conjunction with afforestation efforts, **soil and water conservation have been important aspects of the environmental restoration work undertaken on Auroville land,** notably through the construction and maintenance of check dams, kolams, percolation ponds and pits and budding networks, and biomass production and maintenance to aid rainwater percolation and to increase soil fertility, thus maximising biodiversity potential. **An estimated 6,240,000,000 litres of water are infiltrated per year on Auroville-stewarded land annually,** as a result of ecological restoration work (Introduction to the Forest Group – June 2023, p. 15).



As the forest flourished the **bird list has reached over 100 species,** and the **butterfly list is estimated at over 200 species.** The reptile population has been seen to increase with **over 20 species of snakes recorded,** with other species such as the Monitor Lizard increasing in numbers. The forest has also become a habitat for a mammal population, notably the Indian Mongoose, Civet Cat and the Jackal. In recent years, even the Porcupine and Spotted Deer have made their way back to the area and with occasional sightings of the Jungle Cat and the Rusty Spotted Cat, **the mammal biodiversity indicates a thriving ecosystem.**

A number of ecological organisations have been founded in Auroville, that offer trainings and also undertake significant environmental restoration and



conservation work in other parts of India and the world, such as the Auroville Botanical Gardens, Palmyra, Pitchandikulam Bioresource Centre and Sadhana Forest (see “Land Conservation and Afforestation” in Auroville: A Brief Introduction and 54 Years of Realisations, pp. 7-8).

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT



Another important aspect of the regeneration of Auroville land has been agricultural development. When Auroville was founded, local farmers were only planting low-intensity seasonal crops such as peanuts in the area, given the poor growing conditions of the severely degraded and vulnerable landscape. As early as 1969, Auroville’s first farm – AuroOrchard – was established with the blessings of The Mother. At

present, ~372 acres of land in Auroville is dedicated to farming. There are 21 farms in the community, united under the Auroville Farm Group, each working with some combination of orchards, crop fields, vegetable gardens and/or dairy. The vision for the Auroville Farm Group is to create and maintain a healthy and conscious farming system, integrated with and providing food for Auroville, while taking into consideration the needs of both the land and the Auroville community. Auroville farms use a wide variety of ecologically oriented farming philosophies, such as traditional organic, permaculture, biodynamic, natural farming (etc.), emphasise soil regeneration and make use of eco-friendly technologies such as windmills (for water), solar energy, micro-sprinklers and methane gas collectors.

Auroville has also long been associated with the pan-India organic farming movement, with a number of Aurovilians being pioneers of the “Organic Farming and Seed Revival Movement” in Tamil Nadu and All-India (associated with G. Nammalvar and Vandana Shiva) since 1984. To this day, “Pebble Garden”, a living model for how severely eroded land can be regenerated for farming (and forestry), using no external inputs of soil or compost, trains farmers, farmer leaders, NGOs and forest officers on soil, forest and seed conservation across the country (Auroville: A Brief Introduction and 54 Years of Realisations, p. 8).

Auroville’s farms further welcome and train student groups and volunteers from across the world, while

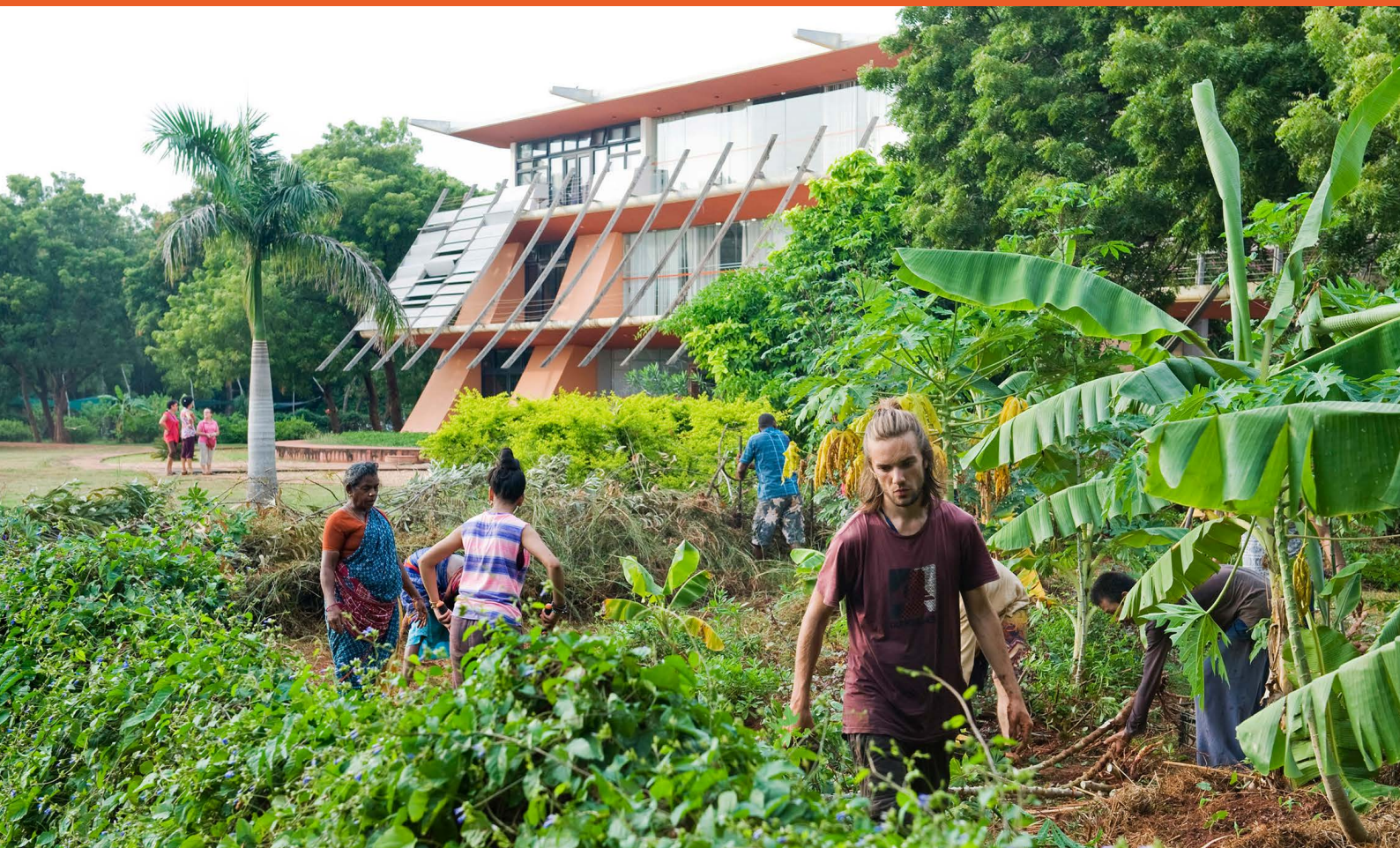


some carry out collaborative research projects with international institutions (see Auroville Consulting, 2017).



For more information:

- α On Auroville's Tropical Dry Evergreen Forest regeneration work, see the award-winning documentary *Ever Slow Green* by Christoph Pohl, 2022.
- α On Auroville's environmental restoration work in the Auroville area, see the Introduction to the Forest Group – June 2023.
- α On Auroville's environmental restoration work beyond the Auroville area, see "Land Conservation and Afforestation" in *Auroville: A Brief Introduction and 54 Years of Realisations*, pp. 7-8.
- α On Auroville farms, see the Auroville website: <https://auroville.org/page/farming>



2. MATRIMANDIR

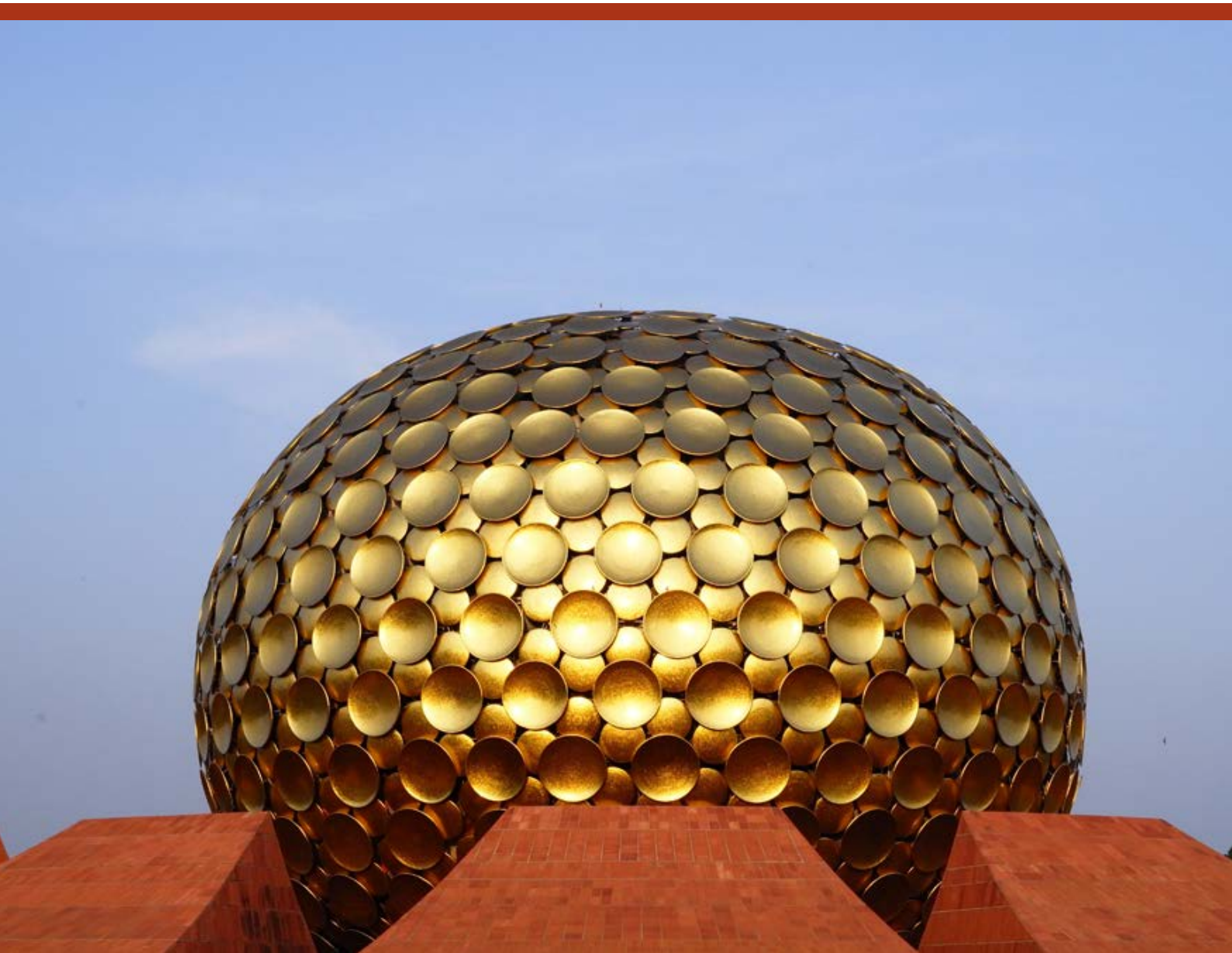
The first construction on Auroville land was the Matrimandir, ‘the soul of the city’: the Matrimandir amphitheatre was constructed in time for the inauguration of Auroville in February 1968.

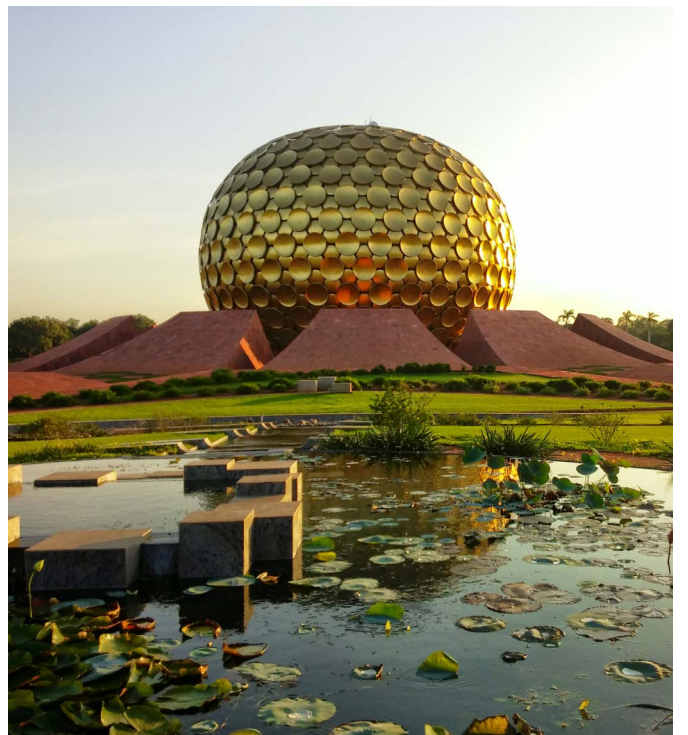
The Matrimandir is the Auroville community’s most significant accomplishment to date – a unique, golden, large-scale, spherical edifice dedicated to spiritual concentration, surrounded by a garden and amphitheatres. Many Aurovilians physically participated in building the Matrimandir, alongside local employees.

To this day, **all funds for the Matrimandir have been provided by the donations of Aurovilians, Friends of Auroville, national and international well-wishers.**

For more information:

- α See the Matrimandir website: <https://matrimandir.org/>
- α See the documentary on the building the Matrimandir: Building Matrimandir, Labour of Love: <https://auroville.org/page/building-matrimandir-labour-of-love-3849>





3. PUBLIC & RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

PUBLIC BUILDINGS

The vast majority of public buildings in Auroville have been personally funded by Aurovilians and well-wishers, including institutional donors such as the European Commission. In a few cases the Government of India (Gol) has provided some funding, notably for the Bharat Nivas - Pavilion of Indian Culture, for the administrative hub of the Sri Aurobindo International Institute of Educational Research (SAIIR) as well as for some educational facilities.

According to the the Implementation and Development Phasing Programme 2013-2018 published by L'avenir d'Auroville (Auroville's Town Development Council) states that, **in 2013, the total built up area of Auroville's public facilities** (including schools) was **37,838 square meters**.

Auroville's public buildings include:

α Research Centres

such as the Auroville Centre for Urban Research (funded by the European Commission and the Dutch Foundation Stichting de Zaaier), the administrative building for the Sri Aurobindo Institute of International Educational Research (funded by India's Ministry of Education) and the Centre for Scientific Research (funded by Aurovilians).

α Cultural Centres

such as Centre for Research in the Performing Arts (funded by the Government of India) and the Pitanga Cultural Centre (funded by Aurovilians)

α Health & Healing Centres

such as Sante – Auroville Institute for Integral Health (funded by private donations with a matching contribution by the Gol) and Arka (funded by private donations), the Quiet Healing Centre (funded by private donations of well-wishers) and Verite Integral Learning & Yoga Centre (funded by private donations raised by its Auroville founders)

α Educational Institutions

such as Savitri Bhavan (funded by personal donations and a Gol grant), and Future School (primarily funded by private donations, with a small amount from Gol)

α Community Facilities

such as the Auroville Visitors Centre (funded by the The Housing and Urban Development Corporation – Government of India, contributions from Auroville entities and individuals, and other donations) and the Solar Kitchen, Auroville's community kitchen (funded by The Housing and Urban Development Corporation – Government of India, and contributions from Auroville entities and individuals).

ACUR - AUROVILLE CENTRE FOR URBAN RESEARCH



The Auroville Centre for Urban Research (ACUR) is the community's Town Hall complex, located in Auroville's Administrative Area at the centre of the city. It offers administrative and meeting facilities for a number of Auroville's administrative bodies ('working groups') and communication services, including a MultiMedia Centre. Completed in 2005, **ACUR was built with funding from the European Commission (EC)**, as part of the "Asia Urbs Programme", **with a matching grant provided by the Dutch Foundation Stichting De Zaaier and Auroville resources** to host other aspects of community administration than town planning.

For more information:

- α Visit the ACUR project website: <https://www.auroville.info/ACUR/>
- α Visit the Auroville website: <https://auroville.org/page/town-hall-complex-805>

CRIPA



CRIPA is a **cross-disciplinary performing arts rehearsal hall, educational facility and research centre** devoted to music, dance and theatre located within the Cultural Zone of Auroville. It is the first building of a larger planned Performing Arts Centre, and currently hosts classes, workshops, rehearsals, and performances open to all, free of charge, in its rehearsal hall. The building was funded by the Gol; a grand piano was donated by the Dutch Foundation Stichting Aurofonds; all ongoing costs of maintaining and operating the facility are supported by community funds, as is the case for all other infrastructure funded by the Gol.

For more information:

- α Visit the Auroville website: <https://auroville.org/page/cripa-centre-for-research-in-the-performing-arts>

VERITE



Vérité is a **retreat centre for integral, personal and collective development within Auroville**, founded in

1985. The centre was built on **22 acres of revitalised barren land**, and features sustainable infrastructure with facilities for group sessions (from yoga classes to scientific conferences), therapy rooms, guest accommodation and a community kitchen. The ongoing focus on ecological sustainability is evident given its alternative solar energy system, organic orchard and garden. Vérité offers a unique setting for individuals and groups that are searching for living, working examples of alternatives to the conventional approaches to life on this planet.

Verite was funded entirely by personal donations raised by its Aurovilian founders.

For more information:

- α Visit the Verite website: <https://www.verite.in/>

VISITORS CENTRE



The Auroville Visitors Centre is a **campus where day visitors and guests can begin to discover and learn about Auroville**, its ideals, history and present-day manifestation, housed in a complex of buildings that include exhibitions, an information and guest reception service, boutiques with exclusively Aurovilian products and handicrafts, a bookshop, cafes and a food court.

The **original building complex was funded by HUDCO**, The Housing and Urban Development Corporation – Government of India, to be a demonstration in appropriate building technologies and renewable energies. HUDCO wanted this centre to extensively use earth and ferrocement technology, wind and solar energy, and a wastewater recycling system. **The centre was built by the Auroville Earth Institute between 1989 - 1992 and was granted the 1992 International Award “Hassan Fathy, Architecture for the poor”.**

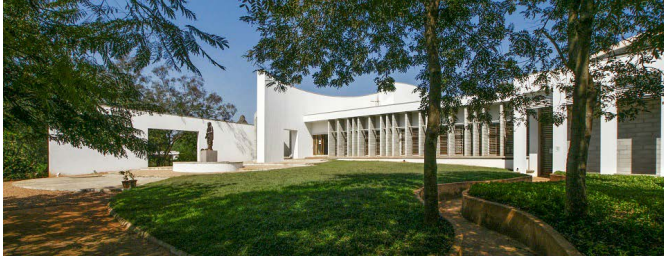
The **Visitors Centre complex has since grown considerably, with funding from Auroville units and private donors, including CSR funding** from NLC India Limited, a central public sector undertaking, for a road between the Visitors Centre and Matrimandir.

For more information:

- α Visit the Auroville website: <https://auroville.org/page/Visitors-Centre>
- α Visit the Auroville Earth Institute website: https://www.earth-auroville.com/visitors_center_en.php

α Visit the Auroville Design Consultants (Visitors Centre architect) website: <https://www.aurovilledesign.com/pdfs/visitors-centre-auroville/>

SAVITRI BHAVAN



Savatri Bhavan is a centre for spiritual education based on the vision and teachings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. The central focus is Sri Aurobindo's mantric epic Savitri : a legend and a symbol, which the Mother has called 'The supreme revelation of Sri Aurobindo's vision'. It organises various programmes and exhibitions and welcomes visitors year-round.

The Foundation stone for the Savatri Bhavan complex was laid by Dr. Nirodbaran, Sri Aurobindo's scribe for Savitri, on November 24th, 1995. The complex was built in various phases, the first of which was completed in 1998, the last in 2018. It includes facilities such as an auditorium, hall, exhibition spaces, libraries and a hostel. Funding for the Savatri Bhavan complex was raised by its Aurovilian founders from private donations, including from the founders themselves, as well as a grant from the Government of India under the SAIER Development Scheme for the provision of educational buildings in Auroville.

For more information:

α Visit the Savitri Bhavan website: <https://savitribhavan.org/>

RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

The vast majority of residential buildings in Auroville have been personally funded by Aurovilians; this investment is a donation to the Auroville Foundation as there is no private property in Auroville. Residential buildings include a range of accommodation types, from stand alone homes to planned communities, youth, senior or newcomer housing. In a few instances, the community has requested and obtained Government of India funding for residential development, in the form of apartment buildings, to be used to accommodate teachers, youth, and people newly joining the community, on a temporary basis.

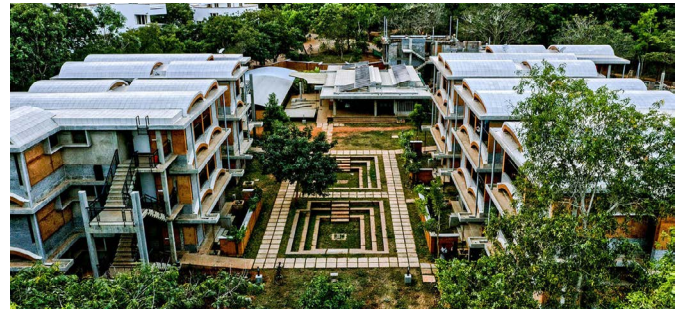
According to the Implementation and Development Phasing Programme 2013-2018 published by L'avenir d'Auroville (Auroville's Town Development Council)

states that, in 2013, the total number of dwelling units in Auroville was 1842 (p.10).

In a 2014 asset list compiled by L'avenir d'Auroville, the total square footage of these residential buildings was 2 million and the estimated cost was 258Cr.

Examples of Residential Buildings:

HUMANSAPES



Humanscapes is a residential community that offers low cost accommodation for young Aurovilians aged 21 - 40, working full time for Auroville. The project also has a strong sustainability focus, as an applied research and demonstration project of Sustainable and Integrated Urban Living. The aim of the Humanscapes Habitat project is to act as a benchmark in habitat for course correction towards a sustainable and harmonious model of development in the context of the present global crisis of energy and climate change. This mixed-use development of residences, community, and workspace is a touchstone for standards for low-embodied energy building. Using local building materials and skills, the residences are designed to be a net energy-positive habitat, by generating their own energy, using renewable energy, zero-discharge of water, reduction and recycling of solid waste, drought-resistant local endemic species landscaping.

The Aurovilian architect and project holder, Suhasini Ayer, was awarded the Green Solutions Award at the United Nations Climate Change Conference COP26 summit for the Humanscapes Habitat project for creating an affordable and sustainable housing hub in the universal township of Auroville.

The Humanscapes building was funded by a Government of India grant from the Ministry of Human Resource Development (now Ministry of Education). All on-going costs of maintaining the facility are supported by community funds.

For more information:

α Visit the Architects' website: <https://www.aurovilledesign.com/pdfs/humanscapes/>

CITADINES



Created in 2010, Citadines is a residential community in which approximately half of the **apartments are offered as pro-bono accommodation to Aurovilians who have fully dedicated themselves to working for Auroville, and who do not have the means to finance their own housing.** In addition to 35 apartments, the complex has a communal kitchen, an exhibition centre and a multi purpose hall to foster a communal life.

The project was financed entirely by private donations of the remaining Aurovilian inhabitants, in the fraternal spirit of Auroville's economy.

For more information:

- α Visit the Citadines webpage on the Auroville website: <https://auroville.org/page/citadines>

SENIOR HOUSING

There are **3 senior residential facilities in Auroville, funded primarily by the personal contributions of Aurovilians** and managed by the Auroville Health Services (AVHS), an Auroville community service.

- α **Mahalakshmi Home** is an assisted living facility with 8 permanent and two temporary accommodation units for seniors, as well as common spaces such as a canteen, a large living room, a meditation space and courtyard garden. Mahalakshmi home is intended for senior Aurovilians who have dedicated their lives to Auroville, who can manage their daily living situation, but may require minimum support, which is provided by the Auroville Health Services team. The project was initiated in 2016 by an Aurovilian, who personally undertook the fundraising required for the project.
- α **Marika Senior Home** is home for up to 4 senior Aurovilians who require constant assistance provided by the Auroville Health Services caregivers, who further take care of providing food and other supplies,

and daily visits by the AVHS doctor. The home was funded entirely by the personal contribution of an Aurovilian community member, and renovations have been completed with funds from the Auroville Housing Service and the Auroville Health Services, both Auroville community services.

- α **Ellen's Home** was funded entirely by the personal contribution of an Aurovilian community member and has recently been renovated to accommodate 4 senior Aurovilians under the care of the Auroville Health Services team. Renovations have been completed with funds from the Auroville Housing Service and the Auroville Health Services, both Auroville community services.

For more information, see:

- α The Auroville Health Services webpage and report of 2022-2023: <https://auroville.org/page/avhs>
- α The Mahalakshmi Home webpage: <https://auroville.org/page/mahalakshmi>

INFRASTRUCTURE

The Auroville community developed its own **infrastructure** – roads, water, sewage, electricity – **with the personal investment of Aurovilians, government grants*, private donations and CSR funding.** This includes technologically innovative and sustainable projects such as rammed earth roads, rainwater harvesting, solar and wind energy systems.

(*since the financial year 2008-2009, at the initiative of the then Secretary of the Auroville Foundation)

ELECTRICAL SERVICE



The Auroville Electrical Service is the internal electricity service unit of Auroville, which was established in 1975. **Auroville Electrical Service takes care of electrical installation, operation and maintenance work in the community** and is also the one-point contact for the Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation (TANGEDCO) on behalf of Auroville.

The Auroville Electrical Service is a **self-supporting service for its running costs**, and receives **financial support from Auroville's community budget for**

repairs, and occasional Gol grants for infrastructure investments since 2011. The Gol investment over the years is estimated at 6.5 Crore, primarily for HT cable, transformers and power transmission stations (Source: TDC member, 2017).

For more information:

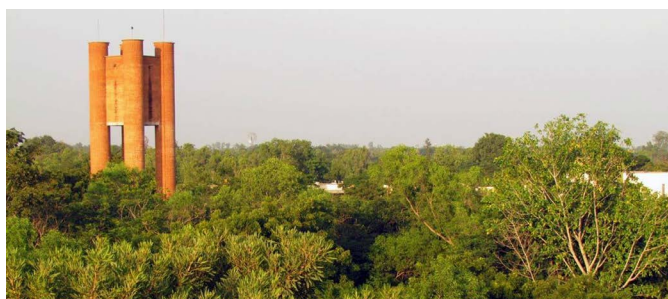
α Visit the Auroville Electrical Service website: <https://aurovilleelectricalservice.org.in/>

ROAD SERVICE



The Auroville Road Service was founded in 2008, and has two departments: a road repair service and a road development service. **The road repair service is funded by the Auroville community**, with an annual budget of ~30L in 2022 (Source: Budget Coordination Committee, 2022). **The road development service is self-supporting, and has received Gol infrastructure grants for new road development since 2009**, estimated at 3 Cr in total (Source: TDC member, 2017)

WATER SERVICE



Auroville Water Tower

Auroville Water Service (AWS) is a core service for Auroville, supplying water to the Auroville community. Since its creation in 2000, **AWS has built a long term water infrastructure within the township**, and is now a centralised system dedicated to supplying domestic water. At present it covers 60% of Auroville's water supply, ensuring 24/7 delivery to approx 1200 users,

while continuously monitoring the water quality, pressure regulation, and the minimization of water loss, which is now close to 0%.

The Auroville Water Service is a **self-supporting service for its running costs, receives financial support from Auroville's community budget for repairs, and occasional Gol grants for infrastructure investments (water pipes)** amounting to more than 2Cr in total since its inception (Source: TDC member, 2017).

For more information:

α Visit the Auroville Water Service website: <https://www.aurovillewaterservice.org/>

VARUNA

Varuna is an organisation managed by Aurovilians and friends of Auroville – partially operating as an Auroville Unit under the Auroville Foundation, partially operating as a Private Ltd – **that generates free, renewable energy for the community**. Varuna operates **6 wind generators** in an onshore wind farm in Tamil Nadu, **2 of which are assets of the Auroville Foundation**. The total annual generation of these 6 wind generators is approximately 80 Lakh KWh. Part of this energy is wheeled to the HT zone of Auroville. Part of it is sold to TNEB and other third parties, and the revenue is used to subsidise Auroville's TNEB electricity bills. Varuna also operates solar panels in Auroville's HT zone.

The total renewable energy generated by Varuna's wind generators and solar panels exceeds the total energy consumption of Auroville (not all of which is from renewable energy sources), **ensuring that Auroville's CO² -emission balance is negative**.

For more information:

α See 'Auroville powered by Wind' at Auroville Radio: <https://www.aurovillerradio.org/auroville-powered-by-wind/>

RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

Auroville also has several important research & development units and centres working on various aspects of civil infrastructure.

The Auroville Earth Institute (AVEI) is specialised in the **research, development, and application of earth-based building technologies** (among the most cost effective, low carbon, low embodied energy solutions for sustainable development), **for roads and buildings**. Over the last 33 years, AVEI has become **one of the world's centres for excellence in earthen architecture**, working in 38 countries to promote and disseminate knowledge in the construction of sustainable habitats, **earning the**

designation of Representative and Resource Centre for Asia of the UNESCO Chair “Earthen Architecture, Constructive Cultures and Sustainable Development”.

Aureka is an ISO 9001 certified engineering company, operating entirely under the auspices of the Auroville Foundation for 20+ years, focused on the **design and production of equipment for sustainable construction and living, such as Earth Block Presses and Mixers and Windmills, used in Auroville and worldwide.**

The **Auroville Centre for Scientific Research (CSR)**, founded in 1984, conducts research on ferrocement technology, biogas technology, wind pumps, wind generators, solar technology, hydrogeological studies for mapping the coastal watershed and aquifers, decentralised wastewater treatment systems, rainwater harvesting and storage, water purification and dynamisation systems, solar desalination, bio-fuels and many others. CSR has been the **recipient of several Indian and international awards.**

For more information:

- α On the Auroville Earth Institute: <http://www.earth-auroville.com/>
- α On Aureka: <https://aureka.com/>
- α On CSR: <https://auroville.org/page/auroville-centre-for-scientific-research-csr>

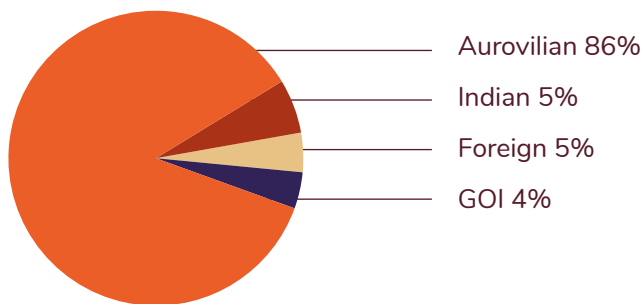


4. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The major source of income for Auroville is the revenue of its social enterprises, complemented by foreign and Indian donations. There is also a small percentage of government of India grants.

A 2021 presentation by an executive of the Auroville Unity Fund* reported that, in the Financial Year 2019-2020, **86% of the total income of the Auroville Foundation was generated by the Auroville community** – 95% of which was from Auroville’s social enterprises, and the remaining 5% from the donations of individual Aurovilians. **Of the remaining 14%, 5% was from foreign donations, 5% from Indian donations, and 4% from the Government of India** (see ‘Auroville Economy 19-20’).

*The Unity Fund, administered in the Financial Service office at the Town Hall, is Auroville’s official channel for receiving and disbursing all internally generated income from commercial units, all donations and grants (both foreign and Indian) to the various Auroville trusts, projects and units, as well as all the contributions and reserves from the commercial trusts of Auroville.



The Auroville community has a total of **610 social enterprises** ('Auroville units') that financially sustain the Auroville community as well as **provide employment for 2500+ people from the surrounding area** (and beyond). These enterprises are active across multiple

sectors, from handicrafts to renewable energy to food. Some have existed as early as the 1970s, and start-ups continue to be created today.

These **Auroville units** are established with the **personal investment of community members** who create and develop these, contributing their time, funds and expertise towards the realisation of Auroville while foregoing professional remuneration in traditional careers. For, these founders are not the owners or beneficiaries of the units they create: these are enterprises of the Auroville community. These units are the major source of income for Auroville’s community budget, which funds Auroville’s municipal services and human resources – Aurovilians and bioregional employees.



Auroville units have created significant assets in the form of industrial compounds – such as Aquadyn, a water purification factory; Aureka, a metal production workshop; the Auroville Earth Institute, a rammed earth workshop; Mason & Co, a chocolate factory; and Maroma, a home fragrance and body care factory.

In a 2014 asset list compiled by L'avenir d'Auroville, the total square footage of the buildings of Auroville units was 300,000 and the estimated cost was 36Cr.

Auroville units have also created intangible assets, brand names respected across India and the world, as well as patents, while many Aurovilians and Auroville units have won awards and recognition for their exemplary work, and published research papers on the same.

For more information:

α On Auroville’s social enterprises, see the Auroville.org website: <https://auroville.org/page/social-enterprises>

- α On Auroville's units, watch 'Commercial Units of Auroville, India' on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=51mXZ-zoYPU>
- α On awards and recognition granted to Aurovilians and Auroville units, see "Awards and Recognition" in Auroville: A Brief Introduction and 54 Years of Realisations, p. 6.
- α To access research publications on Auroville, see the online Auroville Research Repository: <https://aurorepo.in/>

Some examples of Auroville social enterprises are:

MAROMA



Maroma was founded in 1976 as a micro enterprise manufacturing handmade incense. Today, Maroma has grown into **a large enterprise manufacturing a wide range of fragrance-based products, that all continue to be handmade in Auroville, India**, and are sold in India and across the world. All of Maroma's products are cruelty free, earth friendly, natural, vegan and toxin free. **Maroma is a Guaranteed Member of the World Fair Trade Organization and a Member of Fair-Trade Forum India.**

Maroma's founders and CEOs are long term Aurovilians, and explain that the raison d'être of Maroma is "To run the business in a conscious manner, to take up the challenges as part of one's personal growth through the work, and to give to Auroville from the profits it generates". They further share that they see Maroma as **"a leader in the business world as a company which does not belong to the Executives and Founders of the company but to the community."** Maroma has been the largest contributor to the economy of Auroville, and its largest employer.

For more information:

www.maroma.com/about-maroma/

MASON & CO



Mason & Co is an artisanal chocolate manufacturing enterprise that produces organic, **vegan and superior quality chocolate in Auroville**. Founded in 2014 as a home-based startup, the enterprise established itself as **India's first bean-to-bar chocolate manufacturers**. The Mason & Co management share that "we have a love and focus on education, **we train our staff to the highest standards, we work closely with farmers around India** training and developing cacao processing methods and we provide educational workshops to consumers and lovers of chocolate in the process of bean-to-bar chocolate making" (see Mason&Co website). They have an **all-female factory team**, providing safe employment to women from the villages surrounding Auroville.

For more information:

www.masonchocolate.com/

SUNLIT FUTURE



Sunlit Future is an Auroville social enterprise **fusing solar energy technologies into the daily lifestyle of urban and rural India to effectuate an environmental and social impact.**

Sunlit Future was founded in 1999, and its core team members have been actively involved in **experimentation and research on solar photovoltaic and thermal technologies and products** since the late 1990s.

Today, they specialise in providing high quality customised rooftop solar energy solutions for homes,

educational institutions, hospitals, commercial buildings, large-scale factories and rural communities. They have installed over 7MW of solar on-grid rooftop systems on 1000+ rooftops so far.

Sunlit Future has been the largest financial contributor to Auroville's municipal budget for a number of years, and carries out pro-bono social responsibility projects throughout India, installing over 800 free solar pumping systems in different villages of Odisha, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand & Himachal Pradesh. These solar pumps are primarily used for **supplying drinking water and for irrigation, benefitting lives of over 1 lakh people.**

For more information:

www.sunlitfuture.in/about-us/

ECOFEMME



EcoFemme is a women-led social enterprise founded in Auroville in 2010 that produces and sells washable cloth pads and provides menstrual health education. **Balancing not for profit activities, like education and research, and commercial activities** to market and sell their cloth pads, **EcoFemme provides a unique, hybrid model where commercial and non-profit activities are undertaken within the same enterprise** – and

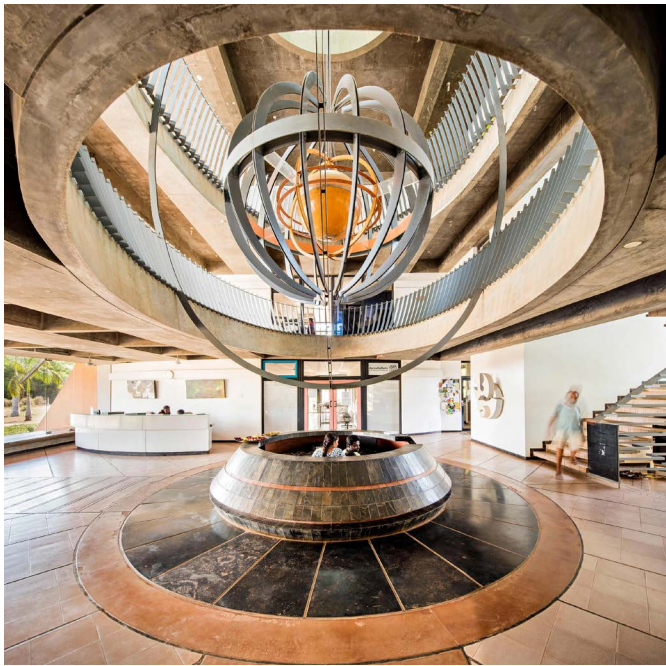
is dedicated to being **an example “of how business and social responsibility really can go hand in hand”**. Indeed, even with much of their time and energy being devoted to non-profit work, they have historically been **amongst the highest contributors to Auroville's municipal budget.**

EcoFemme's not-for-profit work takes place primarily through partnerships with partner organisations based in different states in India, their pad production is undertaken by rural Indian women in safe working environments with fair wages, and sales are global. EcoFemme's goal is “to create environmental and social change through revitalising menstrual practices that are healthy, environmentally sustainable, culturally responsive and empowering”, adding that “**as menstruation is an experience that transcends culture, class and caste, we see an extraordinary opportunity to advance social transformation and ecological awareness through every step of our work.**”

For more information:

ecofemme.org/





5. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Over the last 50+ years, the Auroville community has created and developed a wide range of community services, including community outreach services destined to benefit the local population.

Services were often created with personal investment of Aurovilians and well-wishers, and in some cases – notably schools – with funding from the Gol’s Ministry of Education. The running costs of these services are primarily financed by Auroville’s municipal budget, which pre-Covid was 90% funded by internal contributions and supported a total of 170 services (see Budget Coordination Committee, 2022):

37 services in the education sector

18 municipal services

10 health services

47 forest services

22 farm services

18 services in arts, culture & sports

13 administrative services

8 outreach services

3 housing services

2 land services

The Matrimandir

In a 2014 asset list compiled by L’avenir d’Auroville, the total square footage of the buildings created for Auroville services was 670,000 and the estimated cost was 87Cr.

EDUCATION



Education is the most important sector, receiving the largest share of Auroville’s municipal budget. The budget for Auroville’s education sector supports the education of youth within the community and the surrounding villages, as well as continuing education and informal education for adults, and through this the manifestation of the community’s founding ideal of being a place of ‘unending education’, as expressed in the Auroville Charter. The Auroville Foundation is registered as an autonomous body under the auspices of India’s Ministry of Education, and an annual Government of India grant to the Sri Aurobindo International Institute of Educational Research in Auroville represents approximately a quarter of the community’s budget for the education sector (27% in the FY 21-22 – see BCC, 2022). Educational services in Auroville – outreach activities in particular – also receive significant financial support from other, primarily foreign, sources of funding (BCC, 2022).

From pre-creche through high school level, Auroville’s 22+ schools and educational centres serve 2300+ children of Auroville and of the bioregion – 550 and 1770 respectively in the financial year 21-22 (see BCC, 2022). Each explore and experiment with ideals and values of ‘integral education’, a pedagogical approach envisioned and initiated by The Mother in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram.



Adult Aurovilians and visitors to the community avail of the community's libraries and research centres (such as Savitri Bhavan), and many educational workshops offered in the community. **Foreign and Indian university student groups regularly visit Auroville on accredited field trips and intern in Auroville units and research centres, and hundreds of volunteers each year learn from their immersions in these** (Clarence-Smith, 2019). A 2013 research report entitled "Educational practices & opportunities for Adults in Auroville" reveals that the facilitators of these opportunities aspire to **embody and transmit integral educational experiences** to their participants, and that their **immersion in the environment of Auroville facilitates an inner dimension of personal development** (Grinnell et al., 2013).

Similarly, the "Auroville Education Survey: 1968-2013", a longitudinal survey of students of Auroville schools revealed that, for most students, **Auroville as a whole had provided for an integral, educational 'life' experience and cultivated a striving for progress**, which reflects the second article of the Auroville Charter: "Auroville will be the place of an unending education, of constant progress, and a youth that never ages" (Clarence-Smith and Tewari, 2016).

Auroville's unique culture of integral education is one of the community's most significant intangible assets.

For more information:

- α See the website of the Budget Coordination Committee: <https://budget.auroville.services/education-fy21-22>

SOME EXAMPLES OF COMMUNITY SERVICES IN OTHERS SECTORS ARE:

PITANGA CULTURAL CENTRE



The Pitanga Cultural Centre is a service that was conceived, funded and built in 1991, by three Aurovilians – 2 professional dancers and an Iyengar yoga teacher – as a facility for the embodied and performing arts. The centre has hosted dance, martial arts and yoga classes, as well as music practice, and various performances as well as arts exhibitions. It has offerings for people of all



ages, from modalities emerging from various cultures – Odissi to Aikido to Western classical music.

Pitanga was funded entirely by personal donations from its Aurovillian founders. Since then, many Aurovillians have contributed to the development and upkeep of the community centre – either by offering their skills or their financial contribution. Today, **Pitanga is a service funded by Auroville’s municipal budget.**

SOLAR KITCHEN



The Solar Kitchen is Auroville’s largest community kitchen. Established in 1997, the service **provides lunch and dinner to community members and guests in its dining hall, and for all of Auroville’s schools.** It derives its name from the large Solar Bowl on its roof, which generates steam to cook its 1100+ meals daily.

The original Solar Kitchen building was **funded by The Housing and Urban Development Corporation – Government of India, and contributions from Auroville entities and individuals.** Its on-going running and repair costs are covered by community funds. The Solar Kitchen complex has since been **expanded with funding from foreign foundations** – the Foundation for World Education, Stichting de Zaiier, Stichting Aurofonds, as well as Auroville units and Aurovillians.

POUR TOUS DISTRIBUTION CENTRE (PTDC)



PourTousDistribution Centre is a **cooperative, communal distribution centre for grocery items**, including ready-made meals to take away, sold at cost price. Aurovillians, Newcomers and long-term volunteers are welcome to join the cooperative, with a regular monthly contribution that enables bulk purchasing. Opened in March 2006, it has grown to include the majority of the Auroville community as members.

The Pour Tous Distribution Center building was funded by foreign foundations – the Foundation for World Education, Stichting de Zaiier, Stichting Aurofonds – as well as Auroville units and Aurovillians. **Its running costs are covered by Auroville’s community budget**, amounting to ~Rs. 42L yearly.



FREE STORE



The Free Store is a service funded by Auroville’ municipal budget, where Aurovillians and Newcomers can donate and/or pick up clothing items for free, as well as access free tailoring services towards repairing damaged clothing. **The service has existed since the beginnings of Auroville and thrives to this day, a living testament to the possibility of practising an economy with no exchange of money**, one of the founding visions for the community.

ECOSERVICE



Auroville's EcoService manages solid waste for the international township of Auroville. Its primary goal is to minimise as much as possible the impact of Auroville's waste on the environment, and works towards this by collecting and recycling as much of the community's waste as it can, and landfilling as little as possible. Of the waste collected by EcoService, approximately 72% is recycled and 28% landfilled.



RESIDENTS' ASSEMBLY SERVICE



The Residents' Assembly Service (RAS) is **responsible for organising the meetings of the Residents' Assembly (RA), one of the three authorities of the Auroville Foundation** (Auroville Foundation Act, 1988), whenever they are called for, overseeing their facilitation, organising RA decision-making processes where necessary, keeping minutes & recording the RA's decisions, and communicating them to Auroville residents & the Auroville Foundation Office.

The RAS is funded by Auroville's community budget, alongside 12 other administrative services. The whole of Auroville's evolving internal organisation is in and of itself one of Auroville's unique, intangible assets, one of the most significant examples of participatory, community-based governance worldwide, given the longevity and diversity of the community, and its freedom to experiment with "autonomous arrangements" (Auroville Foundation Bill, 1988, p. 329).

For more information on Auroville's services:

✦ Visit the Auroville City Services website:
www.budget.auroville.services



6. BIOREGIONAL OUTREACH & DEVELOPMENT

AUROVILLE'S FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION TO BIOREGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A 2021 presentation by an executive of the Auroville Unity Fund highlights that Auroville's **total payments to bioregional development are 2.9 times higher than the UN target** for economically advanced countries. The total amount was reported as 6.71 crore, or 2.05% of the Auroville Foundation's Gross Income. In 1970, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution that economically advanced countries give 0.7% of their national income in aid. Only six countries have ever met the target, and the OECD average has never exceeded 0.4%.

EMPLOYMENT CREATED BY AUROVILLE FOR THE BIOREGIONAL POPULATION

A 2016 study by Auroville's Social Research Centre records that units of the Auroville Foundation employed a total of 2504 employees in the Financial Year 2016/2017, a 13.9% increase from a total of 2194 in 2000/2001.

Auroville is known for creating **safe employment for women**, with several **Auroville units employing all-female teams** (such as EcoFemme, Mason&Co, Naturellement, Shradhanjali and WellPaper), while the Auroville Livelihood Education Centre, focuses specifically on offering young women pathways to employment.

AUROVILLE ORGANISATIONS DEDICATED TO SUPPORTING BIOREGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Auroville has several **educational institutions, cultural centres**, and training centres that are dedicated to **supporting the bioregional population**, as well as **health clinics and outreach programs**, led by highly dedicated Aurovilians and funded primarily by personal donations, as well as regular funding from the Auroville community budget and occasional Gol funding via the Sri Aurobindo Institute of International Educational Research (SAIIER) annual grant.

According to the 2020-2021 annual City Services budget report of the Auroville Budget Coordination Committee (see Budget Coordination Committee, 2022), there are **6 Auroville outreach schools* serving over 1770 youth in the surrounding villages, one college** (the Auroville Institute of Applied Technology), **and a centre for children & youth with special needs** (Deepam).

*Aikiyam, Isaiambalam, Udavi, Arulvazhi, Palayam, New Era Secondary School



In addition, there is a **vocational training centre for girls**, the 'Life Education Centre'; an **educational and training centre for Auroville's employees from the surrounding villages**, 'Illaingnarka!'; and 'Reach for the Stars', an organisation that finances the higher education for young people from these villages.



There are also several **cultural centres in the surrounding villages, offering programmes primarily aimed at children and women:** Thamarai, Kulai Creative Centre, Mohanam Arts & Cultural Education, and New Colors.

Auroville's Health Centre* has established 7 sub centres in surrounding villages and the **Auroville Dental Centre** runs a dental health programme in rural Indian communities in the bioregion and beyond. In addition, Aurokiya, an Auroville health service, provides eye care in Auroville and the bioregion.

*recognised as a Mini Health Centre by the Tamil Nadu State Government

AUROVILLE VILLAGE ACTION GROUP (AVAG)



Auroville's largest bioregional development organisation is the Auroville Village Action Group, an NGO founded in 1983. Through a well established network of women's and men's Self Help Groups (SHGs), **AVAG implements programmes across the four critical areas of community development, economic development, capacity building and psychosocial services with approx 4,000 villagers.** The component programmes

offered by AVAG include: micro-finance, micro-projects and collective work camps, capacity building training and seminars for villagers, psychological and physical health initiatives, environmental awareness, livelihood training and social enterprise development, expansion of legal access for women and children confronted with human rights abuses, caste integration exchange programmes, and exposure trips.

SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD INSTITUTE



The Sustainable Livelihood Institute (SLI) is a **partnership between the Government of Tamil Nadu and Auroville.** SLI was established in 2015 with the goal to **provide the knowledge concentrated in Auroville concerning sustainable development to the rural communities of Tamil Nadu.** Many programmes are designed, organised and delivered to **community members from all over Tamil Nadu as well as officials of the Tamil Nadu Rural Development Department,** to gain knowledge and hands-on experience in the fields of perspective building, skill building and management related to sustainability.

For more information on Auroville's bioregional organisations:

α See Auroville: A Brief Introduction and 54 Years of Realisations, pp. 8 -11.



7. CONCLUSION

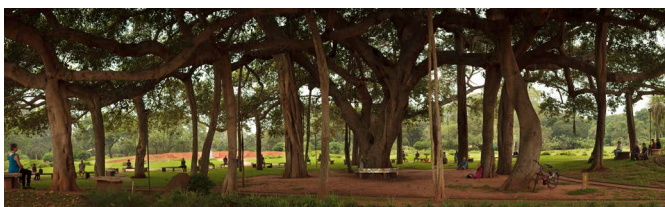
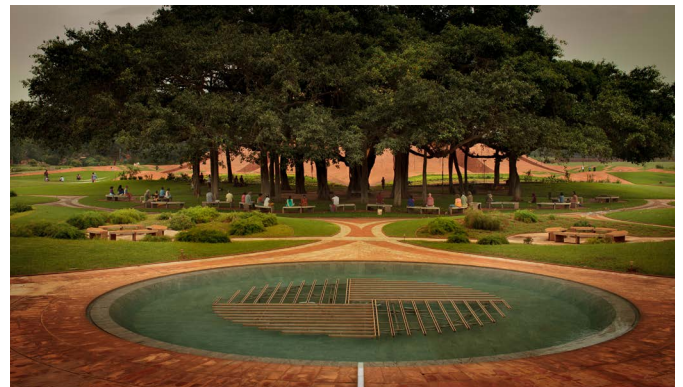
This document demonstrates the remarkable dedication that Auroville residents have shown in establishing and advancing the project of Auroville, with the invaluable support of well-wishers in India and the world. It highlights the creation of an exceptional range of tangible and intangible assets, as part of its unique process of research and development, across fields from ecological to socio-economic to urban. Auroville is recognised by UNESCO, and endorsed by Indian and foreign dignitaries for its realisations and stands today as the largest, most active and diverse intentional community in existence. At 50+ years, it is a testament to the viability of such experiments, made possible by the many Aurovilians who have dedicated their lives, energy, and financial resources to growing what The Mother envisaged as a cradle for a new humanity.

The Auroville Residents' Assembly remains committed to manifesting the vision set forth by The Mother for Auroville, guided by the Auroville Charter.

We hope for a harmonious and supportive collaboration with the other authorities of the Auroville Foundation (namely the Governing Board and the International Advisory Council) in continuing to do so in Mother India, for humanity as a whole. These authorities were established with the passing of the Auroville Foundation Act in 1988 by the Government of India "for the purpose of protecting and encouraging the development of Auroville", a unique endeavour which UNESCO has recognised as "all-round material and spiritual development for harmonious individual and collective growth" (UNESCO, 2017). With continued faith, goodwill and dedication from within and without Auroville, may it continue to be a world-leading example of an alternative society, and an inspiration for all in an era of compounded crises.



Auroville 50th anniversary celebration



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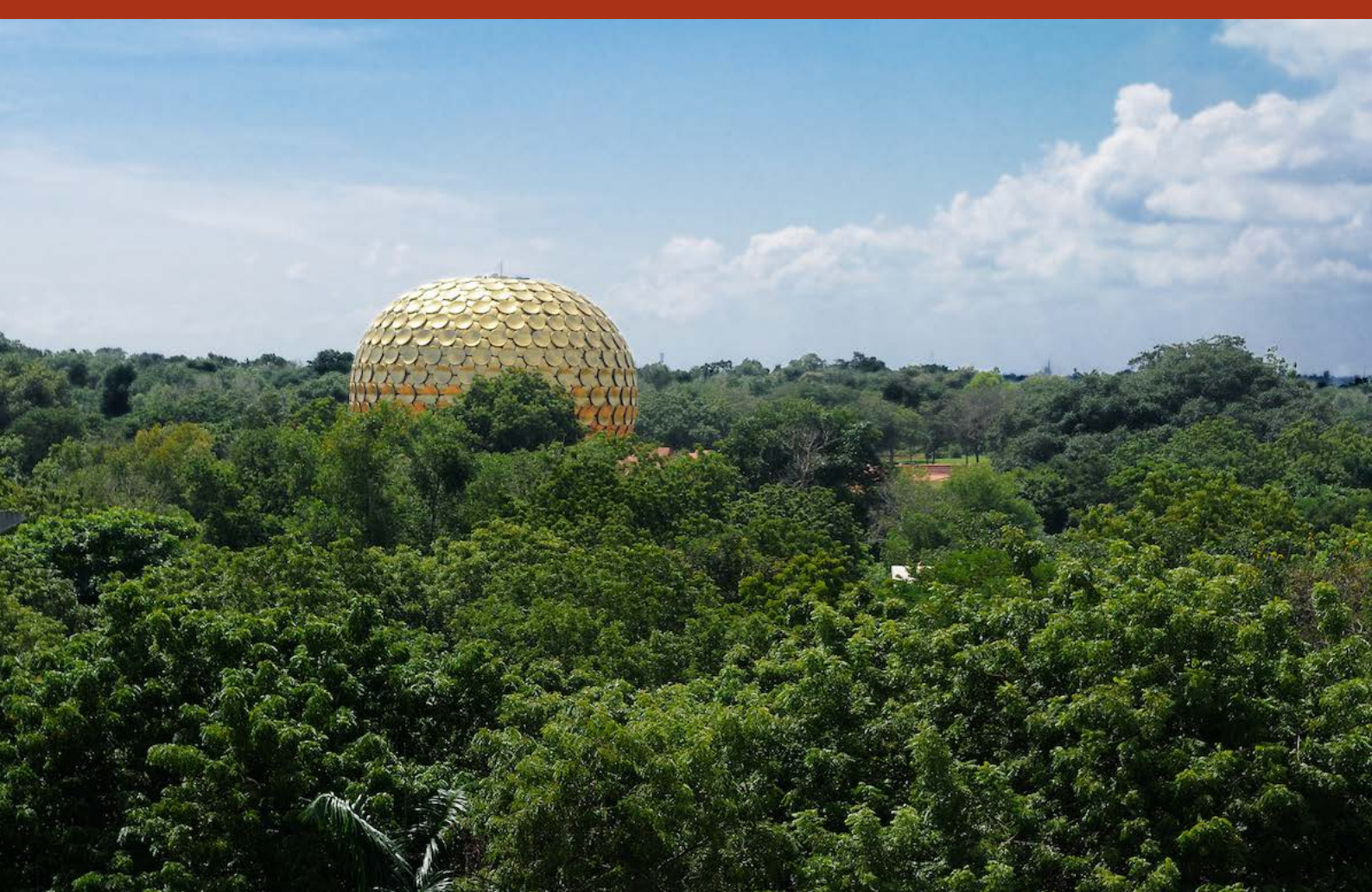
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