Contribution of Auroville International (AVI) to the development of Auroville “The City of Dawn”
The Auroville International (AVI) association

Less than two years after Auroville’s founding ceremony in 1968, the idea was born to create an international support network for the fledgling township. The idea was brought before The Mother and She gave Her blessings “for the realisation of unity and harmony”.

The need to get the international community involved in the building of Auroville had been expressed by The Mother well before its inauguration: “All this is simply to tell you that if nations collaborate in the work of Auroville, even to a very modest extent, it will do them good – it can do them a lot of good, a good that can be out of proportion to the appearance of their actions... I am speaking of the countries’ collaboration in CREATING something. It’s not when Auroville has been completed: it’s the nations’ collaboration in creating something...” (September 21, 1966)

Right from the beginning thousands of people worldwide were inspired by Auroville’s ideals and during the 1970s started forming associations, some already called “Auroville International”, to organize support for Auroville’s unfolding.

Around November 1982, Dr. Kireet Joshi, then Educational Advisor to the Government of India and Special Secretary at the Ministry of Education, visited Paris. He had been instrumental in creating the Auroville (Emergency Provisions) Act in 1980 and was briefed on the work of the various Auroville International Centres. He expressed the need to create an umbrella organization, a legal body of which all these Centres could be members and which in turn could apply for registration with international organisations and governments.

Auroville International (AVI), was registered as a non-profit legal organisation at the Chamber of Commerce in The Hague, Netherlands in 1983 and has functioned as a multi-national support and feedback base for Auroville from its very onset.

Very good contacts with UNESCO had meanwhile been established. Mr. M’Bow, then Secretary General of UNESCO, was a member of the Auroville International Advisory Council (IAC) set up under the Auroville (Emergency Provisions) Act.

The Indian Government promoted the 4th resolution on Auroville in UNESCO’s General Conference in autumn of that year, in which the Auroville International Centres were mentioned: “Noting that Auroville International Centres have been established in different parts of the world to work for the growth, development and promotion of the aims and objectives of Auroville,...”
AVI was mentioned again in the Resolution of the 39th General Conference of UNESCO in October 2017: “Also appreciating that Auroville International Centres have been established in many countries of the world, which are engaged in bringing youth from their countries into contact with the aims and ideals of Auroville and in facilitating internships, volunteer stays and academic research programs,...”

The AVI network presently (February 2023) consists of ten national Centres, which are registered associations in their respective countries, most of them enjoying a charitable, tax-exempt status, plus twenty-seven Liaisons, which may be smaller groups or single individuals:

Argentina         Ireland         Singapore
Australia         Israel          South Korea
Belgium           Italy           Spain
Brazil            Japan           Sweden
Canada            Kazakhstan       Switzerland
Croatia           Kenya          Taiwan
Denmark           Lithuania       Uganda
France            Luxemburg       Uruguay
Germany           Mexico          United Kingdom
Greece            Montenegro     USA
Haiti             The Netherlands Turkey
Hong Kong         Portugal
Hungary

The structure of AVI is non-hierarchical, with individual Centres and Liaisons developing their own organizational set-up and their own range of activities, following the idea of national and cultural diversity.

It is one of AVI’s most important tasks to raise funds or provide a funding channel for Auroville’s overall development and for individual projects as well as to organise financial support in times of major challenges, like the tsunami in 2004, the cyclone Thane of 2011 and most recently in the pandemic crisis. Considering it one of Auroville’s major projects of city development as envisaged by The Mother, AVI takes a special interest in the planning and developing of the International Zone.

The “Acres for Auroville” (A4A) fundraiser for land has been initiated by AVI in collaboration with “Land for Auroville Unified” (LFAU). Since it was launched on August 15, 2014, it has raised the impressive sum of $ 6 Million from donors all around the world. A4A has provided the funds for almost all land purchases and exchanges in Auroville since its start and is presently the only active source of funds.

For more details about the work of some national AVI Centres and impressive figures of their financial contributions please see the attached reports.
AUROVILLE INTERNATIONAL CANADA

The Canadian association is one of the oldest among the AVIs, having started in 1971. Based in Montreal, it serves all provinces across Canada. It is administered by a board of five benevolent officers and currently has about 30 active members. An annual General Meeting is held usually in August. An annual bilingual English-French Bulletin is distributed, and a bilingual e-mail with news about Auroville is sent every two weeks to about 200 members and friends of the association throughout Canada. Group activities are also regularly organized among the members (readings, meals, cultural or recreational outings, etc.)

AVI-Canada’s status is a non-profit organisation recognised by Revenue Canada. Donors receive a receipt for tax purposes for all monetary donations made to the association. A deduction (12%) is taken on all the donations to the amount of 100.00$ and more, channeled through AVI-Canada, in order to cover operating costs and promote specific projects in Auroville, in the domains of Education, Mobility, City services or Acres for Land. Since decades the donations sent to Auroville by AVI-Canada amount to approximately CAN$30,000 (€20,000) each year, with the largest part (2/3) going to the purchase of land.

AVI-Canada Board (Andrée, Christian, Jacques, Jean-Guy, Samuel)

419, Avenue Duluth Est. Montréal, Québec, H2L 1A4, Canada

contact@aurovillecanada.org
http://aurovillecanada.org
The Auroville Association in France

Auroville International France is the oldest of all the AVI associations: it was founded in 1968 by Roger Anger. In April 1968, the first press conference was held at the Indian Embassy in Paris to announce the birth of Auroville and the laying of the first stone.

The Association played an early role in preparing enthusiastic Auroville candidates for their departure by explaining Auroville to them and familiarizing them with the teachings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. The first caravan left France for India in 1968, followed by another in the Seventies, and then by about 20 more people in the 1990s.

We set several objectives among which:
- fundraising for Auroville projects
- developing a “bank” of AV volunteers
- support for the activities of the French Pavilion, Auroville University, and CIRHU.

Financial support
AVI-France is a non-profit organization. Since 1968, AVI-France has contributed financially to the development of numerous activities in Auroville. Until 2010, donors were able to deduct tax on their donations, which is no longer possible. This has reduced the amount of aid and the number of donors passing through the association, with people contributing directly.

For the period 2004 to 2022 only, AVI-France has contributed 664,550 euros, mainly in the development of Auroville (260,265 euros), construction (186,899 euros) schools (65,980 euros), humanitarian aid during the Tsunami and aid to villages and Auroville during the COVID (31,079 euros), Acres for Auroville (18,196 euros), drilling of wells (13,920 euros), New Creation (16,370 euros) and the Pavillon de France (12,870 euros).

Acres for Auroville (A4A)
AVI-France has contributed €18,196 for land consolidation in A4A Years 1 - 8 (15/8/14 - 14/8/22).
This amount includes contributions from donors, and from the Association AVI-France specifically and also proceeds from Nadia’s book “AV 80 - The Poetry of Daily Life”.

The “Acres for Auroville” land campaign is a collaboration of Auroville’s ”Lands for Auroville Unified” with the international centers of Auroville International. Initiated at the inspiration of AVI-France Board’s Auroville fundraiser, Mandakini, it was enthusiastically accepted by the AVI International Board and Aryadeep, longtime leader of LFAU. Launched on August 15th 2014, the A4A team has worked non-stop to raise awareness of Auroville’s vitally needed land consolidation plus trust through its detailed and transparent monthly accounting.

The “Art for Land” action is an A4A action co-led with Jaya and the Unity Pavilion team. Donations raised by A4A’s actions have financed the purchase costs and exchange fees for almost 100 plots of new Master Plan land to date, thanks to the generous solidarity of over 1000 donors.
Now in its 9th year, the campaign continues to receive 40 or more new donations each month, mostly coming from members and friends of AVI.

Acres for Auroville is the only source of funding for Auroville’s vitally-needed land consolidation.
Auroville International Germany

Auroville International (AVI) Deutschland e.V. was founded as a non-profit association in 1982. Based in Berlin it serves all federal states of Germany. It is administered by a board of five and has a stable membership over decades of around 170, who are supporting AVI Germany’s activities with their annual fee and with regular donations for Auroville. An additional number of 60 friends of Auroville receive the quarterly AVI Germany newsletter with news from Auroville and the international AVI association.

AVI Germany is closely affiliated with the Sri Aurobindo Center Berlin (SACB), which was founded in 2001 by active members of AVI Germany.

In 2003 AVI Germany and SACB have organized a one-week Auroville exhibition in the Indian Embassy of Berlin. Guest speakers were the former German ambassador to India and other high-ranking diplomatic representatives. In continuation of this cooperation, information events with lectures and films about Auroville and Integral Yoga were offered in the Cultural Institute of the Embassy in 2004 and in 2005.

AVI Germany holds annual meetings, which provide an opportunity to meet visiting Aurovilians and exchange ideas on current topics related to Auroville and to the philosophy and practice of Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga. About 80 people regularly attend the meetings. Our Berlin office also offers a wide selection of books, films and other media on Auroville and Integral Yoga.

It is one of our main efforts to bring young people closer to Auroville and to the ideal of human unity. AVI Germany is endorsed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development to send up to 18 young men and women for a year long voluntary service in Auroville within the framework of the Ministry’s "weltwaerts" (reaching out to the world) program. Substantial funds, provided by the Ministry, could be channelled to partnering Auroville projects.

Another focus of our work is to support Auroville ideally and financially by generating donations for various specific projects of the urban experiment and its unfolding and transferring them to Auroville. In particular, the work of Auroville in the surrounding villages is also supported, for which AVI Germany has been able to receive funding from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development several times in recent years; substantial donations were given by the Ministry to build and later extend the Auroville Institute of Applied Technology (AIAT) in Isaambalam, now Irumbai/Koot Road, and in earlier years the Kuilapalayam Highschool, and also for the AVAG-Microfinance project.

Financial support:
The donations raised by AVI Germany and transferred for Auroville’s overall development as well as for specific projects in Auroville in the last 40 years (1982-2022) amount to 5,1 million €.

This sum includes the following grants provided by the German government:
- 616,023 € transferred to Auroville via AVI Germany (projects AVAG-Microfinance, AIAT and Kuiilapalayam Highschool, as described above),
- 172,430 € transferred to Auroville via AVI Germany (for Auroville projects partnering the "weltwaerts" program, as described above).

These grants amount to a total of: 788,453 €.
Until before the pandemic, Auroville's representation in Italy was carried out by Marco Ferrarini. In recent years, however, the need has arisen to carry on the work he did, so Luigi Fedele (Manohar) decided to gather the people he has known during his long stay in Auroville of almost 20 years and continue this representation. We accepted this call in 7 (Luigi Fedele, Andrea Camerini, Teresa Maria Giacone, Valeria Russo, Sandra Suppini, Mira Tonioni and me, Rosa Eleonora Percesepe) and from January 2021 we are meeting online one morning every month to agree on how to join forces and best progress in our mission. Also starting from January 2021 I accepted to become the official representative of Auroville in Italy.

On the day of the Darshan August 15th, 2021, wishing to carry out many projects especially in the educational field, we felt the need and therefore decided to found a full-fledged AVI Centre in our nation and I gave my willingness to become the legal representative of this new Centre here in Italy.

From September 2021 to June 2022 the work of the legal representative and the founding members was very intense as we asked for support from a tax accountant and a lawyer for the entire foundation of the Centre. This foundation was only possible thanks to the support of donations made by AVI International and private individuals who believed in our cause and allowed us to be born. In May 2022 we opened the official bank account and after summer we have delivered all the documentation to the Revenue Agency (Agenzia delle Entrate).

In March 2023 we will also carry out the necessary procedure to allow our donors to deduct the donations we will receive in the future (in 2022 it was not possible to carry out this procedure as well because at the beginning of the year we were not yet fully registered).

Since after the summer we have defined our Integral Education Programme that we want to launch throughout the national territory (see attachment). It is a very broad project because it includes many aspects of everyday life: from the study of languages to ethical fashion, from permaculture to educational theatre for children, from Ayurveda to Integral Education Programme in schools, from the study of the Mantras to the creation of tours and cultural exchanges with the city of Auroville and much more.

A first online presentation of all the Centre’s programs has already been carried out on October 28th, 2022. After that, Manohar has begun a cycle of live broadcasts on our Facebook page that deepen various aspects of Auroville to make the city known in all its facets to the Italian Community as well. The first national event of AVI ITALIA in presence will be launched on March 26th in the province of Bologna in which the founding members will be physically there and will present the various activities that are about to start.

Being the founding members all in different cities (Rome, Milan, Turin, Bologna, Rimini), we would like to carry on the idea of Marco Ferrarini and the "antennas" in such a way that each founding member is the spokesperson of Auroville in his/her territory and few times a year (as of now) we will also organize national events too.
AVI Liaison Ireland

My first visit to Auroville took place 20 years ago and since then I am in constant contact with Auroville and especially with the after-school project New Colours in Edyanchavady. Over the years the project grew substantially from a few stone pillars and a palm leaf roof to a building with computer facilities, art and craft room, a garden, playground, water well and a kitchen. All that is available for up to 30 children every day.

At present a state-of-the-art library is being built on top of the existing ground floor rooms for the inhabitants of the surrounding area.

I visited Auroville nearly every year and worked in kindergartens and schools, helped older Aurovillians as a carer and fundraised in Ireland for various Auroville projects.

In 2010 I became the AVI Liaison for Ireland and in 2012 hosted the European AVI meeting in Cork (Ireland) for around 40 people.

I am in contact with the Irish Aurovillians and I organised exhibitions and talks given by Aurovillians in Ireland.

As a member of the AVI BOARD it is one of my responsibilities to keep in regular exchange with circa 10 European AVI Liaisons.

Juergen Faulstich
Auroville International The Netherlands.

Right after the inauguration of Auroville in 1968, the early pioneer Ruud Lohman gave lectures and presentations, and wrote monthly newsletters and several books about his views and experiences in Auroville. A first Auroville Center with a shop started in Amsterdam in 1972 by Marianne Hilarius and Frank Winnubst. In 1976 Dorothy King published her translation of The Adventure of Consciousness by Satprem. The foundation of Stichting Aurofonds followed in 1980 with the aim to publish Dutch translations of the books of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and to support Auroville. Various people gave lectures and presentations about Auroville or started integral yoga groups in different parts of the country. A new wave of consciousness inspired many people to visit or move to Auroville.

On May 11th, 1982 Auroville Netherlands was founded and officially registered by Carel Thieme. The statutes were adapted in 1985 to insert Auroville Netherlands into the legal umbrella of Auroville International (AVI) and change its name into Auroville International The Netherlands (AVI NL). Upon agreement with Belgians, the statutes included the possibility for them to become member as well. Since 2016 Belgium has its own AVI Liaison and collaborates with AVI NL on tax exemption.

In 1971 the Mother approved the idea to set up a so called “Auroville International” society to work upon a realisation of unity and harmony. Dr Kireet Joshi suggested a legal body for Auroville International to obtain international recognition. Following various meetings with Auroville International, the Auroville Cooperative, nowadays the Working Committee, concluded on August 12, 1983 that the necessity for a legal international body has become apparent. On August 15th, 1983 Carel Thieme registered the seat of the new international legal body of Auroville International in the Netherlands. Together with the Board, AVI NL cares for AVI’s compliance with Dutch law.

Having been the chair for the boards of AVI NL and the AVI, Mia Berden became for many years a driving force for both. As a Board member of the philanthropic foundation Stichting De Zaaiers, she endorsed a long term annual support for Auroville, which continues till date. In 2021 AVI NL and De Zaaiers co-sponsored the film production of ‘Inijan’ based on a story of Ruud Lohman. In the field of economy, the Dutch professor Henk Thomas, together with the Indian Chartered Accountant Manuel Thomas, conducted a profound and long term research. Eburon published the book in 2013: “The Economics for People and Earth. The Auroville Case 1968-2008”.

AVI NL acquired the fiscal status of tax exemption, called ANBI, in 2008. People who donate through AVI NL can deduct their donations from their income tax. Donors give donations to the projects of their choice like for schools in the villages, the Matrimandir, Savitri Bhavan, land acquisition, Integrated Animal Care, etc. The support has also be in kind like providing tools, skills, and knowledge as for the Fiber network or fencing.

In the past 10 years AVI NL transferred some €385,000 to the Unity Fund of Auroville. Due to bequests for Auroville Aurofonds donated another € 567,000. Together nearly one million.

Throughout the years the official membership varied between 80+ at a peak to now 55 members, while another 150 people and institutions receive information. AVI NL provides information via the website, monthly newsletters and organises meetings about Auroville, de Darshans and facilitates study groups about the books of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.
Auroville International Spain

At the end of the 1980s a group of friends of Auroville formed in Navarra Country (North Spain) and in 1990 the non-profit association called Auroville Internacional Española (AVI Spain) was founded in the city of Pamplona. On June 20th, 1991, Auroville Internacional Española presented its statutes and was officially registered as a non-profit association with the Ministry of Inner Affairs and with the Ministry of Finance.

In December 1998 an AVI Spain group formed in Catalonia (North-East Spain), which currently serves as the main center. Presently AVI Spain has 32 members and collaborates closely with Central and South American AVI Liaisons.

To provide information about Auroville and promote its ideals in different parts of Spain, talks and seminars have been organized in cultural centers and universities, radio and television programs were attended, articles have been written in magazines and newspapers, and two Auroville exhibitions were organized in Bilbao and in Tortosa.

Over the years AVI Spain has organized four international meetings of the AVI association. AVI Spain also participates in public events and collaborates with organizations that promote Peace and Human Unity, the essence of the Auroville ideal.

AVI Spain works closely with the Spanish Pavilion group in Auroville, which is promoting Hispanic culture in Auroville to help building, in the future, our country’s pavilion in the Auroville International Zone.

AVI Spain has its own internet domain: “auroville.es”, and gave to Auroville the domain: “auroville.net”. AVI Spain has its own web site: www.auroville.es

a Facebook Page: https://www.facebook.com/aurovilleinternacionalespana
and a YouTube Channel: https://www.youtube.com/@auroville.espana

AVI Spain has also published translations of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother: Conversaciones 1929, El Enigma de este Mundo, Savitri (complete in Catalan) and El Ideal de la Unidad Humana (in collaboration with the association Lur Gozoa).

AVI Spain publishes the review AUROMAgazine and the bimonthly Notas y Noticias for partners and friends.

Financial support
Since its foundation, AVI Spain has coordinated the financing of development projects in Auroville and its native social environment, and has contributed, among others, especially to health, sanitation, educational and housing projects.

Although many of the financial contributions coming through AVI Spain are from private donors, the Government of Navarra and the Pamplona City Council have contributed substantially, between 1993 and 2003, towards the financing of development projects for the local population of Auroville and its surrounding area with near to 400,000€. The bank Caja Navarra and its clients have, through AVI Spain, contributed to emergency aid for those affected by the 2004 tsunami with an amount of 60,000€.
Financial Summary
Auroville International UK (AVI UK) has supported the development of Auroville in many ways since the inauguration of Auroville in 1968.

Financial Support
European Union Grant - Education
In 1998 AVI UK applied and received a grant from the European Commission to support Auroville’s work in Education in the villages surrounding the community. Over 3 years this grant supported the improvement of facilities in three Auroville schools for village children, and the development of new education methods.  
Value Euro 143,000

European Union Grant - The Tropical Dry Evergreen Forest (TDEF)
This 3-year project supported the work of the regeneration of the Tropical Dry Evergreen Forest (TDEF), the indigenous forest of the Auroville area.

Value Euro 415,000

Gateway Grant
This grant was used for many different building projects including Future School, Kailash youth residence, and the Multimedia Centre at the Town Hall

Value Euro 970,000

Donations to Auroville since 2012 for a variety of projects
Value Euro 690,000

Many donations were received before 2012 including large amounts of money for the Matrimandir, particularly for the Crystal Globe. Many of these donors were from the Indian community. Additionally in 1982 the AVI UK group became a registered charity, enabling it to claim extra money from the government and enabling some donors to claim tax relief on their donations. Also, the AVI UK website has an online donations facility.

Non-Financial Support -
In 1968 earth was sent for the Urn for the opening ceremony on 28th February that year.
Since then, AVI UK has promoted Auroville in many ways, please see below.
- Organising many exhibitions about Auroville, including one at the Nehru Centre (the cultural centre of the Indian High Commission) in London. A speaker from the Sri Aurobindo Ashram was invited to inaugurate the exhibition. The last exhibition was in 2018 in London at SOAS University (School of Oriental and African studies).
- Publishing annual or biannual newsletters about Auroville.
- Hosting public meetings about Auroville and hosting AVI meetings.
- Currently AVI UK promotes Auroville through our website and social media outlets, Instagram etc.
Auroville International-USA History

Multiple Sri Aurobindo Centers existed in the US in the 1950’s. At a Sri Aurobindo Study group in California, June Maher created the Auroville Association. The US government confirmed the legal non-profit status 501 (3)c and 509 (a)(2)Foundation status in 1973, and in 1986 the name was changed to Auroville International USA. AVI USA organized informational programs on Auroville, sent a regular newsletter, hosted visitors from Auroville, including, groups of Tamil students from the Auroville schools and sent donations from the US, initially for Matrimandir, Land, Afforestation, and Education.

AVI USA created the All USA Meeting, known as AUM, in 1983, the intent of which was to provide a yearly gathering in our large country, where Auroville and Ashram supporters in the US could find common ground in the aspiration for Human Unity. On several occasions AVI USA hosted the annual meeting of the other Auroville International groups in tandem with the AUM meetings. Eventually, AUM developed its own organization.

In 1999 the AVI-USA Board was inspired to build place in Auroville where volunteers could have an inexpensive place to stay. In collaboration with the University of Washington, selected students raised the money, created an innovative ecological design, and with student and Tamil workers, built, the building now called International House in the International Zone. They continued coming to Auroville for 12 more years to learn from and contribute to Auroville. Living Roots was another student program from the US that, for many years, took students to Auroville for study and volunteer experience.

In the past five years, AVI USA board added two members who had worked with organizations which did extensive fundraising. They have vastly expanded our capacity to communicate with supporters. They also work directly with projects in Auroville, training Aurovilians to create opportunities for projects to generate support directly. In the last few years, when travel was limited, AVI USA created Zoom opportunities for people to experience and communicate directly with people and projects in Auroville. These continue to give a great boost to participants’ connection with Auroville, and to ongoing fundraising for over 70 projects, as well as Auroville generally.

AVI USA sends a regular eNewsletter about current activities in the US and Auroville to about 3,000 supporters. Twice yearly, it sends them a printed newsletter, Connect, which offers an in-depth exploration about people and projects in Auroville. It also maintains a website which, in addition to general information, facilitates donations to projects throughout Auroville and gives visitor travel information. AVI USA works with other groups in the US dedicated to Auroville, notably, Matagiri Sri Aurobindo Center, which has sent $1,808,000 to Auroville from a large donor in the last two years, and the Foundation for World Education, which has been sending grants to Auroville for many years, and has sent $557,441 to Auroville projects in the last fifteen years.

AVI USA is supported by 10% of the donations received and direct donations for the work. In the last 13 years, AVI USA has sent a total of $2.9 million dollars to Auroville.