

Newsletter ASDWT

January to March 2022

Message by the CEO

Hello everyone!

In the last few months, we got on our feet in post-pandemic Pakistan. Thank God, all went well. So hopefully we will be able to travel out of Lahore and Karachi soon to visit smaller towns where our actual work lies, because we still need to create basic awareness about autism and related neurodevelopmental disabilities among parents, health workers and teachers. It's a long haul, but Insha Allah we will succeed in improving the quality of life of every child and adult with Autism in Pakistan, be it through a better understanding and acceptance of person with disabilities at home, or through trained teachers who would be improving their outcomes in life.

Having said that, the families of persons with Autism and I/DD must go on exploring new avenues and striving for better education, training, employment and independent living for their children and adults with these conditions.



The ASD Welfare Trust organized the First Conference in Pakistan on "Training & Employment of Adults with Autism and I/DD" in Karachi on 26th March 2022. It was a Round Table format with short presentations by trainers, potential employers, job coaches and stakeholders, who spoke about their different concerns and gaps in the services sector which could play a bigger role in job identification, matching, training and mentoring.

The discussion that ensued was very rewarding as potential employers were forthcoming and willing to learn more. Training organisations like STevta and the Sindh Directorate of Technical Education were open-minded in curricula modifications

to include adults with Autism and I/DD.

It is up to all of us now to develop these possibilities - never before explored in Pakistan - to translate our dreams into the real world.

Cheers.

Rukhsana Shah

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Special Event

ASDWT Annual Conference

ASDWT Karachi conducted a Conference on **"TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT OF ADULTS WITH AUTISM & IDD"** on 26th March 2022 at IBA City Campus Karachi. This was the first of its kind conference in which potential training organizations and prospective employers gathered on one platform and discussed practical approaches for inclusion of Neurodiverse Persons in the mainstream job market. Trainers and Employers were quite enthusiastic and committed to facilitate the Autism community under guidelines provided by ASDWT.



ASDWT is thankful to all the speakers and Guests from Department of Empowerment of Person With Disabilities, Sindh Board of Technical Education, NOWPDP, CARTS, Special Olympics Pakistan (SOP), KVTC, JS Bank, Chase Up Stores, All Pakistan Restaurant Association, Punjab Skills Development Fund (PSDF), Sindh Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (STEVTA), Saylani Welfare International Trust, HRSG, Karachi Down Syndrome Program, Pakistan Centre For Autism (PCA), ACELP Institute of Child Development, Growth Trainings, The Hunar Foundation, Herbion Pakistan, PayPro, Zaamin Group, Aga Khan Foundation, Advocate Rana Asif Habib, Mr. Naveed Tejani, Qazi Fazli Azeem, and our most empowered Autism



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Trainers and speakers specially Chairman Sindh Board of Technical Education Mr. Masroor Sheikh, Mr. Azmat Hafeez from STEVTA and Mr. Omair Ahmed from NOWPDP offered their cooperation in modifying curricula and providing need-based accommodation for trainees with Autism and I/DD. On behalf of Aga Khan Foundation Mr. Naveed Tejani offered unconditional support regarding IT training programmes and Job Placement. Potential employers Ms. Tehmina Kalia (All Pakistan Restaurant Association), Mr. Hasham (Chaseup) and Ms. Tamkeen (JS Bank), emphasised the need for sensitization of employees, provision of job coaches and safety at workplace.



International Conference on Autism

The Pakistan Centre of Autism in Karachi conducted a One-Day International Conference on Autism ICA-2022 in collaboration with Department of Psychology, University of Karachi on Thursday 31st March, 2022. The Conference theme was 'Inclusion in the Workplace: Challenges and Opportunities in a post pandemic world'. International speakers participated on Zoom Link.

COO, ASDWT Karachi Dr. Salma Khalil was invited as a guest speaker to talk about 'Autism and Challenges in Pakistan'.



Advisory Council

The First meeting of the Advisory Council was held on 6th January 2022 over Zoom. Mr. Naval Vaswani, Mr. Noor Ahmed Narejo, Dr. Ilyas Baloch, Ms. Sana Ayaz, Ms. Fawzia Salahuddin and Dr. Faiga Kiran attended the meeting. Mrs. Rukhsana Shah, welcomed the members and said that ASD would greatly benefit from the experience and expertise of the Advisory Committee. Mr. Vaswani suggested that partnership be done with the Universities and Schools sustainable awareness programmes. Mr. Narejo said that our primary emphasis should be small localities and communities where we live and work. Ms. Sana Ayaz introduced the work being done in Karachi by KVTC and emphasised the need for focusing on the independent living skills of ASD and their inclusion in the society. Dr. Ilyas Baloch said that he was encouraged to see that good work is being done in Karachi and requested that the same be started in Quetta and Balochistan as there is no dearth of funds and donations. Ms. Fawzia Salahuddin suggested that maybe Ms. Sana Ayaz would like to start vocational training in Quetta as well.



Residential Facility for Adults with Autism

On 17th January 2022, ASDWT, Lahore invited parents to discuss options of independent living for adults with Autism. After a short presentation on the Ramaq Homes Pilot Project presented by Rukhsana Shah, a detailed discussion took place and it was decided that parents would visit facilities set by the Department of Social Welfare, and others such as Roshni Gaon, Rising Sun and Dar-e-Mussarat.

Workshops

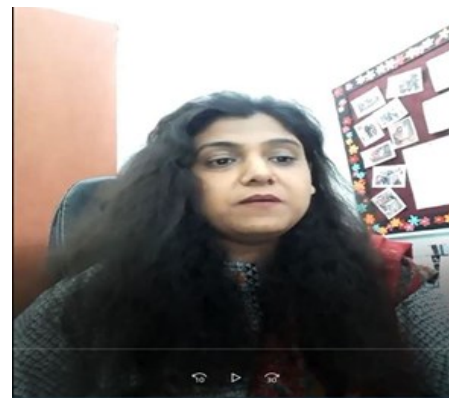


Quaid e Azam Rangers Special School

ASDWT Karachi conducted a session on Behavior Modification Techniques for Quaid e Azam Rangers' special school on January 8th, 2022. Ms. Faiza Ilyas talked about Analysis of behavior and discussed Behavior Modification Techniques.

Strategies for Empowerment of Person with ASD

ASDWT, Karachi organized a workshop on Strategies for Empowerment of person with ASD on January 18, 2022. The session was conducted by Ms. Alliya Batool, CEO, Pakistan Centre for Autism. The session was attended by more than 30 parents and professionals and was followed by a detailed question and answers session.



University of Sargodha

On 21st January 2022, Ms. Farah Amanat, Senior Clinical Psychologist, ASDWT Lahore, conducted an online training session for students at University of Sargodha. She covered the topic "Understanding Autism and overview of its Management Techniques". It was an interactive session attended by 80 participants from the departments of Psychology and Special Education. Special thanks to Dr. Najma Butt, Head of the Department of Psychology for facilitating in organising the session.



Batool Rehabilitation Centre Hyderabad

A training session on introduction to Applied Behavior Analysis was conducted by Ms. Faiza Ilyas for Batool Rehabilitation Centre on February 9, 2022.

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Arena Multimedia

ASDWT Karachi conducted a session on Autism Spectrum Disorder for Arena Multimedia on 24th February, 2022. Ms. Faiza Ilyas talked about on autism spectrum disorder and role of IT in management of children with Autism. It was very interactive session with instructors and teachers in attendance.



Zobia Nazley Memorial Trust, Mirpur & Islamabad and Special Education School Bhimber, AJK

ASD Welfare Trust, Lahore conducted an online training sessions on 2nd & 10th March 2022 for Zobia Nazley Memorial Trust, Mirpur & Islamabad and Special Education School Bhimber, AJK. Mrs. Rukhsana Shah, CEO, ASDWT talk about ADHD and its management while Ms. Farah Amanat gave a detailed presentation on ASD. These synergistic sessions were attended by 25 participants from AJK.

Govt. Shadab Training Institute for Mentally Challenged Children, Lahore

Mrs. Rukhsana Shah, CEO, ASD Welfare Trust conducted a training workshop on the topic "Puberty Issues in children with Autism & other Disorders on 3rd march, 2022". She gave a very thought provoking talk on the importance of recognizing and managing puberty issues in children with ASD and other disabilities. She stressed that it was vital for parents and teachers to educate and prepare children in matters relating to their body and its functions so that they can cope up with puberty related anxieties and be able to protect themselves from exploitation. The Session ended with a Q&A segment whereby the specific queries of parents and teachers relating to their children and students were answered.



Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan

Autism Awareness webinar at Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan was conducted by ASDWT, Lahore on **8th March 2022**. Ms. Farah Amanat gave a talk on "Understanding Autism Spectrum Disorder", its possible causes, its manifestation and the management as so far both prevention and cure of Autism remain elusive. Special thanks to Prof. Dr. Noor Jehan, Head of the Department of Psychology for facilitating in organizing the training session.



Executive Functioning Impairment in Autism

Ms. Farah Amanat of ASDWT, Lahore conducted an online workshop on "Executive Functioning Impairment in Autism" on 30th march, 2022. In her presentation she explained how impairments caused by executive dysfunction at cognitive, behavioral, and emotional levels in children with autism affected learning outcomes. She also discussed home based strategies to bridge the gaps to develop independent living skills for people with autism, ADHD, ID and SLDs. The session was attended by 54 participants.

Empowering Parents

ASDWT conducted a meet up February 10th, 2022 with a group of mothers to discuss the future possibilities of adults with autism. The meeting started with a detailed briefing by Ms. Faiza Ilyas regarding selection of individuals for vocational and skill polishing program leading to employment. It was insightful discussion with mothers.



Awareness Seminars

Peoples University of Medical and Health Sciences for Women, Nawabshah

ASDWT, Karachi organised an awareness seminar on Neurodevelopmental Disorders at Peoples University of Medical and Health Sciences for Women, Nawabshah on January 20, 2022. A large number of post graduate Doctors, House Officers & Lady Health Workers attended the session. Assistant commissioner Nawabshah, Vice Chancellor (PUMHS) & Mr. Abid Lashari from National Disability & Development Forum (NDF) also joined the session.



Quran Institute, Karachi

On January 27th, 2022, Team ASDWT, Karachi held an awareness seminar on Neuro Developmental Disorders at Quran Institute, Karachi. It was an interactive session with students and faculty members in attendance.



Jamia Tul Mohsinat



ASDWT, Karachi conducted an awareness seminar on Neurodevelopmental Disorders including ASD, ADHD and Learning Disabilities at the Jamia Tul Mohsinat, a madrasa for females, on March 12th, 2022. Students and faculty members had detailed question and answer session on the topic.

Collaborations, Visits and Meetings

Pakistan Institute of Learning and Living (PILL)

ASDWT held a meeting at PILL and discussed about the future collaboration and working plan in the area of research along with Pakistan Institute of Learning and Living on February 2nd, 2022. [MORE INFORMATION HERE](#)

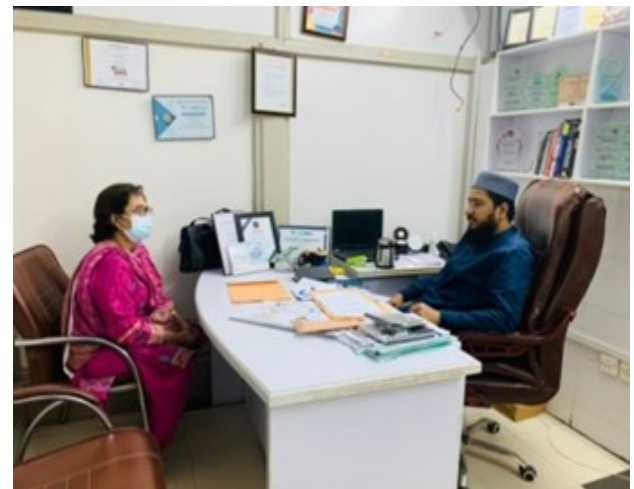
Sindh Board of Technical Education

ASDWT had a Meeting with Sindh Board of Technical Education on February 2, 2022. It was a productive meeting in which team ASDWT offered their services for designing customized curriculum. Chairman SBTE was very positive and offered to facilitate in this regard.



Saylani Welfare Trust

Team ASDWT, Karachi conducted a meeting with Mr. Wazeer Raza from Saylani Welfare Trust on February 2nd, 2022. ASDWT offered its services to train Saylani Welfare Trust's workers as well as its staff at Educational Institutes. It was also proposed to develop fully equipped rehabilitation center for neurodevelopmental disorders with support from the ASDWT.



Visit to Rising Sun Institute for Special Children

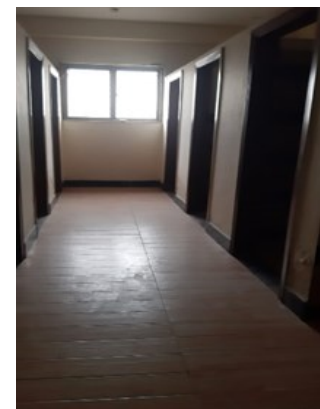
On 17th February 2022, ASD Welfare Trust's team visited the Rising Sun Institute for Special children in Lahore. The team was received by Mrs. Parveen Tawwab, co-founder and CEO, Ms. Nabila Chaudhry, CEO. A detailed presentation on the working of the Institution and its specialized purpose build campuses was given by the CEO. Later a round of all departments was given to the team.

The team was informed that in a new campus was opened in Mughulpura in 2003 which is currently catering to 150 children. State of the art services were being provided to children with CP, such as physiotherapy, hydrotherapy pool, sensory integration therapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy. The institute has a section for children with autism spectrum disorder where management is done under different standard programmes. They are also provided pre-vocational and vocational training, family support and early intervention programmes, computer education, daily living skills, sports and games, etc.

A visit was also made to Gosha-e- Aafiat in Harbans Pura, which is a residential facility for adults with disabilities. Vocational training and employment was also given to these young adults with disabilities. It was a tremendous learning experience for ASDWT team.



Living
facilities
at the
Gosha-e-
Aafiat





World Memon Foundation (WMO)

ASDWT conducted meeting with WMO on February 17th, 2022 to discuss future collaboration in raising awareness about neurodevelopmental disorders in the Memon community and training of their teachers and health workers.

National Academy for Performing Arts (NAPA)

ASDWT conducted meeting on February 18th, 2022 with NAPA to discuss future opportunities in performing arts and theater industry for children with Autism. Mr. Junaid Zubairi, CEO, NAPA took keen interest and was willing to facilitate ASDWT's efforts of providing training and employment to adults with Autism and I/DD.



POHTM

ASDWT held a meeting with Professional Institute of Hotel and Tourism Management on March 1st, 2022 to discuss future opportunities in culinary arts for children with Autism. Mr. Mansoor Iqbal Siddiqui, Director, POHTM took keen interest in the idea, and was willing to facilitate ASDWT in providing training to adults with Autism and I/DD.

Karachi Down Syndrome Programme (KDSP)

ASDWT visited KDSP on February 23rd, 2022. It was a fruitful meeting in which KDSP requested ASDWT for their facilitation in the Inclusive educational programme, recently started by KDSP.

Visit to SOS Village, Jamshoro

Team ASDWT visited SOS Village in Jamshoro in February to discuss possibilities of training their teachers and staff in identification of children with neurodevelopmental disorders in the Village. They were briefed in detail about the working of the Village, and how there is a Psychologist on the campus who keeps a file on every child's mental health. But they said they would be happy to avail free trainings from ASDWT if so needed. The team found the visit a very pleasant experience.



Punjab Welfare Trust for the Disabled (PWTD)



ASDWT, Lahore held a meeting on 2nd March 2022 with Dr. Izhar Hashmi, Director PWTD. Mrs. Rukhsana Shah and Ms. Mobashshrah Bajwa to discuss upcoming programmes for training and employment of adults with Autism & IDD. Dr. Hashmi showed keen interest to do training sessions in collaboration with ASDWT. Mrs. Rukhsana Shah also presented him a book titled "Autism Ki Pehli Kitab" written in Urdu by Mr. Muhammad Hassan, Pakistan's Ambassador to Indonesia.

MOU with Special Olympics Pakistan

On 3rd March 2022 ASDWT signed a MOU with Special Olympics Pakistan. Ms. Rukhsana Shah, CEO on behalf of Autism Spectrum Disorder Welfare Trust (ASDWT) and Mr. Anees-ur-Rehman, Vice- Chairman, Special Olympics (SOP) signed the MOU for collaboration in training and supporting children with autism and related neurodevelopmental disorders. ASD also pledged to provide training to staff and coaches of Special Olympics Pakistan in this field.



Chairperson Special Olympics Pakistan

ASDWT team had a meeting with Ms. Ronaq Lakhani and Mr. Anees - Ur-Rehman on 28th March in Lahore, where many parents of children with disabilities were present. An action plan was discussed by Mr. Taha Tahir, National Director of Special Olympics to explore employment opportunities for adults with disabilities within the activities of SOP.

Amin Maktab



ASDWT team visited to Amin Maktab on 11th March, 2022. They had meeting with Dr. Tasneem Raza, Chairperson and Ms. Tahira, Director, Amin Maktab. It was proposed that ASDWT would join Amin Maktab's Outreach programme for training parents on Autism and related disorders. On 15th the ASDWT team attended a vocational workshop in Amin Maktab and Rukhsana Shah presented Dr. Tasneem Raza with a book "Autism ki Pehli Kitab" written in Urdu by Mr. Muhammad Hassan, Pakistan's Ambassador to Indonesia.

On 26th March, team ASDWT visited Amin Maktab's Fun Fair to and exhibition of crafts produced by children at their vocational centre.

Pahchaan

Rukhsana Shah, Ms. Mobashshrah Bajwa and Ms. Saira Mir had a meeting with Dr. Naeem Zafar, President, Pahchaan on 14th March 2022. He explained recent projects of their organization for protection of children against abuse. ASDWT offered their services for training sessions on awareness about Autism and related disorders among lawyers, Child Protection Bureau and Prisons.



Oasis School

ASDWT Team visited Oasis school on 16th March 2022. Mr. Inaam and Ms. Samra briefly explained their school projects. Ms. Rukhsana Shah and Ms. Mubashshra Bajwa showed keen interest in their vocational training classes. Mr. Inaam offered training sessions from ASDWT platform. Later, they showed classes and kids activities to ASDWT team. CEO, ASDWT presented a book titled "Autism Ki Pehli Kitab" written in Urdu by Mr. Muhammad Hassan, Pakistan's Ambassador to Indonesia.



Hunar Foundation

ASDWT conducted a meeting with Hunar Foundation on March 15th, 2022 to start customized training program for their teachers and staff.

Core Care Institute

Team ASDWT visited this newly formed school for children with Autism and I/DD in February to assess their facilities. As it is a fresh venture, the management is gradually adding more equipment and facilities as required.

APTECH

Team ASDWT visited APTECH Institute on Shahrah e Faisal on March 16th to discuss possible opportunities of professional training in IT and software programming for adults with Autism. Further meetings to discuss specifics would be held in April.



Consultation Camp for Parents

On March 11th 2022, Team ASDWT organized a Consultation Camp for parents of children with neurodevelopmental disorders, referred by World Memon Organization (WMO). Team ASDWT provided tips and strategies for improving outcomes for families.



Book Launching Ceremony at Karachi University

A book launching ceremony of "Autism: Issues and Challenges" edited by Ms. Shugufta Shahzadi, HOD Department of Special Education, University of Karachi, was held on March 25th at Auditorium of Jameel Jalibi Research Library, KU. Dr. Salma Khalil presented a copy of "Urdu ki Pehli Kitab" to Dr. Shagufta Shahzadi.

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