

## A typical day in Auroville

Written by Mitra Ardrón

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It's my second day in Auroville, jet-lag has kicked in, and I wake at 4am, tired but not able to sleep. I read for a while and around 4:30 the first birds start calling, followed by the frogs and crickets. Finally I give in to the inevitable, and grab a shower - it's cold, and just dribbles out the shower-head, but I'm not complaining. A short walk across the farmyard, past the cows rattling their buckets to my rented electric scooter - which I've left charging in the barn, and then a drive through the forest to the bakery in the village. The chocolate croissants look like they have been made for westerners, but at this time of the morning it's only Indians buying.

As I set off back through the village an older Indian woman, in a sari, with a tattered shopping bag steps into the road; smiles and holds out her arm, palm down, in the gesture that both asks for a ride, and sets the expectation that I'll stop. She climbs on, side-saddle, and about 5 minutes later says something in Tamil which I presume means that she wants to get down as we've just passed her turning.

This morning I have a breakfast meeting with Jorge - an Ecuadorian wind engineer. He's brought mangoes and bananas - green, but sweet, so the serious conversation has to wait.

We get a lot done, completing a write up of the technical plan, and finally mid-morning, after some Ecuadorian coffee, we come to an insight that clears a big challenge with pricing his training so that it is affordable to the village mechanics who will take it; will support the project; and that it represents the value that each mechanic will get from learning a new business.

I'm invited to stay for a vegetarian lunch with his community. We are sitting on mats, in the kitchen, about a dozen people, (Ecuador, Portugal, Spain, Italy, India, Germany, UK) so the language shifts back and forth between Spanish & English.

In the afternoon we work on the financials, challenging in 35°C (95°F) on 5 hours sleep, and then I meet with an electronics engineer, to talk about how we might design an open-source modular charge controller. I don't have any plans for the evening, so I head into the village again to "Kofi Bar" for a Dosa & French Fries.

As I eat, I chat with the permaculture activist owner. He wants to bring together social entrepreneurs in the area - both inside Auroville, and outside it (like him) to share their challenges and solutions.

So, just a typical day in a place that blends east and west fairly smoothly.

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