

**Auroville Project Coordination Group  
GRANT PROPOSAL FORM**

***GENERAL INFORMATION***

**1. Project title** (please choose a short title):

A magazine titled:

*"Restoring Connection and Building Bridges – Tamil Aurovilian Journeys"*

**2. Project duration:** September 2018 – February 2019

**3. Project Summary** (*NB 1-3 brief, concise lines to summarize contents of proposal*):

"Restorative Auroville" will create a one-time magazine to share the unique journeys of Tamil Aurovilians, including their personal stories as well as their experiences of inclusion and exclusion in Auroville. We aim to create short, accessible narratives that allow the reader to get a better understanding of the experiences of Tamil Aurovilians, as we believe that empathy and understanding of our diversity are important steps on the road towards human unity. The Magazine will consist of 30-40 'voices,' each one telling her/his own story from a first-person narrative; very story will include a portrait of the participant, specially photographed for this publication.

**4. Total Cost of the project:** Rs. 1,41,592

**5. Funding amount requested:** Rs. 1,41,592

**6. Name of project holder and other (contact) details:**

**1. Principal Project Holders:**

Henrike Prudon, Anitya (Joy of Impermanence)

Kati Hötger, Creativity

Pranjal Tiwari

L'aura Joy, Centre Field

Janet Fearn, Arati

**2. Units:**

Joy Living Learning, Centre Field

**7. Date of application:** 7<sup>th</sup> of November 2018

***BACKGROUND INFORMATION***

**8. Background** (*SVP provide history/context within which this request/initiative takes place*):

"Restorative Auroville" is an independent project that aims at educating the community about Restorative Justice, and looking at how we might develop a Justice System in Auroville that reflects our community values. We offer Restorative Circles as a more specific response to conflict when it arises.

For formal purposes (such as accounting and other), we fall under the Unit "Joy Living Learning," although our hope is to one day be registered as an Auroville Service. We work in parallel with Koodam, and Restorative Circles are offered as part of Auroville's Conflict Resolution Policy (in addition to Mediation and Arbitration).

Our approach incorporates different strategies, with a hope to connect with different aspects of our communal life, so that we can better understand how to build systems that respond to our unique and complex reality.

Among other activities (the "Restoring Connection" FilmFest, the Walk of Hope in Auroville and the bioregion), we have hosted two Cross-Cultural Dialogues (a 3-day process in September 2016, a 2-day process in April 2018), to explore some of the cross-cultural challenges between Tamil Aurovilians from the bioregion and other Aurovilians.

**9. Problem statement:**

During the Prime Minister's visit for Auroville's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration in February 2018, two members of the Working Committee were not given proximity passes for the event. As these were the only two members of Tamil origin in the Working Committee, they claimed their exclusion from the event was an act of discrimination. Following this, Governing Board Chairperson, Dr. Karan Singh, requested Auroville to inquire into the issue of discrimination. Although it is still unclear what exactly happened that led to the exclusion of the Tamil Aurovilians, we at Restorative Auroville saw this as an important moment to restart a conversation on cross-cultural communication and discrimination that we had already started in 2016.

Therefore, we hosted a second Cross-Cultural Dialogue in April this year. In cooperation with the Auroville Council we considered devoting the entire 50<sup>th</sup> year to this topic of discrimination. For us, it is clear that while we can take a step forward towards wider community awareness, this is a matter that we need to constantly return to if we want to evolve as a community. Thus we now propose the magazine, "Restoring Connection and Building Bridges - Tamil Aurovilian Journeys".

The unique experiences and histories of Tamil Aurovilians, partly informed by their roots in Tamil Nadu, need to be better understood by all Aurovilians. Without more common understanding and connection, we can easily fall into prejudice and stereotyping, which moves us further away from achieving our core aim in Auroville – human unity.

**10. Project Team:**

The main interviewers and project holders are Henrike Prudon (Newcomer) and Kati Hötger.

Henrike is a trained anthropologist who has done research on Auroville governance in 2013. Because of her background, she has a strong conceptual understanding of the themes that the magazine engages with, such as belonging, cultural identity, discrimination, and meaning-making. Furthermore, she has a varied experience in conducting interviews and subsequent analysis and editing.

Kati has been a documentary filmmaker for 25 years, and as such has a wide experience interviewing people on a variety of topics. Because of her background in film, she also has a good eye for aesthetics and supports the photography and design of the magazine.

The "Restorative Auroville" team will be supporting at all stages. The team of Restorative Auroville currently consists of L'aura Joy, Janet Fearn, Kati Hötger, Pranjal Tiwari

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(Ashram School Alumnus), and Henrike Prudon (Newcomer). We are also working in collaboration with Franz of Prisma Publishing, and with a photographer, Madhu Jayamurthy.

Most importantly of course are our interviewees. Currently we have interviewed several Aurovilians already, including D. Selvaraj (Aspiration GH), Shankar (Aikiyam School), Partha (WCom), Vinodhini (Name and Symbol Protection Group), Devi (LEC), Sudhagar (AuroConstructions), and Kavitha (YouthLink). We hope to include many others, some of which have already endorsed the project, such as Raman (Centre Field), Sudhakar (La Terrasse), Sathyaseelan (Land Board), and Umramanan (AuroOrchard).

**11. Group approval of project** *(if applicable. e.g. for activities under SAIHER or other Auroville groups or bodies, or initiatives that require permission from Avenir etc.):*

The Auroville Council is aware of the work that Restorative Auroville is doing to raise awareness in the community on the topic of (perceived) exclusion of Tamil Aurovilians. After our Cross-Cultural Dialogue, which was well-received and attended by two Council members, the Magazine continues on the same theme and the Council is aware of all of our activities on this topic.

**12. Other Sources of Funding** *(names and amounts already received, or promised):*  
Not applicable

**12a. Where else have you applied for funding?** Not applicable

### ***PROJECT INFORMATION***

**13. Aims & objectives of project:**

To get closer to human unity, we need to understand and embrace our diversity first. Perhaps the most pertinent intercultural connection within Auroville is the one with the people who are native to our host land, as Auroville is constantly exchanging with the immediate environment. We need to examine more closely the stories of Tamil Aurovilians from near and far, as they are the primary representation of this connection.

Our hope is to raise wider community awareness and connection to the unique stories of these Aurovilians, especially where it concerns feelings of inclusion and exclusion. We have three goals in mind:

- To provide what we see as a much-needed platform for sharing Tamil Aurovillian experiences through personal narratives.
- To reduce prejudice and stereotyping.
- To open a wider community conversation about how to - individually and collectively - cope with and transform possible discrimination within Auroville.

**14. Description of activities/details of project intervention:**

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### **15. Who will be the specific beneficiaries?**

We trust that the Auroville community as a whole will benefit. The magazine is part of our commitment and ongoing activities aiming on harmonizing our cross-cultural relations, and co-creating responsive ways of engaging with our differences and challenges.

We hope that those who participate in and those who read the magazine will be deeply inspired to manifest and contribute towards our dream of Human Unity in Diversity.

We envision that the magazine can function as a reference point for new Aurovilians, much like the 'Turning Points' book of interviews, which still connects those interested to join Auroville with those who arrived in the early days, Auroville's pioneers.

### **16. What is the link to other Auroville activities?**

The magazine is strongly connected to the vision of Restorative Auroville, which is expressed in our Cross-Cultural Dialogues and Restorative Circles work.

Prisma, an Auroville publishing unit, will do the printing.

The magazine is part of an effort to open a conversation about discrimination in Auroville, a topic that the Auroville Council is also engaging with.

### **17. Is the Auroville community waiting for the results of this project? What are indications of this?**

*(Please provide emails from related groups that give reasons for considered support. To be included as an addendum, cut and paste, at the end of this format.)*

From the inception of the magazine, there was positive feedback on the necessity of this work. The question of intercommunity tensions has become more prominent, as shown by the Auroville Council's attention to the subject, the formation of the Tamil Forum and it's increasing claims for this issue to come to the light, as well as widespread community concern since the Prime Minister's visit.

Furthermore, a series of articles in the Auroville Today of July, August, and September that outline the issue of discrimination clearly show an increased community interest. In the last issue, Alan notes that recently *'it became evident that the perception of discrimination by some in the Tamil Aurovillian community is a much larger issue [...] that has been churning away beneath the surface for many years.'* (AVToday September 2018, p. 6). Clearly, a lack of connection between Tamil and other Aurovilians has been

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noted by the community. Now is the time to continue this conversation from several angles.

### 18. How will the project be implemented?

- September-December 2018: Taking interviews, aiming for 30-40 interviews with Tamil Aurovilians who want to share their stories with the community.
- October 2018 onwards: Special portraits are made of every individual.
- Second half of December 2018: Typesetting and layout work.
- January 2019: Printing and distribution of 500 copies in Auroville

### 19. Evaluation (if applicable):

During our interactions, we will be in ongoing dialogue and exchange with the community, so informal feedback and evaluation will unfold in an organic, live way. We will also encourage the readers to fill out a feedback/evaluation form so that we can assess their impressions and the impact of this publication.

While of course it is hard to quantify the actual impact of such a project, we again refer to the 'Turning Points' book of interviews as an example of how such a project can have a large and longlasting impact on the collective wisdom of the community.

### 20. Budget Table (NB EXCEL spreadsheet is a *separate file*)

**21. Budget Table Explained:** Here below please provide narrative explanation/description of items per line in budget request.

<i>No.</i>	<i>Item Name</i>	<i>Intended use (by whom, for what purpose)</i>
40	Commissioned photographs	Photographs will be taken by Madhu Jayamurthy. We are looking for a uniform, artistic type of portrait as well as some pictures of the person in their work or home environment. The photographer is paid per person, not per picture.
500	Printing	To publish the magazine we will engage the services of Prisma Publishing, an Auroville unit. The costs include paper (21x24cm, natural shade), printing (100 pages in black and white, cover in colour), binding (section sewn, soft cover laminated) and transport.
1	Graphic designer	For achieving an aesthetic layout and typesetting, we will engage the services of Tixon Mohan, a professional designer.
2	Interviewers/editors	As interviews form the core of the book, all 40 of them need to be taken, transcribed, and edited into a piece of text suitable for the purposes of the magazine.

### 22. Name of project holder(s) responsible for information given in this application, including budget request.

Henrike Prudon, Anitya (Joy of Impermanence)  
Kati Hötger, Creativity  
L'aura Joy, Centre Field

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Janet Fearn, Arati

**23. Name of person who will take the responsibility to submit a final report (and progress reports or updates *as specified by the donors*) for any and all grant(s) received for this project.**

Henrike Prudon, Anitya (Joy of Impermanence)

Kati Hötger, Creativity

L'aura Joy, Centre Field

Janet Fearn, Arati