

RURBAN LIVING

Co-creating Eco-Habitats that Celebrate The Living

September 2020

Why Go So Far?

By Rakesh Koti

In our effort to design and manifest eco-habitats, we come across this question, often from clients and sometimes from collaborators: why are you developing a community so far away from the city?

With our cities being choked due to high population density, we are consuming polluted water, breathing polluted air and eating polluted food. Counter-urbanization is one possible solution to reduce stress on our cities and improve our health and well-being.

Food

I live in Kukatpally, probably the densest part of Hyderabad. When I go to the supermarket to purchase vegetables, I have no idea where the food was produced, how it was handled, what preservatives were added to it, how the packaging was done, how long the food has travelled, how many hands it has changed before it fell into my shopping cart. There is a lot of uncertainty there about the freshness and quality of food in this supply chain.

In Rurban Communities, farming happens in your backyard. You can see how your food is produced. You can see it being harvested and delivered to your house immediately. The supply chain is very short.



Having lands dedicated to agriculture is not possible within the city due to cost of land and polluted air, water and soil resources



Air

There is so much information nowadays about the importance of air quality that it is evident why air quality is bad in the city and it is not going to improve, unless a pandemic type scenario arises.

Or, Rurban Communities can offer a breath of fresh air as they are far away from the city with low vehicular movement. This is not possible in the city.

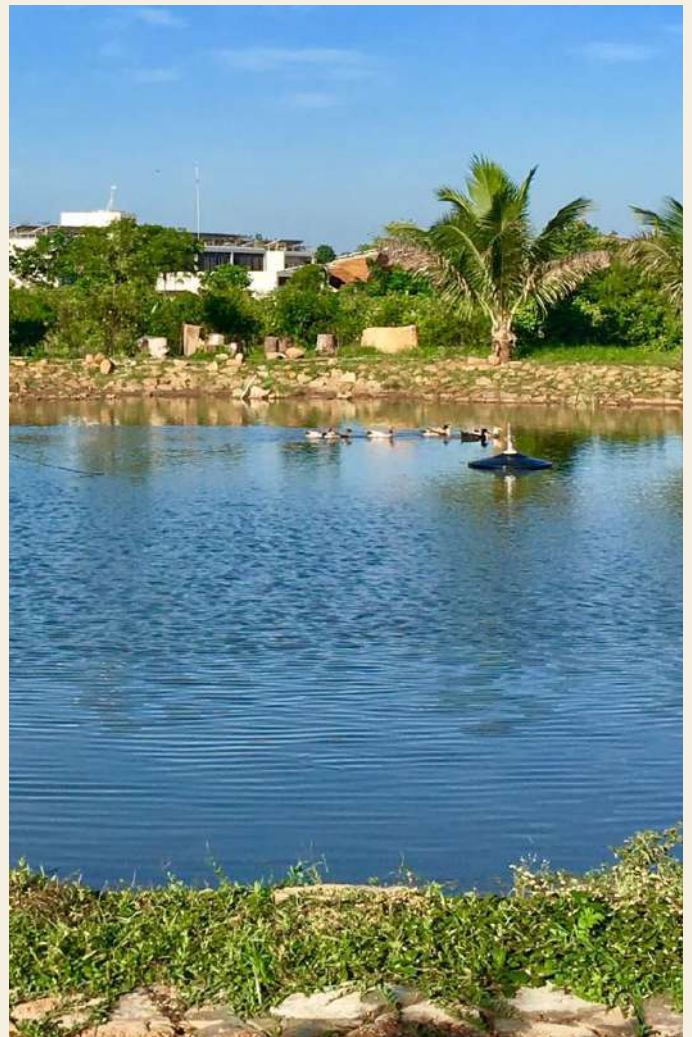
Water

As shared in articles in previous newsletters, the best source of water is rainwater. And it is impossible for our city to entirely depend on rainfall due to high population density compared to the amount of rainfall falling.

We are not only diverting water from lakes and rivers for city consumption but are also cutting off pathways for rain to flow back into these resources by building roads, destroying soils and rocks and cutting down trees.

In Rurban Communities, the density is not more than 3 units per acre. This means, there is ample rainfall for communities to sustain. Please see this article for more information of water consumption in urban vs rural communities.

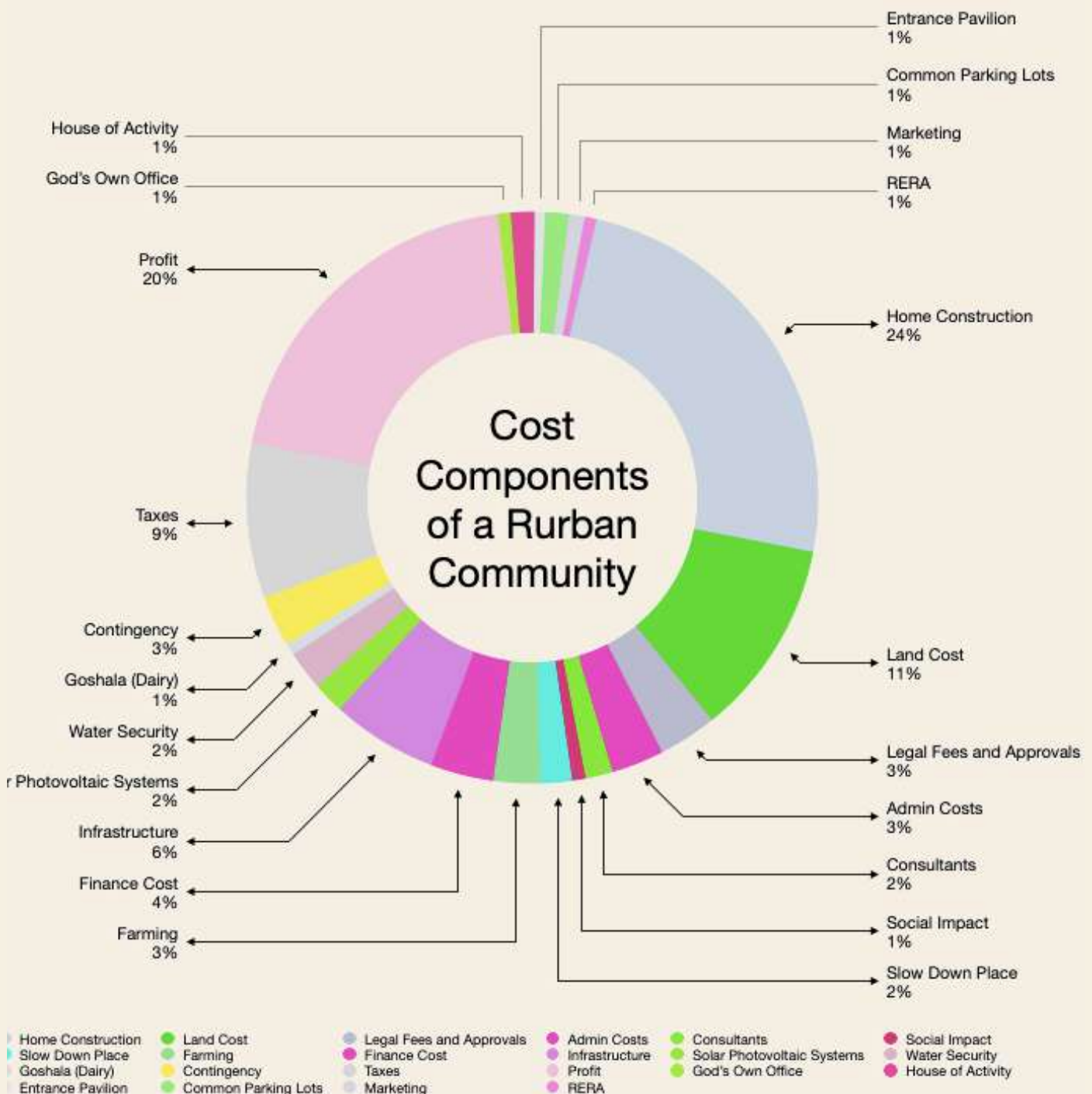
[\(Blog\)](#)



True value for money

Building Rurban communities is not like typical real estate where the value is majorly derived from the speculative nature of land price and developments that happen around the project.

In Rurban Communities, there is very little speculation on land price and most of the cost of construction goes into building infrastructure installing technologies for sustaining the community. As can be seen in the breakdown below, land price is just 11% of the overall cost. There are so many other contributors to the cost such as work-from-home spaces, Goshala, solar, water security, training and skill development cost, farming, MEP infrastructure spread over a larger area, etc.



Cultivating the budding farmers

Nurturing a learning environment for all stakeholders where inclusive holistic eco-living is celebrated

Organo Et school conducted a workshop on "how to grow your own microgreens" with Students of grade 5, Sloka Waldorf School that had 31 students participate in each session. Students were told how Microgreens can be grown from every window sill to balcony corners with available resources like reusing toy boxes, ice-cream boxes, recycled plastic bottles and food delivery bowls and with whatever seeds they have at home. They discussed among themselves how these tiny leaves and shoots are known to be nutritional powerhouses and hence its worth growing these to have our plates get healthier and prettier than ever before.



There were some very interesting questions by students like, if they can use Rajma seeds and other lentils, if they can use a basket or jute bag to grow, if they can grow it soilless. It was overwhelming to hear students share their knowledge about Microgreens and its benefits.



The objective of this workshop was to create an interest in students who take ownership of taking care of a living thing, the importance of eating healthy food and taking care of their environment. We introduced them to the growing medium, containers that can be used for growing the Microgreens, spray bottles that can be made from any pet bottle, and how to provide basic maintenance and care. We also showed the stages of growth of Microgreens including how to harvest and how to use them as well.



Students were encouraged to grow their own Microgreens and document and share their work. Some students went on to plant their own Microgreens such as fenugreek, coriander, mustard and many more.

There were some students who were disappointed that they didn't get to harvest their microgreens. We took their queries and

understood their roadblocks and gave them appropriate solutions.

We gave away e-certificates to students who were able to take the learning to the next level of implementation and shared their remarkable journey with us through photographs of their stages of growing and their produce which was quite remarkable.



Life at Organo Naandi

By Anurag Dahiya

I have had quite a modern and upscale life all along. After I was diagnosed with cancer, there was always a deep desire to return to my roots. After my husband quit the Indian Air Force and we moved from Delhi to Hyderabad, we chose a rather fancy society. It was pretty comfortable and luxurious.

I was looking forward to a conscious lifestyle amidst a community of like-minded people. However, it did not quite turn out that way.



Everything that I felt I was missing, I found here. Within only a month, I was much happier from within. I started to feel a deep sense of harmony with my surroundings and myself. It is not just the fresh air or organic vegetables and milk that we get here. It is the whole environment and the like-minded people that contribute to harmony. I have reached a place with myself where I can just be. Organo has taken out all fears from my heart. I do not fear my health going down anymore.

When we moved to Naandi, it was love at first sight for me. It felt like every cell in my body told me that this is the place that I need to be in. Considering that we did not know anyone here, we still moved in. Having come from a totally fauji background and not knowing anything about the civil world, we had quite a few apprehensions. Everything was new. Yet, we felt at home almost immediately, and rather effortlessly.



Bio Fences- to incorporate, not bifurcate

By Venkatlakshmi



As we, humans, increase our presence and reach, on this planet, human-animal interaction is becoming increasingly restricted to pets and livestock as wild animals, being hostile, pose a threat to our increasingly urban civilisations.

For farmers, reduction in community pasture lands, increase in land value, coupled with a loss of forest cover pose a threat as animals forage over farms, ruining crops overnight. Seasonal migration of nomads from drier regions results in massive destruction of plantations and crops. To cope up, a lot of farmers have recently gone back to their old ways of natural incorporation. How? **Bio Fences.**

People stopped growing bio fences as they need patience and extensive maintenance in its early stages due to risk of foraging and damage. But now, Bio fencing has been proven to

be a **unique** and **cost-effective** method to keep wildlife and livestock away from private property. Bio-fences don't just serve as bounding plants but also several other purposes, thus, being beneficial not just for humans, but also for the environment.

Serving as a **habitat** for many birds and animals, bio fences help provide **compost** and naturally fertilize the soil. Fallen leaves, droppings from birds and animals taking shelter and small branches of the living fence can be used as compost. These living fences also provide bee forage, thus helping in **pollination**. Moisture loss in land and soil erosion due to wind are very common problems faced by farmers. Bio-fences act as effective **windbreaks**, thus providing **dust control** and **preventing moisture loss** and **topsoil erosion**.



These living fences are **environment-friendly** and harvesting of such plants can also be economical. For instance, Chinese chaste trees can be used to make mosquito repellents. Edible fruits like Bengal currants also act as fences and **provide income**.

The plant species for fencing are chosen **based on the location** (nativity) and its **requirements**. Lemongrass, Agave, Rambans, and certain species of chilly have been proven to deter elephants, boars and other wild animals. Palmyrah, Manila and Tamarind protect topsoil.

These natural fences can be incorporated in our **urban context** as well. House gardens are the closest mimics to a healthy ecosystem.

Bio fences don't just help them thrive but also provide **aesthetic value**. For example, Bougainvillea plants provide a very rich look

with its bright flowers along with providing **natural compost** and **shelter to pollinators** like butterflies, bees, squirrels etc.

On a larger scale, Bio fencing can also be used in **gated communities**. This will, in turn, increase the net **oxygen inflow**, provide a **cooler microclimate** and create a **thriving ecosystem** which gives back to the community in terms of **organic harvest**, protection, a great **community space** and much more after a couple of years of maintenance.

Bio-fences are a great way to achieve tree cover and bring balance in our ecosystem. They can help us lead a **sustainable life**, **conserve biodiversity** and reduce pollution by **absorbing carbon**.

Thus, it could be a small step towards mitigating **climate change**.



My little adjustment

By Yelen Gutta

Considering the benefits that we enjoy at Naandi, the adjustments that we had to make were hardly any.

Before we moved here, we were living in Banjara Hills, which is right in the heart of the city and we had a set lifestyle with our routines and house help. The maids there knew all about housekeeping and our house help was quite used to my particular preferences. After moving here, I had to train the help from scratch. The help here are mostly people from the surrounding villages. Initially, I had to spend some time getting them to understand what I needed done. It was different rather than difficult, I would say.



I still need to instruct them once in a while. But they are essentially nice people and we have now gotten used to them, just as they have adjusted to our particular needs over time.

Besides this, there were hardly any adjustments to make. Distance is barely an issue. Our daughter, Jwala's training academy is not too far from here. If we need to head to the city, it is just a few extra minutes of commute time.

The adjustments are rather minor in comparison to the kind of healthy and enriching life we have here. I wish more such communities would come up in the future, so more and more people can benefit.



Nurturing the Young Generation in a Rurban Way



Urban spaces have their own merits in terms of financial and career opportunities. Yet the feeling of alienation people experience inside the crowded skyscrapers, unhealthy surroundings, troubled lifestyles, and hectic schedules take out 'life' from 'living'. And many of them end up just existing. Rather a 'not so great' place to nurture the future generation...

Now, what could be a holistic solution where we can find the best of both worlds. How about a Rurban life that perfectly blends and balances the comforts of an urban space with the values and blessings of a rural setup?

Fast-paced, technology-assisted, rapidly growing urban settings are considered a prospective place to live in this digital era. However, seldom we realise that during this accelerated journey we are missing out something really important called "peaceful living". Nobody talks about it because deep inside we are aware that there is no concrete answer to this question. The sad reality is that children/young generations are the victims of this transformation. Wondering how???

The adults of the present generation are fortunate people as we got to experience a happy and peaceful childhood. But the children of this digital era rarely get an opportunity to feel or enjoy their surroundings and being close to nature. Besides, suburban or rural life was not just about the presence of healthy and beautiful surroundings but also about community living.



If you are wondering whether there are advantages that Rurban children experience and cherish while growing alongside nature, we can count many. The first and foremost should be the availability of unadulterated food that is grown in their vicinity.

It is not only a blessing but a learning experience for the young ones to cultivate interest towards agriculture growing their own food. Because as we all know healthy food is directly proportional to healthy humans.

Learning from nature is essential for children because nature has enormous wonders to satisfy their curious minds. Compassion and empathy are two important skills that these kids would acquire while co-existing with all that is part of nature.

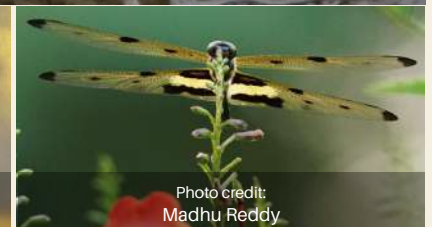
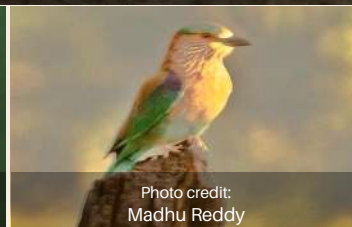
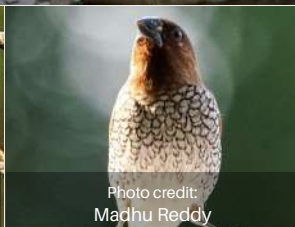
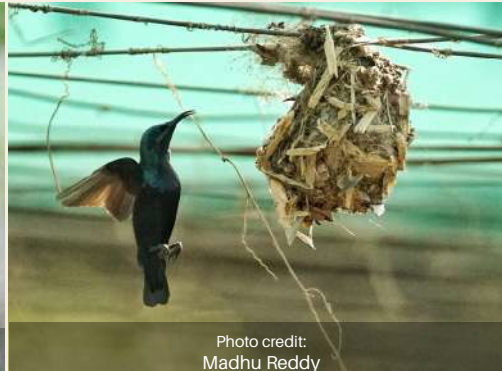
When they are living as part of a huge community, they become socially conscious and aware; a skill highly needed in the present world.



We have to agree that young ones these days are far more intelligent and fast learners than we all used to be. Hence, what else could we provide than a healthy and safe surrounding, life skills, and experiences to enhance and nurture them to be an, even more, better version of themselves?



Visitors of Naandi



Organo Naandi

Aziz Nagar

Contact: +91 79 9335 5227

Email: mounika.puli@organo.co.in

Website: www.organo.co.in

Facebook: Organoecologicalfarms

Instagram: Organo_rurbanliving

Location: 149 & 148#,
Aziz Nagar Panchayat,
Through Yenkapalli village,
Moinabad, Ranga Reddy district,
Hyderabad - 500075.

Co-Creating Eco-Habitats that Celebrate The Living