

ENTRY SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT / April 2011

I/ GENERAL PRESENTATION:

- I. 1 Accountability
- I. 2 Mandate and Policy
- I. 3 Core Group Constitution
- I. 4 Core Group Purpose and Functions
- I. 5 Opening hours
- I. 6 Support group
- I. 7 Programs for newcomers: Monthly Tamil Orientation programs, Newcomer Orientation program, "Newcomers for Newcomers" program

II/ FUNCTIONING:

- II. 1 Team tasks
- II. 2 Different interview types
- II. 3 Relevance of support letters
- II. 4 Importance of reliable feedback
- II. 5 Newcomer Self-Assessment
- II. 6 Decision making

III/ SHARING OUR REFLEXIONS AND DIRECTIONS WITH THE WIDER COMMUNITY

- III. 1 A thankless job
- III. 2 Challenges and Concerns
- III. 3 Need to review the current mandate - draft 7
- III. 4 Striving for transparency: Announcements and information messages, Recognized channels for written communication, Communication with the community, Internal Meeting Minutes Access, Reaching out to the Resident Assembly, Reporting through internal bulletin/magazines, Meetings with other working groups/ services

IV/ STATISTICS:

- IV. 1 Entry Service announcements
- IV. 2 Newcomers
- IV. 3 Auroville Children
- IV. 3 Friends of Auroville
- IV. 4 Newcomer Orientation Program participants
- IV. 5 Tamil Orientation Program participants
- IV. 6 Fresh applicants
- IV. 7 Information requests

V/ APPENDIX LIST:

- V. 1 Criteria and requirements applicable to all applicants
- V. 2 Conditions to live in Auroville
- V. 3 Other aspects for consideration
- V. 4 Methodology

I/ GENERAL PRESENTATION:

1. Accountability: The Entry Service is directly acting under and answerable to the Resident Assembly through the Working Committee.

2. Mandate and Policy: The Entry Service is assisted by the Auroville Council in following the “Auroville Admission Policy dated 2007” otherwise known as “draft 7”, in helping making Entry service decisions in sensitive cases that affect the community, in proposing revisions to the mandate and policy to be approved by the Resident Assembly.

The Entry Service follows the mandate given by the Auroville Council and the current policies from the various concerned groups: Housing Service, Human Resource Team, FAMC. The Entry Service applies the regulations of BCC regarding mandatory health coverage since January 2010 and from the AV Security Office regarding obtaining a police clearance since October 2010.

The Entry Service follows the requirements of the Financial Service regarding the one-time administrative fee, the repatriation fee applicable for foreigners, the ticket deposit for 4 years for foreigners, the recurring monthly payment of the Central Fund Contribution.

The Entry Service operates in conjunction with the Auroville School Board regarding the admission of newcomer children - and very exceptionally Friends of Auroville children.

It works in regular and close cooperation with the Working Committee, the Resident Service and the Auroville Foundation regarding Entry visas for foreigners and non objection certificates for Indian Nationals.

3. Core Group Constitution: The Administration & Coordination Core Group is constituted of 7 members - 6 old-timers and 1 person who recently became resident appointed by the Resident Assembly: 3 full-time members: Cecilia (French), Coren (American), and Ross (Australian) and 4 part-time members: Buvana (Indian from Tamil Nadu), Jocelyn (American), Kalsang (Tibetan) and Rakhee (Indian from Gujarat).

The length of the team mandate is currently 3 years with all members being replaced at one time. The Entry Service is assisted by the Auroville Council through the Resident Assembly in selecting new team members when a replacement is needed.

4. Core Group Purpose and functions:

The purpose of the Administration and Coordination Core Group is to oversee the Newcomer process from beginning to end.

Its functions include performing all the required administrative work such as general correspondence; processing applications; requesting recommendation letters from the Auroville Foundation for foreigners and non objection certificates for Indian nationals; interviewing applicants to determine their commitment to Auroville and overall suitability; reviewing all the information supplied and feedback coming from various sources about the integration of an applicant; recommending the names of newcomers and Aurovilians for feedback to the community through the News and Notes, monitoring favourable and unfavourable feedback; listing the names of Newcomers who have successfully completed their probationary period towards their inclusion in the Auroville Master list maintained by the Working Committee and further inclusion in the Register of Residents maintained by the Auroville Foundation.

5. Opening hours: The entry service is meant to operate on a yearly basis. However due to our lack of personnel in June, only emergency requests in terms of letters of recommendation previously granted are handled by a reduced staff.

Our opening hours to the public are Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9AM to 12PM. The rest of the time is dedicated to administration, e-mail correspondence and meetings.

6. Support Group: The core group is helped by a support group of some 20 Aurovilians that it calls on occasionally as observers and translators during interviews.

Bridget from L'Avenir team has been active in collecting data towards the financial means and housing needs of aspiring newcomers and newcomers in the process.

Friend of Auroville Krishna is currently assisting us in collecting data on Friends of Auroville.

7. Orientation Programs for newcomers: Two separate Newcomer Orientation programs have successfully been running over the past 18 months. The purpose of these programs is to ensure a smooth integration of new people wanting to become Newcomers. It plays a significant part in providing the needed background to aspiring applicants and newcomers already in an Entry process.

- **The Tamil monthly Orientation Programs:** This Orientation program is especially aimed at our local population. It takes place one Saturday morning each month. The meetings are held in Tamil language only and subjects range from very practical issues to more subtle topics. Since July 2010, approximately 30 participants gather at different locations in Auroville monthly. The organizing team: Meenakshi, Tillai, Kalsang, Buvana and Jocelyn - with a varied group of committed guest speakers have covered the study of the Auroville Charter, The dream, Mother and Sri Aurobindo, Auroville and Integral yoga and Human Unity and gone through the more practical aspects of School Education, Housing, Waste management, Health and Hygiene, Farming.

Meeting locations vary as to expand the participants' knowledge of the community.

So far meetings have been held at Ilaignarkal school, Isai Ambalam school, Creativity, Pavilion of Tibetan culture, Buddha gardens, Solitude farm and Savitri Bhavan.

- **The Newcomer Orientation Program:** This program of introduction to Auroville for newcomers, is run by Shivaya, Sonja and Rakhal and generally lasts over 5/6 full days. The program focuses on the participants themselves: formation of the group, fostering of the relations between the participants, particularity of individual commitment and contribution toward Auroville, appraisal of the impact of the program for each one; and the founding principles: group and individual sharing on "the Dream", "the Charter", "To be a true Aurovilian", Introduction to the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and sensing ones' Psychic Being. It offers visits, presentations and testimonies of Aurovilians in the following fields of activities: Education, Green activities, Rejuvenation of the Land, Commercial activities, Village Action, City Services, Matrimandir ongoing work, City Planning, Waste Treatment. It also covers practicalities on various topics such as housing: founding principles, experiments, difficulties, organisation and regulation; Economy: founding principles, historical experimentation, work and individual contribution, creation of wealth, general organisation and structures; Self-governance and organisation: founding principles, history, creation and functioning of the Auroville Foundation, community self-governance, level of decision, processes. The feedback from participants is impressively positive and our team has made this Newcomer Orientation Program part of the Entry process for all newcomers, irrespective of their background.

- **Newcomers for Newcomers program:** After having an excellent start in 2009 with monthly events that were attended by an average of 30 newcomers, this program promoting knowledge and integration went through ups and downs in 2010. Events were fewer and not as well attended. However, it has recently regained much popularity thanks to the active participation of the assistance of the Unity Pavilion team. Some 40 newcomers teamed up last month in Sve Dam: while sharing as a group their challenges and achievements, newcomers discover different facets of the community and assist one another.

II/ FUNCTIONING:

1. Team tasks: Each team member takes up a special task (reception, correspondence, interviews, on site visits, linking with the Auroville Foundation, but all members in turn take part in interviews either as facilitator, note-taker, translator and observer. On an average, the Entry schedules around 15 interviews a week, which results in a considerable amount of administrative follow up.

2. Different interview types: There are several types of interviews: first advisory interviews towards obtaining a letter of recommendation to return as a newcomer with an Entry visa (foreigners) or towards obtaining a non objection certificate (Indian nationals) , interviews “to become a newcomer”, and Acceptance interviews to become an Aurovilian. We also hold clarification meetings when applicable, for instance in the event of unfavorable substantiated feedback or upon a newcomer's request.

3. Relevance of support letters: Applicants and Newcomers need to be pro-active. To be officially registered as a Newcomer, newcomers must bring at least 3 letters of support from at least 3 Aurovilians as well as 1 from work and 1 from residence. We need to have a sense that a person is integrating into the wider community and not just a small section, which implies that letters must come from a cross-section of the community. The letters must be in hard copy and signed and give as many details as possible. We expect people who vouch for an applicant to feel a degree of responsibility in recommending someone's name to us. There are also times, when we are more pro-active and ask complementary letters from individuals or groups/services.

4. Importance of reliable feedback: There are times when the Entry Service realizes it cannot by itself assess the full potential of an applicant. Our extra source of information, besides our interviews, is feedback from the community. Feedback is studied by our team very seriously. Anonymous feedback is not accepted. On some occasions, oral feedback is accepted when it is put into writing by one of our members. After the announcement of someone's name for feedback, we monitor the feedback received and there are times when our decision changes. It has happened that we delay the overall process by giving a 3 to 5 months extension or rescind the process altogether. This is why community members knowledge and impressions of an applicant based on commitment and integration into the community are essential.

5. Newcomer Self Assessment: Newcomers need to keep a close contact with our service throughout the whole integration process. Significant changes in terms of work commitment and housing, difficulties, illnesses and conflicts, going out of station, need to be brought to our attention. While this close contact is a true need, this is not always possible due to time and space constrains. We have therefore worked out a self assessment questionnaire that newcomers need to return 3 times a year including a final self assessment prior to the Acceptance meeting.

6. Decision making: The entry service has a mandate to screen applicants - which is a rather daunting task. While there are only 7 of us in the team , we would like to share that a newcomer process is handled from beginning to end by 40 to 50 people - including the newcomer contact person, people through service/work or residence or other community activities.

The team holds everybody to the same standards, irrespective of his/her origin. All criteria and requirements as listed in the current Admission Policy need to be met by individuals to be accepted as newcomers and later as Resident Aurovilians.

We make all decisions by consensus, but if that is not possible, a decision is made by consent and team members reservations are noted. All in all, thanks to a great degree of flexibility and to encourage Auroville's population growth, we have accepted roughly 90 % of the applicants that we have met in a formal advisory interview.

Reasons for refusing an applicant vary. Some people do not fulfill the basic criteria in terms of general understanding the aims and ideals. Some people are merely looking for a pleasant place to retire - at any age - , and/or simply wish to provide an alternative life-style for themselves and family without committing to the community, seek alternative education for their children, need to obtain an Entry visa to live in India for lengthy and uninterrupted stays. We may have received an insufficient number of quality support letters on behalf of an applicant or reliable members of the community have expressed strong reservations or valid objections.

On occasions we prefer to delay the process of an applicant by a minimum of 3 to 6 months to give the applicant, our team and the community some time and space to reflect.

Rescinding someone's process is the end result of a series of discussion with the concerned person and many times various working groups. The high number of rescind cases that we have had to make is an indication that too many applicants in the past were not screened properly prior to being accepted as newcomers by former teams.

As long as we do not have all elements at hand or there is hope that a situation may evolve positively, we delay making a rescind decision. However, when the decision has been made unanimously after sometimes a rather long process, we see no point in changing our final decision if the circumstances stay the same and/or no new element comes to light. We then leave it to the community to take it to another level if an individual or a group decide to contest this decision. On two occasions this past year, a final rescind decision made by our team has been challenged by a group of supporters and brought to the attention of a Review Body through the Resident Assembly Service. In the first case, our position has been confirmed and the newcomer has been finally requested to leave Auroville. In the second case, the case is still under study by the Review Body.

III/ SHARING OUR REFLECTIONS AND DIRECTIONS WITH THE COMMUNITY

1. A thankless job: The Entry Service is the threshold of the community and Auroville needs to welcome genuine people that have a true aspiration for progress at the individual and collective levels. Many conflicts that we have come from having people in the community that do not share common values. While we can agree to be flexible and see each case as a special case, there are some basic points to look into for the sake of clarity towards a smooth future in the interest of the wider community.

We handle several hundreds of requests at different stages in the process at one time and limited personnel. Not accepting an individual, delaying his acceptance by 6 or more months, rescinding someone's process is sometimes met with resistance on the part of the individual that feels "rejected" and with even more resistance by a group of supporters who may have sympathy for a person but may not have a full enough picture. While we acknowledge that it is absolutely impossible for our team to fully know a person on the basis of a few interactions in one or more meetings, we would need a lot more understanding of the work, support and participation from the community.

Gossip about an individual, group intimidation, accusations of dishonesty, corruption and racism and maintaining double standards often come to our ears directly or indirectly. We infrequently but still too often receive lectures, insults or threats as individuals or as a team. While this is not directly affecting our work, it undermines at times our energy and enthusiasm for this demanding task for the community. This is hardly compensated by the many support letters from services/working groups or individuals we receive and one could say that this is a thankless job. Regardless of the challenges, the team has a common appreciation for team work and a feeling that we are all going in the same direction, along with the other working groups in the community. This is the key factor to our cohesiveness and sustained interest for the work.

2. Challenges and Concerns: As much as we would like to embrace all the genuine good-will people that come and ask to join as newcomers, there are limiting factors:

- **Housing:** The lack of housing facilities is the biggest difficulty we encounter by far. To satisfy a legal requirement from the Auroville Foundation and to facilitate their integration into the community, aspiring newcomers and newcomers need to live on Auroville land from the very beginning of their process, new Aurovilians too. At any given time, there are 300 people in the Newcomer pipeline, but there is no new major housing development coming up in the near future.

- **Work opportunities:** A certain dimension has been given by the Mother to allow an individual to do the work he/she really feels like doing and our team would not want to force people to do something in Auroville simply because it corresponds to their education or previous work experience as they may want to do something completely different. However, the community has needs that need to be fulfilled in priority. We would need an active group to guide Newcomers in this particular field: to find meaningful and regular work commitment(s) that match the various community needs - preferably in services - with the newcomer field(s) of competence.

- **Finances:** Many good-will people, mainly youth, need to be encouraged to join despite their lack of financial means. Availability of maintenances from services/groups/units through work commitment are still scarce. However, the housing and maintenance groups have agreed that they will allocate roughly 10% of their budget to deserving people who really have nothing. Moreover, Newcomers can now receive a maintenance and get their Central Fund and Health Fund contributions taken care of if they are doing essential work for the community.

We also have some concerns:

- **People from the local area:** In many cases, when the people come from the local area, we have co-dependency concerns that may inhibit their process. In some cases, an applicant may come to rely heavily, and solely, on one Aurovilian only for their housing, their work, their financial support and mentor/friendship. A certain level of co-dependency may develop that stunts their growth and inhibits the necessary integration into the larger community. There must be a sincere aspiration and effort to become involved, to understand the community, to explore, to grow and try new things. There must be something different between working in/for the community and becoming a member of the community. This difference is something individual and interior. A choice made at the soul-level in response to a wish for change, for growth. We regularly urge people to extend themselves if we feel their living/working situation is too small so as not to remain stuck in the contained space of their work environment.

- **Over representation of the indian population:** Our current population census show that out of 2224 Aurovilians, 938 are Indians. Out of these 938, 71% come directly from the nearby villages. These figures do not include members of the family that do not have the status of Aurovilians but nevertheless weigh in the Auroville economy. If we want to retain our international spirit, the diversity of our population needs to be better balanced.

- **Aging population:** There have been twice as many Newcomers from older age groups (60-80 years of age) than younger age groups over the past 5 years. We would like to encourage more people from younger age groups and individuals with especially needed skills.

- **School admissions:** We need to come to a common understanding regarding newcomer children with the School Board and the school admission coordinator, given our limited capacities. Our first concern is that currently 1 primary school counts 15 children of newcomers plus a sizable number of guests whose parents are aspiring newcomers. While we very much welcome the fact that this school accommodates the needs of those children who need schooling, and their guest/newcomer parents who need time to get involved into the community, a balance needs to be restored. All these children come from abroad and other states of India. In many instances, their parents are involved in the school itself in teaching and/or administration. Our second concern goes to single parents wanting to join Auroville while the other parent is unable or unwilling to join. We favor that families join as full families and wish that schools see it as a priority to accept children when both parents are newcomers and future Aurovilians. We also favor the idea that parents give their commitment to services other than the school their children join.

3. Need to review the current Admission Policy - otherwise known as draft 7

After having worked with the Admission policy for 1 and ½ year, our team see the need to make revisions in conjunction with the Auroville Council. Suggestions to be approved by the Resident Assembly have already reached the Working Committee and the Auroville Council:

- the formal status of Aurovilian and member of the Resident Assembly could be granted only after a time period of 3 to 5 years. Meanwhile Newcomers become Residents of Auroville. Housing investments can be returned within this time period if the Resident decides to leave or is asked to leave Auroville.
- The full automatic process from Auroville child status to Aurovilian status is questioned. The status of Aurovilian and member of the resident Assembly could be granted in due time when a child of Auroville makes a very conscious choice to become a Resident and an active member of the community and follows a process to be defined.
- The guidelines of Friend of Auroville need further reviewing.
- The guidelines of Associates of Auroville need to be completed. For those employees who do not satisfy the requirements to become an Aurovilian, *Associates* will be integrated

employees who will have some rights - still to be defined - in our community without them having to give up their employee rights, traditional life style and beliefs. It will help the Entry service to solve some complex ongoing cases.

- The status of Partners and Relatives needs to be fully reviewed.

4. Striving for transparency:

- **Announcements and information messages:** Announcements in the News and Notes is the only recognized channel used by our team to share announcements and information with the community on a formal basis. Our team publishes in the News and Notes a bi-monthly announcement of the names of the people we recommend as Newcomers, Aurovilians, Returning or Returned Aurovilians, Friends of Auroville for feedback.

We also publish the names of the children of newcomers and new Aurovilians, those who have left Auroville and those whose process has been rescinded.

We regularly give messages of information, clarifications on different points that may need newcomers and new Aurovilians attention.

- **Recognized channels for written communication:** Our Entry Service's email address is the only recognized channel used by our team to exchange communication with aspiring newcomers and the members of the community on an informal and formal basis.

Our team does not always have the physical space and time and/or wish to share our positions/decisions regarding someone's process during open hours to the public. When requested, we schedule a clarification meeting when the team can justify their decision in a more peaceful atmosphere and hear third parties in a spirit of collaboration.

- **Communication with the community:** Anyone with a sincere interest is welcome to come in person to enquire about an applicant's ongoing process or our decision to accept or refuse an individual. Enquiring in writing is also an option. However confidentiality restricts us to not disclose some elements/names in a sensitive file as it often creates more unnecessary complications and/or unwanted interferences from good willed but ill-informed people. We regret that the Resident Assembly Service has been unable to hold monthly Resident Assembly meetings as intended towards the beginning of our mandate in November 2009. While we recognize that interactions with the community are very much needed, we simply do not have the time to organize such time consuming preparations towards these community events.

- **Meeting minutes Access:** Minutes may be accessible upon request but not individual files as they may contain sensitive information. The Entry Service may decide not to give access to its minutes, after having obtained the opinion of the Working Committee, if it considers that that would adversely affect the interest of Auroville, an individual or the person concerned or is covered by confidentiality such as medical records.

- **Reporting:** We welcomed the visit of Alan of Auroville Today in September 2010. This was a golden opportunity to share the beauties and challenges of our daily work and update the community on the realities and direction we had taken as a team within our mandate. Knowing that not all in the community read this monthly magazine, we had it published on Auronet, accompanied by a French translation with Auroville Today's permission.

Informing: The Entry booklet that we had painstakingly put together right prior our term in 2009 is still available upon request - in hard and soft copy - but has not been updated since. We would need one newcomer/Aurovillian with desktop publishing skills to come forward and assist us out so we can send or give a copy for reference to each newcomer at the beginning of their process.

- **Field visits:** We have managed a few "field visits". Our team went and visited places such as Aranya, Saddhana Forest, Well Paper, Swaram, Marthuvam Healing Forest, Pony Farm, Equality. There are many more places that host a high number of newcomers that would need visits, but we cannot simply manage the time. It is always refreshing for both sides to be able to meet face to face and exchange our respective positions and views on the Entry process on an informal basis away from the office space.

- **Meetings with other groups:** Our team has spent a considerable amount of time in meeting with concerned working groups to share our views and difficulties. Apart from the working groups we are regularly in contact with, we have met this year on one or more occasions the Mirra Women's group, L'Avenir team, the Auronet team, the Auroville Security team, the Matrimandir team, the Resident Assembly Service, the School Board, the Review Body, the SAVI team and the International Advisory Council and the Governing Board during their very last visit.

IV/ STATISTICS

1. Entry Service announcements: As per our latest figures, over the past 12 months from May 2010 to April 2011 included, the Entry Service has announced the names for feedback of 80 Aurovilian residents including 38 women + 42 men (17 come from the nearby villages, 11 from else where in Tamil Nadu and other states of India, 52 are foreigners); 69 newcomers including 37 women + 32 men (6 come from the nearby villages, 12 from from else where in Tamil Nadu and other states of India, 51 are foreigners); 3 Returning Aurovilians including 1 woman + 2 men (all foreigners); 20 Friends of Auroville including 13 women + 7 men (18 foreigners, 2 Indians -1 hailing from else where in Tamil Nadu and 1 from another state of India). The Entry Service has also announced that 12 newcomers left Auroville on their own including 9 women + 3 men (11 foreigners and 1 Indian from another state of India). 20 people had their process rescinded including 8 women and 12 men (14 come from the nearby villages, 1 from another state of India, 5 are foreigners). 1 Friend of Auroville had her status revoked (1 foreign woman).

2. Newcomer figures: Currently there 99 Newcomers in the process. 3 have ongoing processes dating back as far as 2008. 11 started their process this month itself. 4 are on hold as they are not able to give even a part-time work commitment to the community. Out of the total number 55 are women and 44 men. There are 57 singles, 6 couples without children and 37 comes as families, either single parent with 1 or 2 children, couples with children including a family of 5 children. Our senior is 70 years old and our youngest is 21 years old.

3. Auroville Children: At this time, we count some 40 children registered in our various schools: Future school:2, Transition school:3, Deepanam:15, Pondy/Ilaignarkal:2, Centre Field Kindergarten:2, Nandanam Kindergarten:8, pre-creche:1. The remainder are babies up to 3 years old not attending the pre-creche and taken care of by their parents.

4. Friends of Auroville figures: Presently there are some 40 Friends of Auroville; some of them are officially registered, some of them are currently completing their registration towards confirming their status. Our team has announced 20 new Friends of Auroville over the past year. Out of these figures, 18 are foreigners and 2 are Indian Nationals. All of them substantially contribute to the Auroville development abroad through their work with AVI Centres mostly and in Auroville through various activities ranging from photo exhibitions to fund raising, marketing Auroville products, practicing their field of knowledge in education, marketing, medicine, alternative energy, etc...

5. Newcomer Orientation Program participants:

Since its inception in November 2009, the team has held 9 programs. Each group counts on average 20 participants from all origins: foreigners and Indian nationals from the nearby villages and else where in Tamil Nadu and other Indian states.

So far, out of the 187 participants, 33 have become Aurovilians, 81 newcomers, 17 will be returning with a letter of recommendation with an Entry visa towards becoming newcomers, 18 have not been accepted, 4 left Auroville. The rest of the people have cancelled their application or are waiting to have an advisory interview.

6. Monthly Tamil Orientation programs participants: Out of the regular 30 or so Tamil participants to the program, 3 have become Aurovilians, 8 have become newcomers, 10 have submitted an application and met with our team in a formal advisory interview but not been accepted as newcomers as of now, 3 have had their newcomer process rescinded and the remainder have either not come to our office to check with us or were told that we did not feel they are ready to submit an application at this point.

7 Fresh applicants: Our group has agreed in principle to 93 fresh applicants who were granted letters of recommendation towards returning as newcomers within a time frame of 3 months to 2 years. We have already scheduled some 20 advisory interviews in July.

8 Information requests: We have also answered about 200 information enquiries from India and foreign countries of people interested in perhaps joining our community. They either visit us directly at our office or write to us. Most of the time, we redirect these people to the Guest Service at Solar Kitchen. A significant number of them have already been here and wish to become newcomers and therefore need our attention.

V/ Appendix list:

1. Criteria & requirements to become a newcomer applicable to all applicants

a/ Criteria to become a newcomer:

The following criteria apply to all applicants who wish to join Auroville under one of the Categories specified in this document.

- 1) To be inspired by and committed to the Auroville Charter and the ideals of Auroville, as expressed in Mother's guidelines and such documents as The Mother's "To be a true Aurovilian".
- 2) To be willing to further the manifestation of the ideals of Auroville according to his/her capacity.
- 3) To be willing to contribute to the collective welfare through work, in kind or with money.
- 4) To tell the truth and refrain from violence.
- 5) To not actively engage in politics and thereby harm Auroville.
- 6) To not use Auroville as a platform for promoting any sectarian activities.
- 7) To abide by the laws of India.

b/ Requirements to become a newcomer:

- 1) A Newcomer is expected to contribute to Auroville by taking up regular work that is meaningful to the growth and realization of Auroville in accordance with The Mother's guidelines. The Entry Service will maintain a list of such work, which will be approved by the Residents' Assembly. The Entry Service will consider the particular circumstances of a Newcomer, such as his or her health and/or responsibility for his or her small children.
- 2) A Newcomer should familiarize him/herself with the spiritual aims and ideals of Auroville and improve his or her understanding of the vision of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother.
- 3) A Newcomer should familiarize him/herself with the different aspects of Auroville, by joining courses, participating in collective activities, open community meetings and other gatherings.
- 4) A Newcomer should be willing to sustain him/herself and his/her family in accordance with The Mother's guidelines, and depend on community funds only as agreed with the Entry Service.
- 5) A Newcomer has to find suitable housing in Auroville in accordance with the Auroville Housing Policy and the requirement of the Auroville Foundation.
- 6) As English is the common language for collective communication in Auroville and Tamil is the language of Tamil Nadu, a Newcomer should acquire basic communication skills in English and Tamil.
- 7) Newcomers should make an effort to understand and respect the culture and customs of Tamil Nadu and India.
- 8) Children of Newcomers are expected to attend Auroville schools unless it can be demonstrated that the education a particular child needs is not available in Auroville.
- 9) During the Newcomer period, a Newcomer is not allowed to start an undertaking - be it a service, a commercial unit or an independent project - except with permission of the Entry Service. The Entry Service will consult with the FAMC before giving such permission.
- 10) The Newcomer will keep the Entry Service informed about his/her housing situation.
- 11) The Newcomer will pay the contributions as specified in the financial policy for Newcomers.
- 12) Foreign nationals will deposit an amount equivalent to the cost of a return ticket to their home country. This money will be refunded if the applicant wants to leave before her/his Newcomer process is completed or when s/he is accepted as Aurovilian.

Before officially beginning this one year period, the Newcomer agrees to follow the conditions for living in Auroville by signing a document to this effect called "Material conditions". And gives to the office the name and contact numbers of a reliable member of the community that has accepted to act as his/her contact person.

2. Conditions for living in Auroville

1. People living in Auroville are expected to contribute to the collective welfare in work, kind and/or money. Essentially Aurovilians should give their full time and energy to Auroville.
2. All activities, productive or service-oriented, must be part of the over-all Auroville framework. All financial transactions should take place through the official channels of Auroville.
3. Lands, buildings, houses and other immovable assets are all the collective property of Auroville, and no claims of private possession or ownership can be made by anyone, whether an occupant or a donor.
4. Disputes among members will be solved without violence and within the community.
5. The laws of the Government of India must be respected. People coming from abroad must have a valid passport and must follow the rules of the Government of India about the granting of entry visas. Residential permits are granted to them on the basis of being honorary voluntary workers in Auroville.
6. According to Indian law as well as the guidance of Mother, drugs are not allowed in Auroville.

3. Other aspects for consideration

While considering admission of a person, other aspects are taken into account. These include: harmonious integration into the community

financial considerations

general good physical and mental health

availability of accommodation within Auroville

suitable work/service commitment to the community - part time can be accepted on an exceptional basis

Attendance of a 5 day Orientation Program for Newcomers

Letters of support from a cross section of Aurovilians besides work and residence places

For parents, acceptance of their children by one of Auroville's schools and letter from spouse signed by notary authorizing the children to live in Auroville in case the newcomer parent joins as a single parent. Sending children to a Pondy school or home schooling can be accepted in special cases after discussion with the Entry Service

4. Methodology

Step 1:

Applicant writes to the Entry Service with a request to join Auroville.

Step 2:

The Entry Service core group discusses initial request. When applicable, the Entry Service invites the applicant to come to the office and pick up a Request Form. Occasionally it can be filled on line and printed. Only after all relevant documentation has been completed does the Entry Service schedule a first Advisory interview.

Step 3:

First Advisory Interview: for foreigners this is towards requesting a letter of recommendation for an Entry - X - visa to return to join Auroville.

First Advisory interview: for Indian nationals towards requesting a non objection certificate towards Newcomer status.

In all cases, when Entry Service makes the decision to accept an application, applicant needs to meet with the Secretary of the Auroville Foundation.

Step 4:

For foreigners, the Foundation issues the letter of recommendation towards an Entry visa when the request is granted. Either the applicant leaves with the LR - for those applicants returning within 3 months time - or it is couriered to their home address. The request for LR can be made up to only 2 years when the applicant has met the Secretary.

For Indian nationals, the Foundation issues a non-objection certificate towards newcomer status, when the request is granted.

Step 5:

For foreigners, upon returning to Auroville, applicants need to visit the Entry Service office and schedule an “interview to become a newcomer” with the team.

For Indian nationals, applicants need to visit the Entry Service office and schedule an “interview to become a newcomer” with the team.

Step 6:

When accepted by the Entry Service team, the name of the newcomer is announced to the community for feedback in the News and Notes.

When not accepted by the Entry Service team, either the applicant receives a notification to renew his application within time frame of 3 to 12 months or receives a notification that his application is rejected. In this case, the Entry Service requests the Foundation office through the Working Committee to cancel his financial guarantee and recommendation. In exceptional cases, the applicant may be requested to leave Auroville.

Step 7:

Becoming a newcomer: In absence of unfavorable feedback within the 2 week feedback period from the date of publication, the Entry Service requests applicants announced as newcomers to come to our office to bring in a series of documents that enable them to have a newcomer account and card. Applicants officially become newcomers ONLY after these documents have been signed and contributions paid for through the Financial Service.

- One time administrative fee: Rs 8000
- One time repatriation administration fee: Rs 1000 - not for Indian nationals
- Recurring transfer of Central Fund contribution: Rs 2200
- Ticket deposit for up to 4 years corresponding of 3 renewal of entry visa for each member of the family - not for Indian nationals
- Health coverage for each member of the family: Rs 280 per adult and Rs 140 per child
- Housing agreement for the full Newcomer period whereas the newcomer lives in Auroville or, very exceptionally, in an Auroville asset outside Auroville

The present Newcomer period of one year - starting when the documents have all been given and signed - can be extended twice by 6 months - during which the applicant needs to report to the Entry Service on his process as often as he/she finds it necessary and/or asked by the Entry Service to do so.

Step 8:

Becoming an Aurovilian: Newcomers officially become Aurovilians ONLY ONCE their name has been endorsed by the Working Committee and entered in the Auroville Master List, and they have met in person with the Secretary of the Auroville Foundation - upon the Foundation's request - so their name is entered in the Register of Residents maintained by the Auroville Foundation.

After the two-week feedback period, in absence of unfavorable feedback, we request newcomers announced as Aurovilians - and Returning Aurovilians announced as Returned Aurovilians - to come to our office with their ID proof and 2 pictures to sign a special form (B form) towards the endorsement of their names in the Auroville Master list.

Monthly, the B forms collected at the Entry Service office that month are forwarded to the Working Committee's office.

When substantiated negative feedback has been received from one or more members, the team invites the newcomer for discussion and clarification.

In case a conflict arises or worsens, an essential document is kept missing, the work commitment stops or the newly announced Aurovilian leaves Auroville altogether, the B form is kept in the file and the newly announced Aurovilian remains a newcomer until the Entry Service finds it fit.

The B forms of those who have received substantiated negative feedback are forwarded ONLY when conflicts have subsided, essential documents obtained, and clarifications made to the satisfaction of all parties.

In exceptional cases, the newcomer process can be further delayed or rescinded altogether at this stage. The B form then becomes void.