

Cross-Cultural Dialogue
Discrimination in Auroville

Saturday, April 28 – Sunday, April 29
Unity Pavilion

We welcome all Aurovilians and Newcomers who would like to join this 2-day Cross-Cultural Dialogue. Please register as soon as possible, so as to confirm your seat.

In response to the recent claim of discrimination against some in the Tamil community in Auroville, we are hosting a 2-day Cross-Cultural Dialogue. We offer a space to explore this topic further and to have a deep sharing about our experiences and pain, as well as our felt sense of togetherness and aspiration to manifest Human Unity.

We are aware that this is a risky conversation, with many divergent opinions. Over the years, we've had several Tamil Aurovilians express that they do not feel like they are treated as equals. And in response to this, there are just as many counter-arguments to defend other perspectives.

With this Dialogue, our intention is not to prove facts or experiences, but instead to hold a space for deep listening, where everybody's voice can be heard and respected, so that as a community we can better understand the complexities of our cross-cultural relations.

We envision exploring questions such as these:

- Do we experience a divide in Auroville, between Tamil Aurovilians originating from the bioregion and others?
- Do we think our cultural differences and history play a role in this divide?
- Have some of us lost connection and trust in one other, and why?
- How do we bridge this divide and walk towards a truer embodiment of Auroville's ideal to manifest "Unity in Diversity?"

We sincerely believe that if we can come together with a willingness to dialogue, we have the potential to reach a place of renewed understanding and trust. We hope to end with creative action agreements, so as to support our collective to live more harmoniously together.

Dialogue Design

We'll be hosting the space based on the principles of Restorative Circles, which relies on reflective listening and slowing down the regular dynamic of back-and-forth debate.

We propose to schedule Pre-Dialogue appointments (on Thursday, April 19 and Thursday, April 26), so that we can meet in smaller groups before our scheduled event, in order to review the process and to hear some of your initial thoughts on the topic of discrimination, as well as answer any questions you may have.

We offer to meet Tamils who joined Auroville from the bioregion separately, as the recent claim of discrimination has come from within this community, and we want to give them an opportunity to speak and be heard in a safe environment. We will also arrange for translation support, if needed.

Schedule

A. Pre-Dialogue:

We are offering 2 dates. Please choose the one that suits you best.

- Thursday, April 19
 - 3pm – 4.30pm: non-Tamil Aurovilians
 - 5pm – 6.30pm: Tamil Aurovilians, especially those who are concerned about discrimination
- Thursday, April 26
 - 3pm – 4.30pm: non-Tamil Aurovilians
 - 5pm – 6.30pm: Tamil Aurovilians, especially those who are concerned about discrimination

B. Dialogue:

- Saturday, April 28 – Sunday, April 29
 - 9am – 5pm
 - lunch and tea breaks are included

C. Post-Dialogue / Follow-Up:

- ...to be decided collectively...

Filming

We intend to make a documentary about the event, and it will be shared if and when needed in Auroville, and possibly beyond, in connection with this body of work (conflict resolution, cross-cultural reconciliation, Restorative Circles, Auroville's history, etc). We will respect the choice of those who do not want to be filmed, and not include their image in the camera's view or any documentation about this event.

Registration

Please register as soon as possible, so as to confirm your seat. Registration closes on Wednesday, April 18.

We you may register in 1 of 3 ways:

1. Fill out the online form here: <https://bit.ly/2Ef3nLI>
2. Or answer the following questions, and send them by email to restorative@auroville.org.in.
3. Or answer the following questions, and drop them off in person at L'aura's house (in Centre Field).

Please answer the following questions:

- a. Name
- b. Community
- c. Email
- d. Phone number
- e. Explain in a few sentences why you would like to join this 2-day Cross-Cultural Dialogue.
- f. Please confirm that you intend to participate for the full program (the Pre-Dialogue appointment, plus the entire 2 days for the Dialogue itself).
- g. Please confirm which Pre-Dialogue date you will be attending:
 - ☐ April 19
 - ☐ 3pm – 4.30pm (non-Tamils)
 - ☐ 5pm – 6.30pm (Tamils, especially those concerned about discrimination)

OR

- ☐ April 26
 - ☐ 3pm – 4.30pm (non-Tamils)
 - ☐ 5pm – 6.30pm (Tamils, especially those concerned about discrimination)
- h. Please let us know if you are willing to be filmed:
 - ☐ willing to be filmed
 - ☐ not willing to be filmed
- i. Any other questions / comments.

Donation

We offer this event for free.

However, if you would like to support us financially, we welcome all donations! Our expenses will include: lunch, tea and cookies, photocopies, hall and sound equipment rental, and a stipend for our filmmaker. You may transfer your donation to “Joy Living Learning Donations #251772,” or sign the blue-sheet during the event itself.

With love,
Restorative Auroville
L’aura, Janet, Shanti, Kati, Rita, Pranjal and Genie

PS. We offered our first Cross-Cultural Dialogue in Sept 2016, with 55 Aurovilians participating. The experience was powerful and enriching for everyone present. If you would like to know more, or to read our reports, please see Auronet: <https://www.auroville.org.in/article/60486>. If you would like to watch a short video-compilation we made, see: <https://bit.ly/2Gvrg3D>