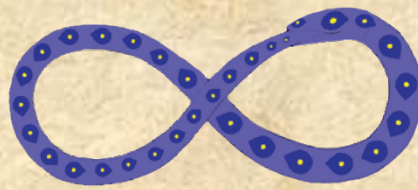


MOHANAM
Village Heritage centre
Hub for Bio-region Arts, Craft & Culture



Auroville

Newsletter

January to July 2021

Dear Friends,

Thank you for considering our request for support. Our work as a bridge between Auroville and the local villages is as important as ever during this time of limitation and hardship during corona times.

Due to the government orders, kindergarten students have not been coming to the school, but so many people rely on the Mohanam kindergarten, including the teachers (for their livelihood and income), parents, and kids themselves, that we have retained three teachers who are providing ongoing homework and meeting with the parents regarding the well-being of their children. Many parents have asked us to allow even just a few children to come to our campus each day, but we have decided to remain cautious and continue supporting the children remotely. In 2020, we were forced to lay off seven members of the Mohanam team who had worked with us for between 10 and 20 years. This was a painful but necessary decision given the financial reality. And paying the limited staff that we have retained is becoming increasingly challenging the longer the current situation lasts. The total cost of paying the three teachers that we have retained and keeping the campus clean and ready to receive children as soon as the government orders permit is approximately Rs 50,000/month. Your contribution to support the Mohanam Kindergarten for one or more months will allow us to continue to provide home support to the children, and also prepare to open as soon as it becomes possible.

We are also continuing to offer arts and yoga classes for older children who rely on Mohanam for guidance, social networks, and connection to both Auroville's spirit and values and their local Tamil heritage. Please have a look on the activities section in this newsletter, just to give you a glimpse of our effort in this field. We are also offering 5 different forms: arts, yoga, dance, music and Tamil classes per week. The cost of offering these classes is approximately Rs 30,000/month. Your contribution to support the Mohanam Arts Classes for one or more months will ensure that our students will continue to benefit from both the rich and spiritually nourishing energy of Auroville and the teachings and traditions of their Tamil heritage. We join so many in the world in hoping that the time of limitation will soon come to an end, and our friends from around the world will again be able to join us at Mohanam to see our work live and in person. Please be in touch the next time you are in Auroville, and we will be happy to welcome you for a village tour, a kolam workshop, a dance performance, and a hearty Tamil meal.

For your support and contribution, you can click on the link below and get in touch.

Gratefully,

Rajaveni, Balu & Mohanam Team

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COVID-19 Relief Work



Community Aid & Assistance

Mohanam has for the last 20 years uplifted, inspired and empowered youth on the path to self-determination and personal growth. Due to the challenges and hardships, the people around Auroville Bioregion were facing during the lockdown with regard to their health. Mohanam took the initiative to collaborate with the Siddha Regional Research Institute to provide “Kabasura Kudineer” Siddha Medicine immunity boosting herbal concoction to the community. Mohanam also distributed food and other daily necessities to the immigrant community within Auroville. Mohanam conducted all these activities in SEWA of the community and without any financial support from the Auroville Donor Community.



[Click to know more](#)

Serving Immunity Booster to the nearest Villages



Mohanam has served a Siddha immunity booster known as **“Kabasura Kudineer”** with the support of Mohanam youth to the nearest villages around Auroville like Alankuppam, Sanjeevinagar, Pudunagar and Annainagar by three weekend days to achieve our primary health support.

This immunity booster a well-known Siddha medicine that consists of a whopping 15 herbal ingredients, each of them having unique characteristic features of its own. This immunity booster is specifically administered for boosting the lungs, improving respiratory mechanism and treating infectious conditions like cough, cold, fever and other respiratory infections.

This Immunity booster had become quite well known during the times of flu owing to its therapeutic and curative qualities. Which possesses strong anti-inflammatory, analgesic, anti-viral, anti-bacterial, anti-fungal, antioxidant, hepato-protective, anti-pyretic, anti-asthmatic and immunomodulatory properties.

As a result of good support and response from the village people encourages our youth to do more social works in the villages.



Survival Pack for Nepali Migrant Family



Nepal is one of the world's least developed countries in South Asia. Migration is an increasingly important source of income. Due to its poor economic condition Nepal has been supplying labour to India.

Nepali people are also called Gurkhas and there are more than 250 Nepali with family around the Auroville Bio-region who are working in the Auroville community in construction, housekeeping, gardening, carpentry, shop keeping, etc.

Nepali migrant's families are facing challenges to fulfil their basic needs; most of them are daily wage earners, who have no means of regular income to maintain their families.

We knew we needed to do something so we started a COVID-19 relief effort. We aim to create and distribute survival packs (consisting of rice, moong dhal, cooking oil, etc.) to those most in need. Through the running budget of Mohanam so far, we have reached 70 families and distributed survival packs, thanks to all the volunteers who have helped us so far.

As the COVID-19 crisis continues, our work is not done. India's lockdown has been extended to 31 May and experts predict that restrictions and hardships will continue to hurt the most vulnerable communities and marginalized people for months, if not years to come.

Our survival packs will help a family to eat and stay safe for around two weeks. As the lockdown continues, many of those we've already helped will need our help again and the number of desperate people will grow.



Creative Responses to Covid-19 Lockdown

Pandemic as a Rite of passage

Special Activity for our Youth, age 11 - 16



A great source of inspiration for us to empower the children and youth through art and cultural activity for the last 20 years. Now the children and youth are facing lots of challenges during the lockdown, so we at Mohanam are trying to support them by using art as a tool for creative expression, and to support their emotional wellbeing.



Auro Ayur Siddha Integral Wellness centre

The second wave came as a splash of panic, causing disruption to the lives and livelihoods of people. As a part of our role in minimizing the negative impact of COVID-19. Mohanam collaboration with the Siddha Regional Research Institute (C.C.R.S., Ministry of AYUSH, Govt. of India).



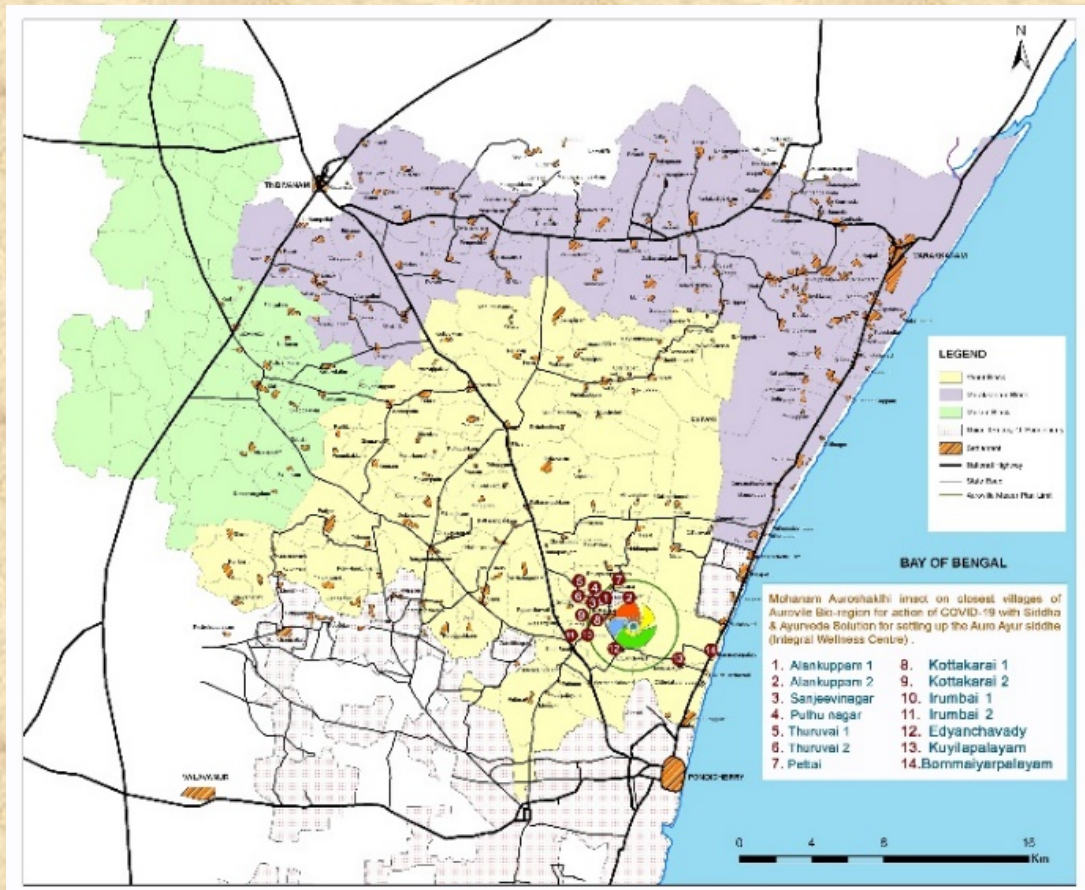
This pandemic reignited the importance of natural medicine within the local community. The purpose of Siddha medicine is to nourish society and protect against harmful diseases, these are a part of ancient natural Tamil remedies.

With the association of Siddha Regional Research Institute, Pondicherry and a rich knowledge bank of Siddha professionals. We are starting a Siddha clinic as a part of the big dream of initiating 14 Siddha natural medicine sub-centres by reinventing our own ancient knowledge about herbs and the environment.

Our plan is to provide training for 5 women in each village to work and self-sustain each sub-centre, this provides not only work for the local community but also the rich knowledge of Siddha and Ayurveda. This will supply the local community with natural medicinal ailments, this will help to improve the health during the pandemic and beyond. Currently, in order to get this project running, we need to generate a 2.5 Lakh Rupee per sub-centre. This will cover the costs of building, rent of property, training, wages of women and material.

[Click to know more](#)

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Arts, Crafts, Culture and Wellness Educational Activity



Mohanam invited young members of Bio-region around and also of our company to join together and learn more about our culture via hands-on experience in art and craft activities and wellness sessions. All of them participated well and really enjoyed the educational sessions which were taken by our expert members.

Pongal Festival 2021



Pongal is an ancient celebration for the people of Tamil Nadu that is celebrated for four continuous days. Mattu Pongal is the 3rd day of the Pongal celebrations and is observed on the second day of the Thai month in the Tamil calendar.

The word 'mattu' in Tamil signifies 'the bull' and thus the day of Mattu Pongal is dedicated as celebrations of the cattle, especially the bulls as they have an important role in helping the farmers to grow crops. Mattu Pongal is the day when people forget their caste, creed, other discriminations and come together to celebrate the new harvest and welcome the new season.

The festival's most significant practice is the preparation of the traditional "pongal". People of Tamil Nadu get freshly harvested rice and prepare it by boiling it in milk and jaggery.



Traditional way of celebrating pongal festival together in a clay pot.



Vibhuti - The Sacred Ash: it is a great medium to transfer or transmit energy, and it has the ability to help direct and control the energy body.

India is a land of festivals, every festival is celebrated here with great enthusiasm, colour and community. It also represents our culture and the people who live in the rural villages, celebrate the Pongal festival as a harvest festival. It is dedicated to the Sun god whereby thanks is given in a way that represents the five elements, Lord Indira. The uniqueness of this festival reminds us of the importance of natural resources; this is highlighted at a time in our history that the world is battling environmental change. In 2021, it was celebrated in a much simpler way because of Covid19. On Thursday, 14 January this year we celebrated in a modest way in our new Mohanam campus with our guests, staff and Auroville friends: Eval, Walter, Ricky, Indhu, Nirmala Nirmal, Naresh, Chinese friends, Chul and many others who shared in this celebration with us.

Pongal was boiled in a big pot and when it began overflowing all participants shouted 'Pongaloo Pongal, Pongaloo Pongal'! After this we gathered together to do Pooja for the bull which was grown up in Mohanam Centre. We circled the bull three times and at the end of Pooja, all the participants offered the sweet Pongal and fruits to the bull. The bull was decorated with flowers and balloons and its horn were decorated with a painted design. The pot breaking game and rope pulling games were played and folk songs were sung during the celebration. At the end there was special solo violin concert while a sweet Pongal dish and tasty traditional snacks were shared amongst all the guests.

Mohanam
Presents

Auro-Santhai

Auroville

Regular Saturday & Sunday Market
Bridging Auroville, the Bioregion & Pondicherry



Mohanam organized the Auro-Santhai weekend market on 27th and 28th February. This is a regular marketplace intended to sell foods, handicraft products and vegetables by the producing farmers and the local artisans directly to consumers. The Auro-Santhai weekend market consists of permanent stalls, kiosks, booths, tables or stands where artists, artisans, farmers and entrepreneurs sell their products.



Click to know more



Various Stalls and Products



Mime Play



Classical Dance



Story Teller



Face Painting



Various Snacks and Foods



Traditional Games



Inauguration For Auro Santhai



Drumming Session



Tamil New Year 2021



Tamil people across the world are celebrating New year today, which is the first day of the Chithirai month. This special day is also referred to as Puthandu Varsha Pirappu. The most interesting part about Tamil New Year is that it falls almost on the same day every year in the Gregorian calendar. People greet each other saying, 'Puthandu Nalvazthukal' to each on this day, which translates to Happy New Year.

The day is observed as family time. Households clean up the house, prepare a tray with fruits, flowers and auspicious items, light up the family puja altar and visit their local temples, children go to elders to pay homage and seek their blessings.





On 10th April 2021 we celebrated Tamil New Year in our Mohanam Village Heritage Centre, we invited Meenakshi Akka, Mr. Raman from RC Construction and Mr. Manohar, who is one of our executives and our Adviser, Anandou as the guests of honor to grace the occasion. All these special guests shared a note and talked about Tamil New Year. The People who joined in this Celebration enjoyed it a lot and also were happy to get a lot of information about Tamil New Year and the importance of this day. Like, how to celebrate and what are the benefits of celebrating this auspicious day in a traditional way. Young Students also joined and became a part of the Celebration, they were quite keen and showed an interest to know more about it. With Traditional food and snack, we end our Tamil New Year Celebration. Mohanam, A hub for Bio- region, Arts, Craft and Culture was able to celebrate this grand day with all covid measures.

International yoga day 2021



Yoga is an invaluable gift of India's ancient tradition. It embodies unity of mind and body; thought and action; restraint and fulfillment; harmony between man and nature; a holistic approach to health and well-being. It is not about exercise but to discover the sense of oneness with yourself, the world and nature. By changing our lifestyle and creating consciousness, it can help in wellbeing. Let us work towards adopting an International Yoga Day.

— Narendra Modi, UN General Assembly



Click to know more



On 21st June 2021, On the occasion of International Yoga Day, the Students Learning Yoga in Irumbai Culture Centre organized a Yoga session in the temple premises under the supervision of Anandou, mentor for the Irumabi Culture Centre and Bharathi, Assistant Trainer at the Irumbai Culture Centre. The Session started with a Lighting lamp, distribution of sweets, meditation, mantra and yoga. Students were given special sessions and the trainers imparted important yoga tactics to fight against stress and anxiety and also to increase the body strength and immunity levels, specially during the time of Pandemic.

This special training gave a lot of confidence and changed the mindset for the betterment of the community at large through this young generation.

Mohanam Community Kindergarten

Auroville



With a heavy heart, we would like to inform you that we have currently paused the Crèche activities due to the pandemic. But since it is true that hard times breed innovation, we from Mohanam have been busy with various activities for which we have received a good response from both the parents and their children.

Feedback from the children

Due to covid restrictions we have come up with a unique solution to keeping up with the children's education. We have been supplying questionnaires and study materials to a local photocopy shop where the parents receive weekly homework from our faculty. Once the homework is completed it is again submitted to the same shop where it is collected regularly by our teaching staff and evaluated.

1

VOLUNTEER

If you love children we invite you to share your time and skills with our children.

2

GIFT

We need books, toys, games etc. Feel free to contact us if you any materials to share.

3

CONTRIBUTE

To make this project sustainable we invite you to share funds for further growth.



Vision

S.M.I.L.E -
Strengthening
Multidimensional
Inspirational
Learning
Environment



Mission

Nourish childhood to unfold hidden potential catering physical, mental, emotional and social development of children using traditional and contemporary knowledge systems.



Values

Caring
Creativity
Love
Peace



AUROSHAKTHI
Awakening House

AuroShakthi Awakening House



Auroshakthi is a women's community organization based around the villages of Auroville, Pondicherry. We aim to improve the lives of marginalized women through education, life skills and counseling. We try and create a safe space for village women to express themselves openly. The main idea is to help local women grow into confident individual beings who can stand for themselves as well as for the community of women.

Kolam Festival



Mohanam and AuroShakthi celebrated The Kolam Festival with a lot of enthusiasm and energy. More than 200 people from Auroville and its surrounding villages attended this event.



Morning pooja with Auroshakthi women



Women's Kummi dance performance

The festival had many things to offer: a beautiful Kolam exhibition, mouth-watering traditional food and handcrafted sustainable bamboo product.

Native women enjoyed the bonding established through the preparation for the traditional Kummi dance with Kolam. They danced around a circle rhythmically clapping and singing with live drumming music. Golden Girls expressed the significance of Kolam through a dance drama, which understandably touched many hearts with the way it was expressed through performance. The entire audience was lit up with the energy of the Auroshakthi team.

Online Kolam Workshop



Kolam is a daily women's ritualistic art form created by Tamil women throughout Tamil Nadu in southeastern India. Each day before dawn, during the Brahma muhurtam (believed to be the time when Brahma and all other deities descend to the earth) and sometimes before dusk, millions of women in the town, villages and the cities of Tamil Nadu draw kolam on the thresholds and floors of houses, temples and businesses. In Tamil culture, the threshold is of great significance as the meeting point of the internal and the external and kolam is one of the many manifestations of that significance.



On 11th April 2021, a women's group in Mohanam conducted Online Kolam Workshop. The members of our women's group gathered together in the early morning hours at around 3:30 am (Bhrama Muhurtham) which is considered an auspicious time in Hindu Culture.

With a lot of hands-on experience and a wish to learn more in Kolam designing, our women's group participated in this online workshop with full enthusiasm. The theme of this Online Kolam Workshop was not only to design or decorate, but was also to explain its sanctity and the meaning behind this practice. In this workshop the significance of Kolam and its connections to the Hindu tradition was taught.

Kolam, is a well-calculated geometrical pattern drawing, created with the help of rice flour. Its design can vary from simple and small to colorful and complex. Regardless of its design, the Kolam is a part of customary Indian culture that has many benefits to one's life. Kolam symbolizes auspiciousness and good luck. The workshop also shared the health benefits of Kolam like; reduce stress, improve brain activity, good exercise for the wrist, waist and back.

Yoga and Self Development sessions



The Golden Girls were engaged in yoga sessions which were conducted every week on Mondays as an alternative for the Traditional dance classes. The children who were homebound with school and no play due to lockdown restrictions thoroughly enjoyed the yoga and meditation sessions.

Launching of "MANJAL"



With the blessings of honorable elders, Manjal, AuroShakthi's new cloth pad brand was launched. Manjal supports and enhances the lives of local women. It is an alternative menstrual choice as well as a source of livelihood. This celebration of menstruation, womanhood, and change felt fulfilling after distributing it to three very active members of AuroShakthi.



Auro-Shakthi celebrated its first Annual Day



AuroShakthi celebrated its first annual day with much fun and enthusiasm. Women gathered to express their deep gratitude towards the group. We started with a small talk introducing the spirit of AuroShakthi to the new members. Then we projected a video that showcased the past, present and future endeavors of AuroShakthi.





We ended the day with dance performances by the members, both solo and group, that boosted the energy of the members to carry on for the future.

International Women's Day Celebrations



We celebrated International Women's Day at Bharat Nivas with many villagers as well as Aurovillian women. Auroshakthi displayed Kolam on Canvas art at the exhibition centre which received a lot of recognition. Thanks to Bharat Nivas for inviting us and honouring us with this opportunity to be a part of the whole.

Celebrating Women's Month



Kummi is a folk dance, popular in Tamil Nadu in India, danced mostly by Tamil women in circles. Dancing may be different. In some places, it is very simple, with rhythmic clapping or beating of the drums. In other places dancers imitate various harvesting activities.



AuroShakthi celebrated women's month at Bharat Niwas, Auroville. We performed the traditional Kummi dance which is a local folk dance. Later the audience also joined and enjoyed the dance together. It was an altogether fun and enjoyable experience for all.



[Click to know more](#)

Herbal workshop

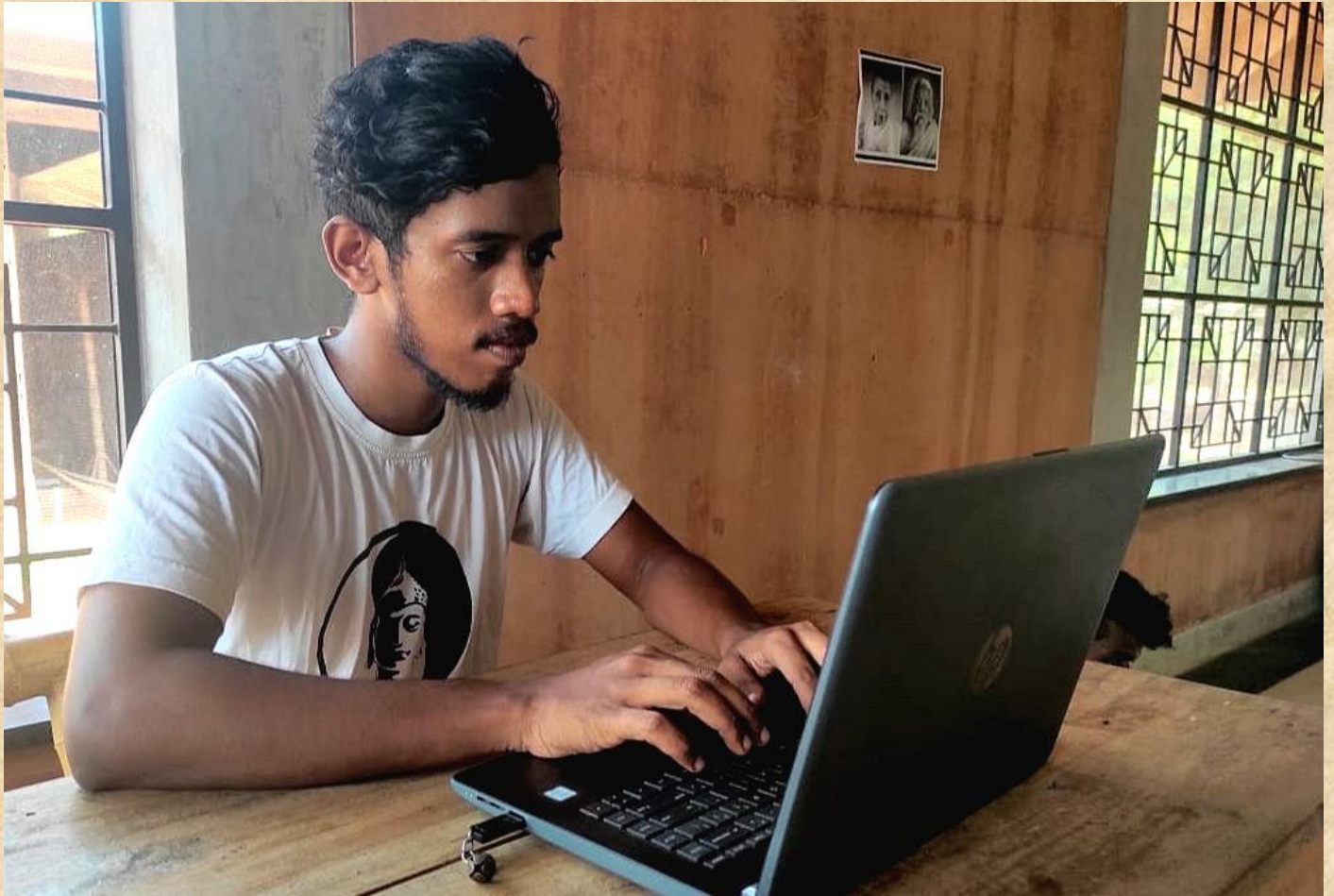


On 4th June 2021, A workshop was conducted at Mohanam Village Heritage Centre by Parvathy, an Herbalist for women's group. Women of the group were trained on various topics like: on the identification of symptoms, Healing procedures, knowledge on herbal remedies, important local herbs, recipes, oils for the treatment i.e. making / mixing of medicines, packaging, awareness about the usage and follow up mechanism.

Parvathy is a social entrepreneur. She is dedicated to women's cause, economic empowerment and enhancing daily life, e.g. through growing their own food and healing with herbs. The tradition and knowledge in the field of Herbal health and cure is running in Parvathy's blood. She got the first lessons in the field of medicinal herbs from her parents, both the parents also practiced as traditional Vaidyas and cured the herbal issue with many people. Today, Parvathy, successfully incubates several rural managed enterprises that are based on herbs and herbal products.



Our Volunteer Experiences



Venkatesh

I am Venkatesh from Pondicherry University. I am doing M.B.A in Tourism and Travel Management. I joined Vocational Training Program in Mohanam Village Heritage Centre in December. It was a really great learning experience for me. I liked the place and the people working here. I got opportunity to work in Various Tourism Projects and learned many things related to Tourism. I learnt Event Management and worked in various events that happened during that time such as December to Remember, Pongal, Kolam Festival, Aurosanthai etc. Apart from my career, personally I learned Social Media Marketing, editing, djembe playing, yoga, farming and kalari. I got opportunity to experience the life of Auroville and met many new people. This experience in Mohanam is really difficult to get in any other place. Thanks to Mohanam Village Heritage Centre for this opportunity.



Gopikrishna

I am Gopikrishna from Pondicherry, currently pursuing Master of Business Administration in Tourism and Travel Management offered by Pondicherry University. I joined the Vocational Training Program started by Mohanam, referred by Dr.Anu Chandran, Assistant Professor, Pondicherry University.

Mohanam is a community hub dedicated to preserving and sharing the traditional culture and knowledge of the rural villages surrounding Auroville in Tamil Nadu, India. I have been a part of couple of events that happened in Mohanam during the training period like December to Remember, Kolam, Pongal, sound healing day, Auro santhai and learned a lot about organising an event.



Abhisha

I arrived on the 6th of February, 2021 as a volunteer for Mohanam. I was assigned to assist/help the media team with their graphic design work. On my first day, I went to shoot videos at Rock Beach in Puducherry. That was a good start in a completely unknown place! I had never imagined that I'll be able to do everything on my own. Getting up at 5:30 in the morning every day, to wash my own clothes, to taking care of my health and getting the required injections in time, without parental support or guidance, was quite a task.

Also connecting with people was a challenge because I am a shy person when it comes to striking a conversation. I run out of words or don't really know where to start from. But that I managed for one month all by myself, was a step towards growing up. I had never left home and lived alone before. Then of course the boys were there who helped and supported me whenever I fumbled. Such a beginning gave me a lot of hope, courage and confidence. Slowly, I am getting used to the native language here, which is Tamil. I have even learned a few words!

Coming to Mohanam and the experience I have had so far. Right after my

arrival, work began. I was given two posters to design for an event - Auro Santhai. I also helped with other design-related work for the same event. From having no professional experience, I can say that I have gained some confidence in the work that I have been assigned. Every day is new learning with challenges. Nothing is pre-planned and one should go with the flow. This is a great takeaway from the one and a half months that I have been volunteering here.

I am really grateful to Balu and Rajaveni Akka for giving me this opportunity. I also went to Thiruvannamalai, which was quite an experience. Definitely, if I had stayed on in Kolkata then I wouldn't have had the opportunity to explore and learn as much as I am being able to do every day at Mohanam. I am grateful to each and every member of Mohanam for that.



Kalaichelvi

I'm Kalaichelvi, joined as an Admin volunteer on February 1, 2021. I have work experience in a corporate company and Engineering college. But this is my first experience working in an NGO. After joining, I experienced the happenings of Aurosanthai and the Inauguration of our campus on February 27 & 28, 2021. The program was full of excitement and energy. This campus has a wide range of facilities like workspace, moongil garden,

Healing, Kitchen, Kindergarten, Treehouse and Guestrooms for volunteers/ Interns. I receive good energy by walking barefoot in the red soil of our campus. I'm excited to be part of this environment.



Anbarasan

I am Anbarasan. I'm from Pondicherry. I completed my B. Com (Commerce) at Tagore Arts College. And I currently pursuing MBA (Tours and Travels Management) at Pondicherry University.

During the COVID pandemic, most of the industries were closed temporarily. Especially our Tourism Industry affected badly. In this situation we the students of tourism final years students, not able to do our internship program at any tourism- related company. Fortunately, I got a chance from Mohanam Cultural Heritage center from the reference of our faculty Dr. Anu Chandran.

After reached Mohanam we have got a mentor named Mr. Ricky. He guided us well and I learned some leadership qualities from him. In Mohanam they organized two to three events, I'm also part of those events. Which Has given me a lot of experiences.

And Finally, thanks to the Mohanam team for giving me this opportunity.

Call for volunteer



Mohanam is a non-profit, non-governmental organization under the Auroville Village Action Group. We at Mohanam are seeking creative like-minded interns and volunteers in the field of education, traditional cum cultural arts, social outreach and community living.....

Areas of interest

- Administration
- Social Work
- Teachers
- Media Professionals
- Architecture & Sustainable Construction
- Handicrafts
- Farming and Food Processing
- Event Management
- Tourism and Hospitality
- Digital and Social Media
- Music and Art
- Healing and Therapy

BE A PART OF ALL OF THIS BY MAKING A DONATION

The contribution of Auroville, the parents and the participants are not enough to cover all the costs of our program. Without the financial support of our sponsors, we would not be able to offer this rich variety of programs. If you would love to offer support and can't be physically involved, this is a wonderful way of knowing you have contributed to the realization of some incredible projects and programs that help support the world we live in and make people's dreams come true.

SUPPORT US!



Donate us now online

HERE'S HOW

The easiest and simplest way to transfer money is by “SWIFT” (electronic transfer) from anywhere. Go to your bank and give them the following information, with your donation.

Send A Bank Transfer Directly to Auroville (SWIFT)

You can also send contributions directly to Auroville using a wire transfer through your financial institution. Below is the information your bank will need in order to complete a SWIFT transfer. **Please ensure that the Beneficiary Name in all circumstances is listed as AUROVILLE FOUNDATION.**

Bank transfer - from inside India

Account Holder name	: Auroville Unity Fund
Account	: 10237876031
Bank Name	: State Bank of India – Auroville Township
IFS Code	: 03160
Purpose	: Mohanam Cultural Centre
An account with	: State Bank of India, Auroville International Township Branch, Kuilapalayam, Auroville – 605 101, India.

Bank transfer - from outside India

SWIFT Code	: SBININBB104
IFSC	: SBIN0000691
Bank Name	: State Bank of India
Branch Code	: 000691
A/C Holder Name	: AUROVILLE FOUNDATION
A/c Number	: 40106120526
Beneficiary	: AUROVILLE FOUNDATION
Purpose	: Mohanam Cultural Centre
A/C Holder Postal Address	: Auroville Foundation, Auroville - 605101, Tamil Nadu, India.
Bank Postal address	: FCRA CellState Bank of India, New Delhi Main Branch, 11 Sansad Marg, New Delhi - 110 001. Bank Phone No. 011-23374050

Thank you for being connected
Your support matters to us!