

ASDWT Newsletter

July to September 2022

Hello everyone,

This quarter, ASD Welfare Trust team's efforts to be part of a global autism community for better access to trainings and interventions for persons with ASD and I/DD, was amply rewarded. The ASEAN Autism Network (AAN), in its Executive Board Meeting held in Malaysia, approved the status of the ASDWT as an Associate Member of the AAN. The

ASEAN countries include

Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam, with Mongolia and Pakistan as Associate Members. The AAN forum would be very useful for us in terms of new initiatives and trainings.

However, in view of the rising cases of ASD in Pakistan and on the request of parents for more services, ASDWT Lahore has decided to provide Speech, Behaviour Management and Occupational Therapy at subsidized rates on its own premises at F-19 Main Gulberg, Lahore.

We are happy to report that we conducted Autism Awareness Trainings for about 460 teachers and trainers of the Punjab Vocational Training Council (PVTC) and Coaches of Special Olympics (SOP) Pakistan. These will now continue on a regular basis to improve awareness of ASD in different communities and professional groups.



In yet another important matter—that of the role of Psychiatrists in diagnosis and management of neuro-developmental disorders—we met a few Psychiatrists to take them on board on the problems being faced by families of persons with these disorders. There are only 600 Psychiatrists in Pakistan and many of

them frequently go abroad on Locums and Conferences. We hope to engage with them more in future for the benefit of adults with ASD and I/DD.

Cheers!

Rukhsana Shah



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Special Events

ASD Welfare Trust Pakistan becomes Associate Member of ASEAN Autism Network (AAN)

On 5th August 2022, ASEAN Autism Network (AAN) Executive Board Meeting was held in Malaysia. Mr. Cason Ong, Chairperson AAN and head of NASOM greeted all the participants from ASEAN and allied countries. Ms. Candy Hernandez, M. Si, LSPR/LSCAA, Indonesia introduced the meeting participants from ASD Welfare Trust, Pakistan. Ms. Rukhsana Shah introduced the organisation's history of creating awareness, diagnosis and management of autism in Pakistan. She also talked about ASDWT's current projects of vocational training and residential facilities for Neurodiverse persons. Dr. Salma Khalil, COO, Karachi and Ms. Mobashshrah Bajwa, COO, Lahore also participated in the meeting. Dr. Salma reported that in Pakistan there still exists a great deal of stigma and social rejection of persons with autism.



It was a milestone achievement for ASDWT to be an Associate Member of a renowned International Forum. Through the ASEAN Autism Network platform, the ASDWT hopes to have access to new ideas and learning.

Green Karachi Campaign, Mazar-E-Quaid

On 3rd August 2022, Team ASDWT Karachi was invited by BINA Education Foundation at Mazar-e-Quaid for a plantation drive on Pakistan Independence Day. The purpose was to include differently abled people in all mainstream nation-building activities. The team enthusiastically participated in the plantation drive to promote inclusion.



Hum Mashal-e-Rah (HMR), a Partner Organisation

On 13th August 2022, ASD Welfare Trust Team visited Hum Mashal-e-Rah Foundation in Township, Lahore to celebrate the 75 years of Independence of Pakistan organised by Ms. Amna Aftab, CEO of HMR. A fun fair was arranged for children and adults with physical and intellectual disabilities. Ms. Sumaira Sar-mad, Secretary Social Welfare, Punjab and Mr. Mudassar Riaz Malik, DG Social Welfare, Punjab were Chief Guests of the event which included a Quiz programme, Musical performance, a Gymnastic show by a person with physical disability and finally, students from Deaf Reach School sang the National Anthem of Pakistan in sign language to wrap up the event. Children also participated in a tug-of-war competition. ASDWT pledged to support HMR as a partner organisation for persons with special needs.



Webinars

Assisted Living Solutions

On 19th July 2022, ASDWT participated in a very informative discussion with Akshadhaa Foundation, India, on Assisted Living Solutions for neurodiverse adults organised by Ms. Neena Wagh, Chairperson of ALAP. Mr. Anirban Dutta, Ms. Sumana Dutta and Ms. Nasreen Mazumdar, participated in the conversation. Mr. Anirban shared his story of conceptualizing and constructing Akshadhaa Assisted Living Facility in Bangalore and explained that it was designed for people with neurodevelopmental challenges who need different levels of care. The project is managed by parents so that they can address problems on a day to day basis.



Forum for Assisted Living Solutions in conversation with Akshadhaa Foundation



Anirban Dutta



Nasreen Mazumdar

CONVERSATION WITH AKSHADHAA FOUNDATION



HOST
Neena Wagh
ALAP

04:00pm – 05:00pm
Tuesday, 19 July 2022
NEENA WAGH

Gynecological concerns in girls with Autism



Forum for Autism
presents a webinar on

Gynecological concerns in girls with Autism



Speaker: Dr. Ashwini Joshi

- A practicing Obstetrician and Gynecologist over a decade
- Co-Owner at Sushrut Maternity Hospital, Andheri
- CEO at Vein Center, Khar
- Winner of two MOGS prizes
- Mother to two wonderful children on the Autism Spectrum
- Active Member of Doctors Team, Forum for Autism

Moderator: Janice Rodrigues

Session includes:

1. What changes happen over puberty in girls
2. Common complaints before puberty, during menstruation and later
3. Common vaginal infections
4. Menstrual issues, diagnosis and management
5. Perimenopausal issues.
6. Ethical issues regarding Hysterectomy

The session will be followed by Q n A for attendees.

Date: Saturday, 23rd July 2022 Time: 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

ASDWT organized a webinar on Gynecological concerns in girls with Autism by Forum for Autism, Mumbai, India on 23rd July 2022. Dr. Ashwini Joshi, Gynecologist, CEO Vein Center, Khar and member of Forum for Autism gave a detailed presentation. Dr. Joshi described the changes that happen at puberty in girls and the common complaints about it. She guided parents on how to handle these complaints and gave tips to avoid common vaginal infections. Menstrual issues and hygiene management were discussed in the session. Perimenopausal and ethical issues regarding Hysterectomy were also explained by Dr. Ashwini. The presentation was very well followed by Q&A session for the participants. The session was attended by a large number of participants from all over the region.

Know Your Rights

Ms. Neenah Wagh, Founder of ALAP, conducted a Facebook live streaming session with Mr. Anil Joshi, parent and Founder member of Parivaar, NCPO, India on 30th June 2022. The focus of the discussion was on the legal and constitutional rights of persons and families of persons with disabilities in the country. It appears that in India, there are a number of benefits including tax rebate, subsidized air and train fares, and legal services provided to parents of children with disabilities, but people did not know about these benefits. The session is the first of a six-part series through which ALAP and Parivaar mean to create awareness on the rights of families of PWDs.

Know your Rights

Talk Series moderated by Ms. Neena Wagh




**30 JULY 2022
11AM ONWARDS
LIVE ON THE SPECIAL MOM**

SPEAKER



Mr. Anil Joshi

Parent
Expert on Diversity,
Inclusion & Accessibility
Former Board Member,
National Trust
Founder Member & General
Secretary PARIVAR NCPO

**FIRST TALK OF THE SERIES ON
"FIRST THINGS FIRST : STEPS
TO TAKE TOWARDS RIGHTS &
ENTITLEMENTS FOR YOUR
CHILD"**

FACEBOOK.COM/THE SPECIAL MOM
CONTACT@THE SPECIAL MOM.ORG

Training Workshops

The Magic of Music Therapy

On 27th August 2022, ASDWT Lahore hosted a workshop on 'The Magic of Music Therapy' conducted by Mr. Sohail Khan, Managing Director, Pakistan Institute of Music and Education in Lahore. Mr. Khan described the importance of music therapy interventions for autism and special needs. He also explained how music therapy can be used to improve speech and other disorders as research has shown that music activates every area of the brain. He showed a number of video clips in which music was used to treat patients with physical and mental illnesses.



Special Olympics Pakistan (SOP)



ASDWT conducted a workshop on 7th September for Sports Coaches and Trainers in collaboration with Special Olympics Pakistan. Ms. Farah Amanat conducted the workshop on 'Understanding Autism Spectrum Disorder.' She explained assessment techniques and management of persons with ASD during Special Olympics' trials and how to maximize their potential in national and international games. She advised Coaches and teachers to make Individual Education programmes (IEP) for persons with ASD and other disorders.

Trainings

Certificate Course on Inclusive Education Training Aga Khan University Hospital, KDSP, PAK U.S. ALUMINI

On the 29th July'22, ASDWT Karachi conducted a full day training session for the Certificate Course of Inclusive Education offered by the Aga Khan University and Karachi Down Syndrome Programme. Ms. Faiza Ilyas, Senior Clinical Psychologist of ASDWT gave a detailed presentation on Autism Spectrum Disorder, its assessment and management.

The Workshop was followed up on 31st August with a training session at AKUH on Intellectual Disabilities conducted by Ms. Faiza Ilyas.

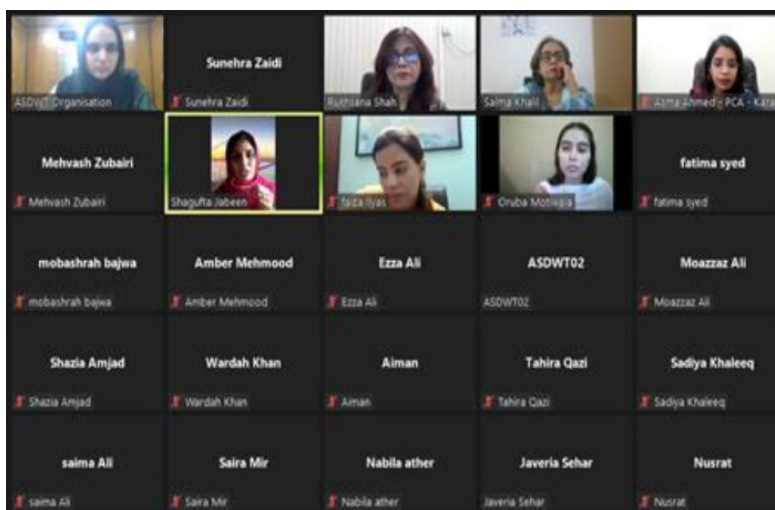


Training Session in Collaboration with PVTC

ASDWT Lahore conducted a training session on ASD and Intellectual Disabilities for the Punjab Vocational Training Council (PVTC) on 31st August. The webinar was attended by 443 PVTC teachers and trainers from all over the Punjab. Ms. Rukhsana Shah welcomed the participants and explained why it was important for teachers and trainers to learn about neurodevelopmental disabilities to be able to impart vocational training more effectively. Ms. Farah Amanat then gave a detailed presentation on ASD and I/DD and the importance of developing Individual Education Plans (IEP). The session was followed by Q&A.



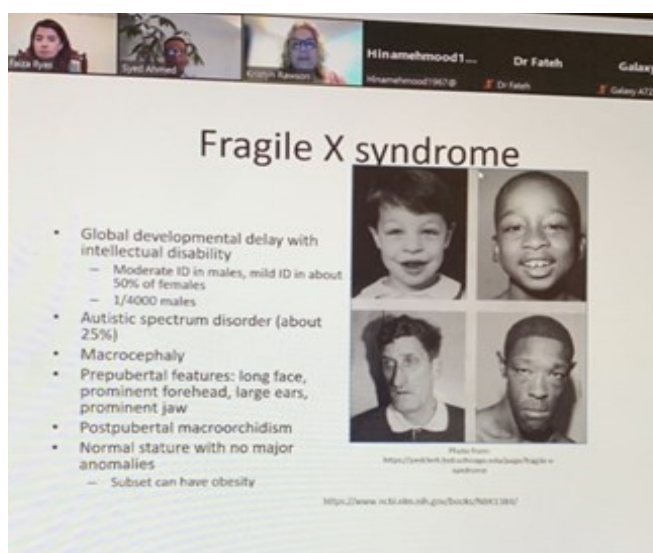
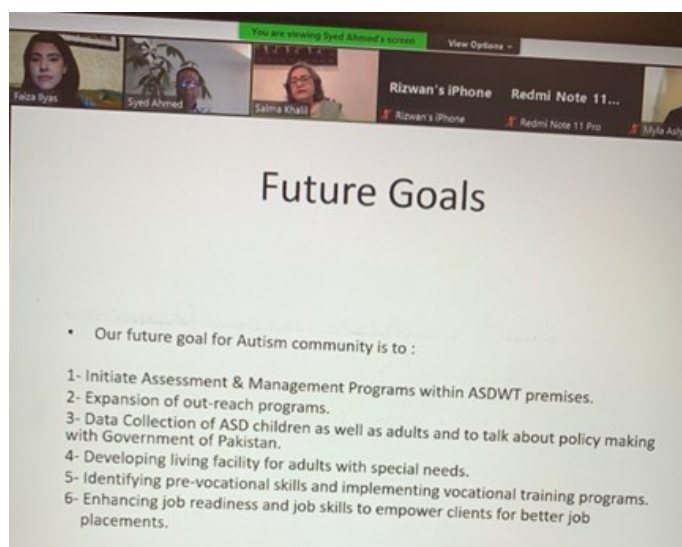
Speech & Language Development in Adults with ASD



On 15th September 2022, Ms. Rukhsana Shah of ASDWT Lahore conducted an online session on Speech and Language Development in Adults with Autism. She explained the importance of social communication, speech mechanics, semantics assessment, and the role of grammar for language development and vocabulary expansion. The presentation was followed by a Q&A session.

Webinar by Pakistan Society of Medical Genetics and Genomics (PSMG)

PSMG in collaboration with ASDWT conducted a session on 25th September on genetic research with regard to Autism. Dr. Salma Khalil introduced the vision, mission and work of the ASDWT with a slide presentation, while Ms. Faiza Ilyas gave a detailed presentation on Diagnosis, Screening and Management of ASD. Ms. Kristyn Rawson talked about the current research being done by the PSMG in genetic disorders to determine the possible causes of Autism. Ms. Rukhsana Shah talked about her own experience as a parent and advocate. The Q&A session covered many different issues such as exposure to heavy metals, pesticides and processed food as possible causes of Autism apart from genetic factors which were at the moment inconclusive. The session was attended by participants from across the world.



Autism Stories

ASDWT Lahore organised a Webinar on Autism Stories with Ms. Rabia Tirmazi, a speech and language pathologist and sign language translator. Ms. Rabia shared the story of her adult son, his early age behaviours, lack of focus and sensory issues. She explained her own research in the field of ASD and the therapies she used to handle these problems. Mustafa is now studying in LGS. He has keen interest in cricket and computers. He is also Hafiz-e-Quran. The session was followed by Q&A.



Free Zoom Session by
ASD Welfare Trust, Lahore

Autism Stories





Ms. Rabia Tirmazi
Sign Language Translator
Speech Language Pathologist

Tuesday 6th September, 2022

Time: 2:00 pm

Please contact for free registration:
0331-4199945
0302-0491707

Parent Support Training Program, Hyderabad

A training session on Home Based Training Strategies for children with disabilities was conducted by ASDWT Karachi in Batool Rehabilitation Centre, Hyderabad on 16th Sept. 2022.



Special Olympics Pakistan (SOP), Karachi

A training session was organised for Parents Group of Special Olympics Pakistan on 23rd September 2022 by ASDWT. Ms. Afifa Rao, Clinical Psychologist gave a presentation on 'Understanding Intellectual Disabilities', highlighting symptoms, red flags and home based management strategies.

Visits and Meetings

Hum Mashal-e-Rah Foundation Lahore

On 19th July 2022, ASDWT Team visited Maskan Complex, Hum Mashal-e-Rah Foundation Head Office Lahore. Ms. Amna Aftab, Chairperson HMR gave a detailed briefing on the Maskan project, a nursing home, vocational training and rehabilitation center for Special Needs. There were different training programmes such as Call Centres Operation, Beautician, Electrician, Cooking and Phone Repairing. About 52 students were residing in Maskan for these trainings.

ASDWT also signed a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) with Hum Mashal-e-Rah Foundation on 29th July 2022. Ms. Rukhsana Shah, CEO ASDWT and Ms. Amna Aftab, Chairperson Hum Mashal-e-Rah signed the MOU. It was resolved that both organisations will work together for employment, economic empowerment and residential facility for adults with disabilities, autism and IDD.



Meeting with Parents on PVTC Vocational Curriculum

On 10th August 2022, ASDWT Lahore invited parents to discuss a modified curriculum for PVTC to enable young persons with ASD and I/DD for vocational training at the PVTC institutes all over Punjab. After the meeting copies of the proposed curriculum were distributed among parents for their feedback and suggestions.



Department of psychology, University of Karachi

A meeting was held with the Head of Department of Psychology, Professor Dr. Qudsia Tariq on 22nd August '2022 at University of Karachi. Dr. Salma Khalil, COO ASDWT Karachi, and Ms. Faiza Ilyas discussed future plans and collaboration of ASDWT with Karachi University to benefit the people with special needs and work collectively.



Meeting with DEWA Academy

ASDWT Karachi visited DEWA Academy on the 22nd August 2022 to discuss pre-vocational and vocational training skills with Mr. Rizwan Lodhi and Ms. Mussarat.



Karachi Vocational Training Centre

On 27th September, a meeting was held between Team KVTC and ASDWT Karachi to discuss future prospects of collaboration with different public and private organizations. Both the organizations were positive to start joint programmes for training of professionals and trainers.

Government Special Education and Rehabilitation Complex

ASDWT Karachi held a meeting with Regional Director GSEC's Karachi, Mr. Jhamandas Rathi along with the team members of KVTC and KDSP. The meeting was held on 9th September at Government Special Education Complex, Gulistan-e-Jauhar to discuss vocational training programmes for young persons with ASD and A/DD.



Capacity Building of ASDWT Teams

Autism After 21

On 27th August, ASDWT participated in a Research Webinar with the University of Florida on 'Autism after 21', introducing new research on supporting young adults for work readiness.

Cars-2 On 22nd and 29th Sept. Ms. Farah Amanat, Senior Clinical Psychologist of ASDWT Lahore attended two training workshops held by the University of North Carolina.



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