

INCREASING REUSE

REUSABLE RESOURCES

Reusable waste is defined as materials that are discarded, but can be reused in their present form, or repaired and reused. In India, the management of this sector of waste is advanced in comparison to so-called developed countries. Resources are repaired rather than discarded as a general pattern, and discards are often converted into resources through innovation.

Auroville has a number of formal and informal reuse initiatives, which help keep products in circulation. Many items are exchanged, sold, or bartered for goods and services. Aurovilians demonstrate a genuine commitment to gaining the maximum life from all materials in their possession.

In respect to the formal reuse sector, the best known are the Free Store at Bahrat Nivas and Mahasaraswati's Free Store at Kuilapalayam. In addition to this is the reuse of glass jars by Naturellement, and other food processors. A trial initiative by La Ferme cheese also aims to reuse plastic packaging.

FREE STORES



There are currently two free stores; a clothing and repair free store service based at Bahrat Nivas, and Mahasaraswati's Free Store next to the Post Office in Kuilapalayam. Mahasaraswati's Free Store began in 1994/95, commencing with the renovation (reuse) of an old building. Most of the materials in stock are of relatively low value. However, Olivier (La Ferme) has excellent skills in repairing items in order

to assure their longevity. Materials of no value are handed on or sold to Eco-Service. The Store also operates a truck that collects from different communities once a week. Donors are asked to have materials ready for collection on a particular day which is advertised in the Auroville News.

Mahasaraswati's Free Store is relatively convenient in its location close to Pour Tous. However, once Pour Tous relocates to the Central Plaza, it is envisaged

that the Free Store will also relocate, giving the opportunity to re-design spaces and increase the area for a more efficient and expanded operation.

Olivier has commenced an initiative to improve the quality of stock in the Free Store. He is inviting Aurovilians to place their unwanted items in the Free Store for sale on consignment. This is an excellent means to provide a convenient service whilst ensuring users get a return on items of higher value, and expand the range of stock. This will generate further interest over time and increase patronage.

There are also plans to commence a system where children can exchange toys and books. In addition, a monthly market at Pour Tous is also being investigated as a means to increase trade, and reuse.

As trade increases through population growth and the expanding of the service to include items sold on consignment, Mahasaraswati's Free Store will need to increase hours of operation. The proposed new location will also allow an increase in stock and display capacity.

Mahasaraswati's Free Store also has the means to become the main outlet for industrial discards. For example, the Matrimandir workshop has materials such as plate glass, which are surplus to its requirements, but can be reused by others within the community. Matrimandir have an operating structure that makes sale of discards problematic. It would be much simpler if the Free Store could purchase these goods in bulk lots, and re-sell. A co-operative business in Sydney, Reverse Garbage, employs over 20 people in a collection, warehousing and resale enterprise for industrial discards. Many materials are unusable by the original producer, but make ideal resources for schools and artists¹. Alternative currencies may play an important role in these types of trade in the future.

WASTE EXCHANGE DATABASE

Waste exchange databases are an excellent means to facilitate reuse through an easily accessible goods exchange database. There are many examples of these databases operating through the Internet. In Auroville, the database could be simply placed as a page in the Auroville Intranet.

Many examples of waste exchange schemes can be viewed through a cursory Internet search. Some of the following are examples of trade waste database systems:

Industrial Waste Exchange – A Recycling Network, Western Australia
<http://www.environ.wa.gov.au/iwe/index.html>

The Ontario Waste Materials Exchange
<http://www.owe.org/>

¹ Kent, Jenny and Buckhorn, Mim: *Rethinking Reuse*

Waste Exchange UK

<http://www.wasteexchangeuk.com/index2.htm>

Northern Disposal Services Ltd – The Waste Exchange

http://www.northerndisposal.co.uk/waste_ex/index.cfm

Waste Matchers – A Free Waste Exchange Service for Staffordshire and the West Midlands

<http://www.waste-matchers.co.uk/exchange/>

Recyclers World. Information and Material Exchange Directory. California Waste Exchange

<http://www.recycle.net/exch/calwaste.html>