1. **Project title:** Youth Entrepreneurship Program

2. **Project Summary:** Aurovilians generally engage in activities that are very different from their educational or professional backgrounds, and in which they have minimal experience, but are passionate about. Although this is encouraged here, there are no mechanisms in place to ensure the success of these activities. At the same time, the Auroville economy needs more income generating activities with Auroville ideals and values in mind.

We propose to set up a Youth Entrepreneurship Program in Auroville that mentors and guides selected youth in transforming their business ideas into viable business plans. The term “youth” is used to refer to people 18-30 years of age. The project is considered over 4 phases as follows:

(i) Surveys of youth who have business ideas and need assistance in implementing them
(ii) Research and development of a curriculum that aids setting up and operating a business in Auroville

(iii) A training program wherein selected youth will attend hands on workshops and convert their ideas into business plans
(iv) An incubation phase in which the business plans will be presented for funding and incubation.

We hope to run this program once a year, with funding being requested only to kick-start the program, after which it will become self-sustainable.

3. **Project duration:** 15 months

4. **Total cost of the project:** Rs. 6.47 lakhs

5. **Funding amount requested:** Rs. 6.37 lakhs (Expenses for Phase 1 will be borne internally)

6. **Project holder's full name(s):** Vikram Devatha

7. **Address, phone and e-mail:** Community: Auromodele  
Tel: 0413-2623283; Cell: 9843948288 Email: vikram@auroville.org.in

8. **Group, School, Service or Unit name** associated with or supporting this project:  
Auroville Collaborative

9. **Group, School, Service or Unit address, phone and e-mail:**  
Community: Saracon, Kottakarai, Auroville, TN 605101  
Tel: 0413-2622571; Cell: 9843948288

10. **Background:** Auroville Collaborative was founded in 2009 as an Activity Unit. Our aim is to develop and communicate innovative solutions for the Auroville community in areas such as sustainability, education, and arts and crafts. Working with a collaborative model we seek help from internal and external experts and students in our projects.

Projects completed so far by Auroville Collaborative:  
2010 Auroville Green Practices (www.green.aurovilleportal.org)
Auroville Project Coordination Group Grant Proposal Format

2011  Unending Education Portal (www.edu.aurovilleportal.org)
2011  Arts and Crafts Book ‘Creative Expressions of Auroville’

On-going Projects:
2012  Vertical Gardens
2012  Urban Agriculture Handbook

11. Date of application: 20th August 2012

12. Problem statement: Many youth in Auroville have graduated from universities and are returning to Auroville. There are also others who graduate from high schools in Auroville, such as Last School, Future School and Udavi School and have many ideas on what they would like to do, but don’t have the skills nor the institutional support needed to take them forward. Auroville currently lacks an entity that helps Aurovilians transform their ideas into concrete business plans. Such an entity would encourage youth in setting up and operating new businesses.

13. Aim and Objectives
The main aim of the project is to promote entrepreneurship among the youth in Auroville. The objectives of this project are
- To survey the youth to better understand their hurdles in setting up new businesses
- To develop a curriculum that bridges the gap between theory and practice of running a business in Auroville
- To invite 5-7 youth to take part in workshops wherein they develop their business plans
- To identify potential sources of funding for incubation of these business plans
- To mentor the new businesses in their first year of operation

14. Description of Activities
The project is divided into 4 phases:
   i.  Youth Surveys
   ii. Content Research
   iii. Entrepreneurship Workshops
   iv. Incubation and Mentoring

Phase 1: Youth Surveys
We have started surveying youth in Auroville and the bioregion, to better understand their hurdles in starting new businesses. An indicative case study is given below.

Velu is an Aurovilian, 33 years of age. He studied at After School and Last School and has a background in computer hardware and software. He has worked with Theo, AVNet and AEP in managing IT systems. He has also worked at La Piscine and is currently involved with the Gas Service.

He has 3 business ideas that he has been trying to implement in the past few years in order to provide employment opportunities to local youth: (i) a restaurant in
Auroville for south Indian cuisine (ii) a food processing unit (iii) a computer
service unit.

He has not been able to implement these business ideas due to the following:
- Believes he has no subject related knowledge
- No knowledge of accounts and finance
- Needs help in managing people
- Lack of funding for incubation

Velu is a typical profile of an Auroville youth that has ideas of businesses for Auroville, but has
not been able to initiate anything due to either a lack of self-confidence, and/or the lack of basic
knowledge in business related topics. We intend to survey more youth over the next few months
to better understand the scope of the training program. This will help in developing content that
addresses the actual needs of the youth. These surveys will be conducted at our cost.

This phase will continue for 3 months.

**Phase 2: Content Research**
A panel of advisors will be formed to assist in content research and development of the
curriculum. The team will include executives of existing Units as well as members of key
working groups. An indicative list includes and not limited to: Min, Uma, Daniel, Angela, Chali,
Ulli, etc. We will hold meetings with the panel and discuss/brainstorm various aspects of the
curriculum including content, structure, scope, scalability and the design of the workshops. 5-10
youth will be selected for taking part in the workshops (in Phase 3); criteria for selecting the
youth will be finalized with the panel of advisors. The selected youth may accompany us in the
field trips to the Units and external authorities. Along with data collected in Phase 1, these
interactions will help in identifying the hurdles and issues the youth will face in setting up and
running their businesses. The information collected will be compiled and a draft curriculum will
be shared for a quick round of feedback. We propose to work with interns and/or volunteers for
content research and design since they are more economical than engaging Aurovilians or
external employees. SAVI will assist in identifying these interns and volunteers.

The detailed tasks in this phase are as follows:
- Recruitment of interns/volunteers for content research and graphics design
- Selection of panel of advisers for content
- Selection of youth to take part in the project
- Finalization of criteria to be used for selecting youth for the next phase
- Visit to existing Units for content development
- Visit to key working groups for content development
- Visit to external compliance authorities for content development
- Compilation of the curriculum
- Sharing of draft curriculum for feedback
It is likely that the following 5 modules will form the core part of the training program. However, this will be finalized during the project.

a) **Finance & Accounting**: Basics of reading financial reports, setting up the accounting framework for the business, compliances such as service tax, EPF, etc. Possible resource for this would be Prabhu of Prabashari.

b) **Branding & Marketing**: Module will cover aspects related to communication, branding Website design, etc. Possible resource for this will be Vimal Bhojraj of Auroville Collaborative.

c) **Operations**: Module will cover logistics, quality control and delivery. Possible resources for this module will be Martin Scherfler of Auroville Collaborative and Daniel of Tanto’s Pizzeria.

d) **People relations**, recruitment, training & managing people. Possible resources for this module include Vikram Devatha of Auroville Collaborative and Angela Raccagni.

e) **Auroville values and internal procedures**, aspirations, bureaucracies, administrative processes & incubation. It is likely that Chandresh Patel will lead this module, with relevant input from ABC, BCC and other working groups.

The above is an indicative list only, and will be finalized in Phases 1 & 2 of the project. Content will be researched and developed for each module, with a separate resource person leading the effort.

This phase will take 5 months.

**Phase 3: Entrepreneurship Education**

In this phase, we will conduct workshops among selected Auroville youth and assist them in converting their ideas into business plans. The manner in which the workshops will be conducted and information disseminated will become clear in Phase 1. We envision each module to be presented to the youth over one week, 2 hours per day. The training program will use a hands-on methodology - the assignments given each day will assist each participant in applying the content to his/her business idea, and transforming it into a business plan. The participants will also be given a stipend in order to relieve them of the burden of earning a livelihood during the workshops. This stipend has been included in the budget, but we hope to supplement it with funding from other bodies in Auroville with the help of the advisory panel.

We will collect feedback from the participants and make the necessary changes to the curriculum for future participants.

The detailed tasks in this phase are as follows:

- Selection of youth primarily from Auroville for the program. Whether to include the bio region or not, will be determined in the previous 2 Phases.
- Conducting workshops on the modules identified in Phase 2
- Mentoring the youth in converting their ideas into concrete business plans
- Guidance in starting the business and operating it in the Auroville context
- Collecting feedback
- Identifying potential sources for funding
We estimate that this phase will take 4 months.

**Phase 4 – Sharing and Incubation**
The business plans that emerged from the previous phase will be shared with potential sponsors for incubation; the youth will be mentored in setting up their business and guidance over the first year of operation as requested. The curriculum developed in Phase 2 and 3 will be shared with the community.

The detailed tasks in this phase are as follows:
- Compile feedback received from previous phases
- Make changes to the content
- Finalize curriculum and make it ready sharing
- Present business plans for funding
- Incubation
- Share curriculum

We estimate that this phase will take 3 months.

**15. Project Team**
Project lead: Vikram Devatha
Support: Martin Scherfler
Design: Vimal Bhojraj along with 1 graphics intern
Content development support: 1 intern
Web support (as needed): AVNet, 150dpi
Indicative team for individual modules: Martin, Vimal, Vikram, Chandresh, Angela, Sandra, Solomon, Manoj, Moushine, Palani and Daniel
Indicative advisory team: Toine van Megan, Ulli Blass, Ananda (ABC), Prabhakaran (C.A.), Chali Grinnell and Isha (ABS)
Working groups to be contacted for content development: ABC, WC, AVC, ABC and FAMC
Mentors: Toine van Megan, Chandresh Patel, Raghu Kolli

**About the team:**

**Chandresh Patel**
Chandresh is a co-founder of Auroville Consulting. He was based in Silicon Valley previously and has over 25 years of experience in hardware design and technology start-ups. He holds a Masters in computer science from Fairleigh Dickinson University in New Jersey and a degree in electrical engineering from SAICE, Pondicherry.

**Martin Scherfler**
Martin is a co-founder of Auroville Consulting. A sociologist and researcher, he has wide experience coordinating educational workshops in areas of sustainability. He is currently
engaged in project management and renewable energy research studies. He holds a Master degree in Sociology from Austria.

**Toine van Megen**
Toine is a co-founder of Auroville Consulting and is involved in Auroville township infrastructure development, energy planning and business management consultancy services. Previously, he held senior management and corporate leadership positions in the global wind energy sector from 1996-2009 and has extensive experience in international business.

**Vikram Devatha**
Vikram has 12 years of experience running family silk business and managing general administration for a multinational company based in India. He is currently engaged in project management and renewable energy research studies. He has an International Business and Economics degree from the Queensland University of Technology in Australia.

**Vimal Bhojraj**
Vimal is a communication specialist with a passion for photography and design. He was engaged in several social responsibility projects for over 7 years developing branding and marketing communications material. He has a diploma in Fashion Technology from NIFT-TEA. He is currently producing a book ‘Creative Expressions from Auroville’, a visually rich book of inspiring art and crafts.

**Sandra Rothboeck**
Sandra Rothboeck is a social entrepreneur with over 18 years of experience in Asia implementing programs in adult learning and sustainable enterprise development for informal manufacturing and services. She co-founded Maya Organic and Labournet in Bangalore. Sandra holds a Masters Degree in Labour Market Economics and a PhD on Economic and Development Sociology from Zurich University.

### 16. Beneficiaries
The direct beneficiaries will be the selected youth between 20-35 years of age, from Auroville and the bio region. The indirect beneficiaries will be all the youth who will have access to the curriculum, and will attend future workshops. It is hoped that the Auroville economy will benefit in the long run. We also hope to make this program scalable and hope to share the content with relevant institutions in other cities, starting from Pondicherry.

### 17. Evaluation
There will be two evaluations during the course of this project. The first will be during the development phase - evaluation will take place though interviews & surveys, to obtain feedback from stakeholders during the testing period of the programme. The data gathered will be analysed, and necessary changes will be made to the curriculum. The second evaluation will take place when the curriculum is finalized. The completed curriculum will be tested among
selected Auroville youth, who will be mentored in developing their ideas into a concrete business plan.

Another indicator for success is the successful completion of the program and the start-up of new businesses.

18. Other Sources of Funding
We currently have no other sources of financing this project. The project will be supported in kind by the Auroville Consulting team (Chandresh Patel and Toine van Megen) as well as by the panel of advisers in the form of mentoring. Also, Phase 1 of the project will be run at our expense.

19. Budget Estimate:
The budget for the project is attached – a summary budget with the major headings, as well as a more detailed budget by Phase. Brief summary is as follows

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration of the project:</th>
<th>13 months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maintenances:</td>
<td>Rs. 3.8 lakhs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stipends:</td>
<td>Rs. 0.35 lakhs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office &amp; admin expenses:</td>
<td>Rs. 0.96 lakhs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intern accommodation and transport:</td>
<td>Rs. 0.71 lakhs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auroville administration (11%):</td>
<td>Rs. 0.64 lakhs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total project cost:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Rs. 6.47 lakhs</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>