

**Auroville Project Coordination Group
GRANT PROPOSAL FORM**

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Project title: Walk of Hope, Auroville

2. Project duration: 2 days: January 28-29, 2018

3. Project Summary:

We have invited Sri M for a “Walk of Hope” through Auroville and the surrounding villages, as an invocation to Peace and Oneness, within ourselves and within Auroville, and beyond, the bioregion and further. Sri M is a social activist, an educator, and a spiritual seeker, and in addition to the Walk, he will also offer a talk at Savitri Bhavan.

We are hoping to include some of our Auroville and Outreach schools on the Walk. We are still in the beginning stages of contacting the Schools and working out the details.

4. Total Cost of the project: Rs.92,000

5. Funding amount requested: Rs.92,000

6. Name and other (contact) details:

1. Principal Project Holders:

L’aura Joy, Centre Field
Kati Hoetger, Creativity
Anand Shanti, Samasti
Helene Gagnon, Sanjana
Janet Fearn, Arati

2. Secondary Project Holders:

Franz Fassbender, Fraternity

3. Units:

Joy Living Learning, Centre Field
Prisma and Aurelec Cafeteria, Aurelec

7. Date of application:

July 31, 2017

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

8. Background:

“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 we hope to soon get registered as an Auroville-based 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.

We have been exploring the practice of Restorative Circles in Auroville, on and off, since late 2010. In September 2015, we decided to offer this work on a larger scale within the community, and we submitted an "Applied Research Project on Restorative Circles and Restorative Justice" to PCG, for which we received financial support and community support.

Our full-time team members include: L'aura, Janet, Shanti, Kati and Helene. In addition, we have the support and encouragement of many Aurovilians who have been touched and inspired by our work.

9. Problem statement:

Many Aurovilians were deeply touched by our week-long "Restoring Connection" FilmFest last year. They appreciated that the movies we selected challenged them to look deeper within and to question their own commitment to walking towards peace and reconciliation in the face of discrimination, hurt feelings, fear and violence. Many shared a real longing to feel more Unity among Aurovilians, and to feel more Unity between Auroville and the bioregion. Several also expressed a real fear and concern that if we do not work on our relationship and collaboration with the neighbouring villages, we are risking our future.

From these discussions (we held an open space for dialogue and refreshments after each film screening) emerged the idea of organizing a peace walk. As a team, we resonated very much with the idea and tracked it as a possible future event.

In addition to the FilmFest, we also hosted a large Cross-Cultural Dialogue, in an attempt to explore together and become more aware of the many cultural gaps, and associated assumptions, that create misunderstanding and division between us. Our journey together was deep and meaningful, although we did not necessarily know how to bring our new learning and understanding to the larger community context – within Auroville, but also between Auroville and the bioregion villages.

Then, many months later, we heard about Franz's experiences with Sri M, that he had participated in pieces of Sri M's 2015-16 Walk of Hope from Kanyakumari to Kashmir, in the name of Peace and Oneness for all people, independent of their religious, cultural or socio-economic backgrounds. We also heard about Franz's experience with organizing a Walk of Hope with Sri M in Berlin in March 2017. We were very touched and inspired, so we researched more about Sri M and his work and mission. We have watched several of his talks online, and some of us have read his autobiography. We also felt very encouraged to learn that Dr. Karan Singh is a good friend of Sri M (link to a dialogue between them: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zmpbbTmBHk8>), and that when he

heard about our invitation to Sri M, he was in full support of having a Walk of Hope in Auroville.

Sri M is spiritual seeker, an educator and a social activist, and we thought that having a Walk of Hope in Auroville and the bioregion would respond beautifully to our earlier idea of a peace walk. Also, we imagine that Sri M's background, having grown up in a liberal Muslim family in Kerala, wandering through the Himalayas as a young adult in search of a Guide, studying the ancient scriptures, and living the simple yet committed life of a true spiritual seeker, adds a layer of richness and "walking one's talk" that we could never offer on our own. We also trust that Sri M's simplicity and depth will touch both the Indian and the Western heart.

Here is a short YouTube link about Sri M and his Walks of Hope:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L3fnlzYBbJY>

Sri M is also dedicated to education and supporting and inspiring youth in their development. He founded the "Satsang Foundation," which runs two of the very few alternative schools in India, both of them in Andhra Pradesh. Previously he had spent a lot of time with J Krishnamurti, whose philosophy has influenced the way these schools are run. His "Peepal Grove School" (<http://www.peepalgroveschool.org>) seems to have a very similar vision to our Auroville schools. We hope that we can also arrange for some interaction between our Auroville and Outreach Schools and Sri M. (This planning is still in progress.)

10. Project Team:

The "Restorative Auroville" team will be carrying out this project and supporting at all stages. From our previous events in this field, we trust that we have the necessary experience to organize this Walk.

We are also working in collaboration with Franz (of Prisma and Aurelec Cafeteria). Franz knows Sri M well. He joined Sri M for parts of his 470-day Walk of Hope from Kanyakumari to Kashmir (2015-16), and he also organized a Walk of Hope with Sri M in Berlin in March 2017.

We have invited several other Aurovilians, originating mostly from the locality, to organize this event with us, as they know the local culture and context much better than we do. We imagine this group will grow in the coming weeks and months, but for the moment the following have accepted our invitation and are very happy about the initiative: (i) Shankar and Mala from Aikiyam School, (ii) Moris and Bridget from Auroville Village Action Group, (iii) Tapas Bhatt from Bharat Nivas, (iv) Tixon from New Creation, (v) Banu from Dental Clinic.

11. Group approval of project:

We have informed the Working Committee of our preliminary plans, to which there were no objections (see attached email.) When we heard that Dr. Karan Singh was a friend of Sri M and that he fully endorsed the idea of a Walk of Hope in Auroville, we forwarded this information to the Working Committee as well.

We are in initial stages of contact with some of the Auroville and Outreach Schools, as we would like to include some of them in our Walk. Discussions are in progress.

12. Other Sources of Funding (names and amounts already received, or promised):

Franz has offered to cover some of Sri M's lunches and dinners at Aurelec Cafeteria.

12a. Where else have you applied for funding?

We have not applied for any other funding for this project.

PROJECT INFORMATION

13. Aims & objectives of project:

Although Human Unity is our Auroville dream, we still have a long way to go, and we think that a Walk together and towards each other, spreading the message of "Peace and Unity, within and beyond," could re-inspire some of us to look at how we live our lives and how we want to manifest Mother's Dream.

We want to host an activity that can appeal to all backgrounds, and where language is not a barrier – hence, walking instead of talking! Also, Sri M speaks Tamil, Hindi and English, so this will give many of us an opportunity to speak to him in our native language.

We want to host an activity that invites presence, and that can inspire a deep inner inquiry, as fellow human beings living together in and around Auroville.

14. Details of project intervention / description of activities:

- i. Walk of Hope: approximately 8-10 kilometers through Auroville and the bioregion. We are still working on the route.
- ii. An evening talk at Savitri Bhavan: Shraddhavan is happy to host Sri M.
- iii. A special Dinner Party with music in Ravena, hosted by Jocelyn S.
- iv. Other plans we have, but have not yet finalized them:
 - Meeting with the Secretary of the Auroville Foundation
 - Visit some Auroville and Outreach Schools

15. Beneficiaries:

The Walk of Hope is a public event, and we hope that many Aurovilians and villagers will join the Walk, whether in its entirety or just to meet Sri M at particular stops on route. We hope that those who participate will be deeply inspired to manifest and contribute towards our dream of Human Unity. We cannot really estimate whether 50 people will show up, or whether 500 people will show up, but we trust that whatever the turn-out, the impact will be felt.

16. What is the link to other Auroville activities?

We are here to live Human Unity in Diversity, and there are so many ways to look at this topic and to walk towards it. We offer this event as just one attempt to contribute to some more peace, within and beyond.

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

In our planning, we've been speaking to many different Aurovilians, from Shraddhavan at Savitri Bhavan, to Shankar and Banu and others from the locality, to informing the Working Committee, and at each step we are received with encouragement and openness. We believe the community is open to hope and renewed inspiration, and that many will find meaning in this activity.

18. How will the project be implemented?

We are still in the early planning phrases. Here are some our next tasks:

- i. Engage with other Aurovilians, especially from the locality, who would like to support in the organizing.
- ii. Update the Working Committee and Auroville Foundation about our plans and confirmed dates.
- iii. Engage with Auroville and Outreach Schools, to see who would like to be involved and how to include the schools and youth.
- iv. Decide on our route.
- v. Advertise and engage with the community, both in Auroville and in the villages.
- vi. Finalize details – finances, food and refreshments, film crew, Auroville Radio recording, etcetera.

We have already completed the following:

- i. Confirmed dates
- ii. Preliminary information sent to the Working Committee
- iii. Guest house for Sri M is booked
- iv. Many initial conversations have started

19. Evaluation:

We hope to film this event and produce a short video for public viewing. We will also ask Auroville Radio to make a recording of the talk at Savitri Bhavan. We will ask for feedback and testimonials from those who participate.

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

21. Budget Table Explained

No.	Item Name	Intended use (by whom, for what purpose)
1	2 double rooms	We have booked 2 double rooms at Pondiville (with breakfast included). Sri M will be coming with his wife, and with some office staff, hence 2 double rooms. We contacted many Auroville guest houses, and they were already all booked, because of the 50 th anniversary season. We felt that Pondiville is our next best choice, as it is so close to Ravena and the Forecomers forest.
2	Savitri Bhavan	Savitri Bhavan does not have a fixed fee for the venue, but they request a donation when possible. We would like to contribute Rs.5000.

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3	Refreshments during Walk	We would like to offer tea, juice and snacks (biscuits, vadai, banana or such) to those who walk. We will set up refreshment stalls at particular stops on route.
4	Refreshments at Savitri Bhavan	We would like to offer tea, juice and biscuits during Sri M's talk at Savitri Bhavan. Savitri Bhavan cannot pay for this.
5	1 Special Dinner Party in Ravena	Jocelyn S has offered to host a special dinner party with music in Ravena. We would like to make a contribution towards the costs.
6	Flyers and design	We will distribute flyers leading up to this event, so that people are aware that it is happening.
7	Banner	We will likely print a large banner in English and Tamil to carry along the Walk, so that it is clear what we are doing.
8	Film crew	We would like to offer an honorarium to 2 film persons, so that they can film the Walk and create a short video for public viewing later.
9	Hard disk	We will need to buy SD cards and a hard disk to store the files.
10	Auroville Radio Recorder rental	We would like to record the talk at Savitri Bhavan. This cost is Rs.3000 with Auroville Radio.
11	Gift	We would like to buy Sri M and his wife a token gift from the Visitors' Centre Boutiques, as an expression of appreciation and a way to remember Auroville.

22. Name of project holder(s) responsible for information given in this application (including budget request) AND who will submit a final report (and progress reports or updates *as specified by the donors*) for any and all grant(s) received for this project.

L'aura Joy, Centre Field
 Kati Hoetger, Creativity
 Anand Shanti, Samasti
 Helene Gagnon, Sanjana
 Janet Fearn, Arati