

# Newsletter

## Auroville Village Action Group

### AVAG's Pandemic Response



We are in the midst of the most momentous challenge in living memory. The pandemic is testing the humanitarian community and its ability to help people in crisis now more than ever. These are extremely difficult times for all of us, and we are doing everything possible to sustain daily operations and support the neighbouring villages around Auroville, to mitigate the challenges faced due to this crisis by the poorest of the poor. To create safer and better living conditions for all, we form cross-gender and generational village level task forces, trained in safety protocols and immunity-boosting practices to provide nutrition, health information, homeopathic medicine and masks to 16,000 families in the villages in our area.



### Relief Fundraising Campaign



Our previous fundraising campaign for food relief raised 31.8 lakh rupees, including generous donations from Aurovilians, AVI centres, World Dignity, Inc., Auroville Deep Adaptation Group, Udhayam Women's Federation, and others, demonstrating the care Auroville and friends have for the people living in the surrounding villages. This amount supported 8912 families including families of migrants, single women, the aged, and the marginalized. We also reached out to all the tribal communities, families in the containment zone, sanitation workers, and the volunteers who supported the police team during the lockdown. All our work to support those in need, when the movement was restricted, was made possible due to the cooperation extended by the government departments, particularly the Deputy Superintendent of Police, Block Development Officer, and the Panchayat secretaries of our working area. AVAG also partnered with the leaders of all villages and the community-based organisations like the Udhayam Women's Federation, Paalam members and the representatives of ABSCA and the youth of our area. We are very grateful for the commitment and good will of all who helped us to support the most vulnerable bringing a smile on thousands of faces.

# Current Action

## EDUCATION – PREVENTION – EMPOWERMENT

The virus is spreading very fast day by day in Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry with an exponential increase in the number of cases daily. Still people have difficulties to follow the social and health practices recommended by the WHO and the government of India as the age old practices and cultural habits tend to be much stronger than the new rules and guidelines. Further spread of the disease will have a devastating effect on the lives and economy of already marginalized communities.

Therefore, we have launched and are halfway through a public awareness campaign covering a total of 16,000 families in 75 settlements around Auroville and are happy to let you know that the campaign is successful, people in the villages value our support and care during this difficult time.



The campaign promotes hygiene practices, physical distancing, and the use of face masks. We supply cotton cloth masks, four per family, homeopathic immune booster Arsenicum Album and we are using a door to door leaflet distribution, posters, flyers, banners, auto-rickshaw canvassing including colored pictures to create a better awareness and prevention to contain the pandemic. Our aim is to distribute 2 masks to 5,000 children each, when the schools open again.

This work is being carried out by AVAG with the guidance of the local authorities, the Deputy Superintendent of Police, and the Block Medical Officer and the support of village level task forces which include leaders, women, youth, Panchayat secretaries, members of the education board and various government departments. This campaign is creating employment for 60 people stitching approximately 74000 masks. Many of those stitching had lost their regular work or have part-time jobs in Auroville units or outside and are getting cut pieces from AVAL, the AVAG social enterprise, and are stitching at home. Thank you to all those who have contributed to this public awareness campaign.

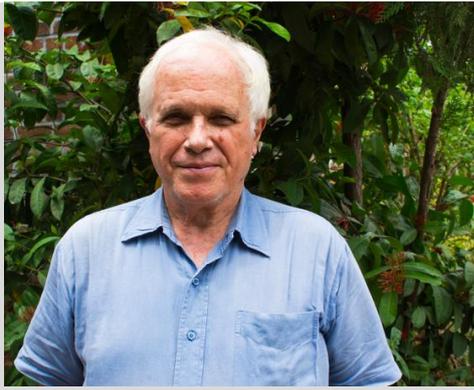
So far we have raised INR. 13 lakh (EUR.14,666 / USD. 17,377) in total from Aurovilians, Colours of Nature, Foundation for World Education and 'Stichting de Zaaier. The estimated cost of this campaign is INR. 24.4 Lakh. (EUR.27,527 / USD 32,616). We now need to raise INR.11 lakh (EUR.12,409 / USD 14,704) more.

All donations, no matter how small, either in-kind (such as masks or soaps) or financially are deeply appreciated.

For queries please contact [avagoffice@auroville.org.in](mailto:avagoffice@auroville.org.in)

Financial Services account 0226

## Our trustee from Auroville Alain, shares his experience on the relief program by AVAG



"As soon as the Covid crisis came up, I was touched by the immediate response that it evoked at AVAG. It was immediately clear that energetic action was necessary. Together, Federation leaders, AVAG staff and the management team, and so many women from different groups, worked tirelessly to find the appropriate ways of bringing support to those most in need in the surrounding villages, a delicate but necessary selection as resources were limited. I really want to commend the beautiful spirit which permeated this collective effort at all levels and I am proud to have been associated to some extent to the promotion of this generous initiative. The crisis, unfortunately, is very far from over and I know that AVAG will continue to work to provide as much support as possible in the difficult months to come." -Alain Bernard (Trustee)

### Testimonial Of Beneficiary

I am living with my son and my husband has taken a second wife. My son is in his final year of college. He got hurt while playing. During the lockdown I did not go to work. I got my salary for march and AVAG women's federation gave me Rs.500 and the Pondicherry govt. gave Rs 2000. AVAG also gave me food materials. Now I work for 15 days a month. The support given by AVAG would be helpful to more people like me.

- Laxmi Prabha, Udhayam Samanthi



### Meet the Team

The team at AVAG is ever evolving with diverse, dynamic and enthusiastic volunteers joining us from different parts of the world.

Anbu and Moris are co-directors of AVAG, supported in their work by a staff of 15 and an advisory group of three Aurovilians, Abha Tiwari, Alian Bernard & Bridget Horkan. We recently had Aurovillian Nadia Akcadurak from Austria who joined our team and will be helping us with Fundraising. Apart from that, there is also long term consultant Shrimayee Dutta, who has been with us since August 2018.

### Our Social Media Presence

We recently redesigned our website: [villageaction.in](http://villageaction.in)

We are now on the following social media platforms:

Facebook: [@AurovilleVillageActionGroup](https://www.facebook.com/AurovilleVillageActionGroup)

Instagram: [aurovillevillageactiongroup](https://www.instagram.com/aurovillevillageactiongroup)

LinkedIn: [Auroville Village Action Group](https://www.linkedin.com/company/auroville-village-action-group)

Follow us to be updated on all our activities!

### How can you help?

- 1) Join us as volunteer for a minimum of 3 months: Drop
- a note about your skills and interests via
- email to [avagoffice@auroville.org.in](mailto:avagoffice@auroville.org.in)
- 2) Donations for our work are greatly appreciated! We
- are under a 12A registered Trust with
- section 80(G) exemption status for Indian donations,
- and we are eligible to receive foreign
- funding via the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act.
- You can donate via:
- CHEQUE
- Write a cheque to us in the name of "Auroville Unity
- Fund" specifying —Auroville Village Action
- Group" and send to:
- AUROVILLE VILLAGE ACTION GROUP
- Irumbai, Auroville - 605 111, Tamil Nadu, India
- DIRECT TRANSFER: You can wire transfer to the
- following account:
- Bank Name: State Bank of India
- Branch Name: Auroville International Township
- Branch Code: 03160
- Beneficiary A/c Name: Auroville Unity Fund
- Beneficiary A/c Number: 10237876508
- SWIFT CODE: SBININBB474
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### SPREAD THE WORD

Pass this newsletter to others who may be interested in our activities.