

NEWSLETTER

October to December 2022



6th Congress of ASEAN Autism Network

ASD Welfare Trust is an Associate member of the ASEAN Autism Network. Our two delegates, Ms. Rukhsana Shah CEO Lahore, and Dr. Salma Khalil COO Karachi, attended the 6th Congress of ASEAN from 6th to 8th November in Kuala Lumpur.

A Country Report was presented by Dr. Salma Khalil, while Ms. Rukhsana Shah gave a presentation on the Theme of the Congress – Vocational Training & Employment of Adults with Autism.

The ASEAN Autism Network (AAN) was established in 2010 by 27 Parents Organizations of 9 member countries of ASEAN at a meeting hosted by the Asia Pacific Centre for Disabilities in Bangkok. Since then, the AAN members regularly conduct meetings to exchange ideas, hold capacity building trainings, make policy recommendations to their respective governments, and present Country Reports on the AAN platform to monitor progress in each member country of the ASEAN.

As Pakistan's lead organization in raising awareness about Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disabilities, the ASD Welfare Trust also partners with the Autism Research Institute (ARI) and International Social Role Valorisation Association (ISRVA) in the USA and the Keystone Institute in India. Apart from these formal arrangements, we liaise regularly with regional Autism organizations in India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Maldives, for conducting joint training sessions, capacity building and sharing innovative ideas.

We are now extremely keen that SAARC countries come together like ASEAN to build a SAARC Autism Network, so that all member countries can benefit from each other. ASD Welfare Trust is already in touch with parents in Sri Lanka, Nepal and India to chalk out the way forward, and we hope that the government of Pakistan takes the initiative to invite parents' organizations of all member countries to Pakistan for the first preliminary meeting.

Special Events





Sukkur IBA University

On the invitation of Sukkur IBA University, Team ASDWT (Karachi) paid a 3 days visit on 7 - 9 December 2022 to their beautiful campus, and held an Awareness Seminar, Behaviour Modification Training Workshop and Screening & Informal Assessment Camp.

Mr Nisar Ahmed Siddiqui (VC Sukkur IBA), Dr Zahid Hussain Sheikh Assistant Professor, facilitated the programme. Honourable Secretary DEPD, Mr Hadi Baksh Kalhoro, Faculty Members of Sukkur IBA University, Parents and students attended the events.

A detailed presentation on the establishment of an Autism Unit at the IBA Sukkur was given by Dr Salma Khalil to Board Members of the University.



Webinars and Workshops

Webinar on Identity and Wisdom in a Pakistani Adult with Autism

ASD WELFARE TRUST conducted a zoom webinar on 8th October 2022 with Ms. Asma Shamim, PhD scholar and Research Assistant at the University of Toronto, and Qazi Fazli Azeem, a South Asian self-advocate for ASD and Assistant Professor at SZABIST in Karachi.

Ms. Asma Shamim wrote her MPhil thesis on "Fazli: Identity and Wisdom in a Pakistani Adult with Autism", a singularly insightful document. Ms. Rukhsana Shah introduced the two speakers after which Ms. Asma explained the three main components of her research, a) Conceptualization of Identity by an autistic adult; b) Reflection of Wisdom in the Learning Processes of Adults with Autism; and c) the Impact of these two factors on the Quality of Life.

Qazi Fazli further elaborated on Ms. Asma's work, as usual with his remarkable insight and intellectual analysis. He said that it is very important for autistic persons to develop self-awareness at an early stage in their lives with the help of family support, in order to understand themselves and regulate their lives.



Free Webinar
ASD Welfare Trust, Lahore

Identity and Wisdom in a Pakistani Adult with Autism

A conversation with



Asma Shamim
PhD Scholar & Research Assistant at
the University of Toronto, Canada



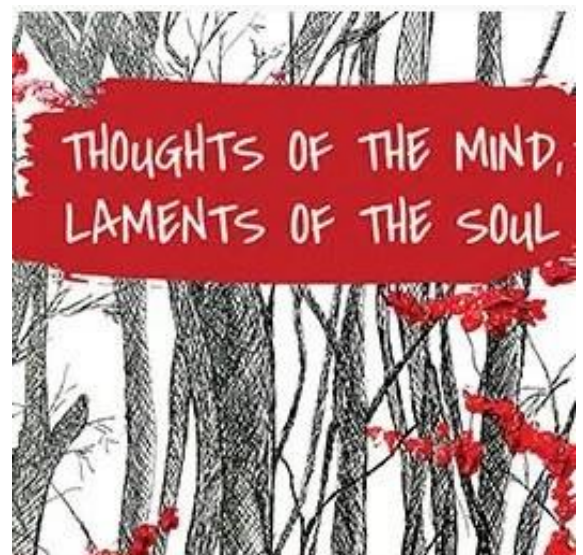
Qazi Fazli Azeem
South Asian Self Advocate
for the Autism Spectrum Disorder

The dialogue was followed by a vibrant discussion, in which Ms. Betsy Neuville, Director Keystone Institute, India, Ms. Rakshita Shekhar, an autistic adult and Consultant based in Bangalore, India, Ms. Aleena Baig, a parent and Consultant on Biomedical Interventions in Pakistan, and many others participated. Around 40 persons attended the webinar.

Autism Stories

An inspirational webinar was held on October 14th conducted by Team ASDWT.

M. Faateh Hayat is an adult with autism who have progressively achieved and is a success story for many fellows. Mother Ms. Muzna talked about the journey of Faateh and how she overcome obstacles came through. She shared the strategies that helped Fateh to reach his full potential, & he wrote a poetry book "Thought of the Mind, Laments of the Soul".



Mental Health Perspective in an evolving culture: what is our role

In the celebration of Mental health month, Team ASDWT Karachi arranged a Facebook live session on October 21st with Professor Dr. Qudsia Tariq of the Institute of Behaviour Sciences, University of Karachi.

Dr. Qudsia talked about over-use of social media and mobile phones in the country that posed a threat to mental well-being. However, she noted that there was also increased awareness about mental health in Pakistan and growing acceptance of mental illnesses. She discussed different strategies for individuals and the community to build a healthier and happier society.



ASD Welfare Trust, Karachi brings

Mental Health perspective in an evolving culture: what is our role



Friday, 21st October, 2022

Time: 11:00am-12:00pm



ASD Welfare Trust, Karachi brings

Female mental health in Sociocultural conditions



Wednesday, 2nd November, 2022

Time: 11:00am-12:00pm

Brig. Dr. Shoaib Ahmed
Consultant Psychiatrist
Executive Director
Dr.A.Q. Khan Centre IBS



Female Mental Health in Sociocultural Conditions

Team ASDWT Karachi arranged a Facebook live session about "Female Mental Health in Sociocultural Conditions" on 2nd November 2022 with Brig. Dr. Shoaib Ahmed (CEO of IBS).

Fruitful discussion was done about Mental Health and its importance. He highlighted female related disorders specifically post- partum depression and psychosis. It was insightful session for the audience.

Workshop at ABC Montessori by ASDWT on Understanding Autism Spectrum Disorder

On 4th November, 2022 ASDWT Lahore conducted a workshop at ABC Montessori School, on Understanding Autism Spectrum Disorder. Ms. Farah Amanat talked about signs and symptoms of Autism, red flags, assessment tools and management strategies. Dr. Husna Iftikhar, physiotherapist at ASDWT also discussed problems and strategies related to sensory integration for children with Autism. The workshop was followed by a question-and-answer session.



Workshop with Step Ahead Autism Center

On 8th November 2022, A training workshop was conducted by ASDWT-Lahore on Formal Assessment in ASD using CARS. The session was attended by 15 therapists from Step Ahead Autism Centre, faculty members and interns from The University of Lahore. Ms. Farah Amanat gave a presentation on assessment and standardized diagnostic tools used for Autism Spectrum Disorder. The session was followed by Q&A session.



Webinar on Sensory Challenges in Neurodevelopmental Disorders

ASDWT, Lahore conducted a webinar on 24th November on Sensory Challenges in Neurodevelopmental Disorders by Dr. Husna Albab, Physiotherapist at ASD Welfare Trust Lahore. She explained how sensory processing disorder impacted learning and behaviours in neurodevelopmental disorders and suggested different sensory integration techniques. Around 40 persons attended the webinar.



Free Webinar
ASD Welfare Trust, Lahore



Sensory Challenges in Neurodevelopmental Disorders

Question & Answer Session



Presenter
Dr. Husna Albab
Physiotherapist
ASD Welfare trust, Lahore





Workshop at Bank Alfalah Head Office

On December 5th, 22 Team ASDWT conducted a workshop on “Stress Management” at Bank Alfalah Head office. Stressors faced by Bank employees on daily basis were identified and discussed.

Different Management Techniques to cope stress were discussed and practiced in the session. Participants left the session with a sense of relaxation and felt empowered by gaining the knowledge and control over the triggers.

Neurodevelopmental disorders and Parenting styles

On 6th December 2022, a workshop was conducted by ASDWT Lahore for Sufi School for Special Learners on Neurodevelopmental Disorders and Parenting Styles.

The session was attended by teachers, therapists and parents. Presenter Ms. Munaza Saeed (Clinical Psychologist) talked about different Neurodevelopmental Disorders and talked about parenting styles and management techniques appropriate for children with special needs.



Visits and Meetings



The Circle of Caring for Children (CFC)

On October 1st, The CFC in Karachi arranged a seminar on “Redefining Inclusion” at Marriot Hotel. It was attended by prominent NGOs including NOWPDP. ASDWT was represented by Dr. Salma Khalil, Ms. Afifa Rao and Ms. Oruba Motiwala.

Mom’s Retreat

On October 6th, Mom’s Retreat, a refreshing activity was held at ASDWT premises in Karachi. It provided mothers of neurodiverse youngsters with an opportunity to relax and share each other’s personal journeys.

Yoga Expert Ms. Rabia Bilal conducted an exercise session to reduce stress and improve resilience of mind and body.

Ms Sarah Waqar an amazing Guitarist from the National Academy of Performing Arts (NAPA), played different songs and guests enjoyed by joining the singing.

25 mothers attended the event. They enjoyed and appreciated the initiative taken by ASDWT.



Special Olympics Pakistan (SOP)

Team ASDWT Karachi organised a training session on Autism and related neurodisabilities for SOP on 7th October. The session was conducted by Ms. Oruba Motiwala. Parents and Coaches attended the training.

Khidmat-un-Nisa Welfare Society Lahore

Center for Special Needs School

ASD Welfare Trust team visited Center for Special Needs School on 21st November'22. Ms. Samina Mir, CEO Khidmat-un-Nisa Welfare Society and Ms. Ghazala Kalim received ASDWT Team.

Center for Special Needs School has 31 students with Cerebral Palsy, Autism, Down syndrome and ADHD from 8 years to 28 years. They are giving vocational trainings in computer skills, cooking, stitching and embroidery. Dr. Hashim, Assistant Professor from Riphah University with his team provide OT sessions daily. They are also linked to a mainstream school from where students come to work with special need students.



Visit to Teachers Training Institute for Special Education, PAF

On November 25th 2022, ASDWT, Lahore visited the Teacher Training Institute for Special Education, PAF. The Center has 33 neurodiverse students from 4 to 18 years old students and 16 trained teachers. They are offering Speech therapy, Behaviour therapy, Occupational therapy and Physiotherapy. Ms. Sadia Hamid, Principal discussed possible collaborations for training with ASDWT. Employment of young adults with special needs was discussed. Ms. Saadia showed therapy section and vocational training section to the team.

Trusted Support Therapy Clinic

On November 25th 2022, Team ASDWT Karachi visited Trusted Support Therapy Clinic, located in Gulshan-e- Iqbal Block 13, Karachi. TSTC is operated by Miss Shumaila Noreen (BCaBA) and Miss Sadaf Naz is the focal person for TSTC Karachi.

Currently, TSTC is offering facilities of Behavior Therapy, Speech, Occupational and Sensory Integration Therapies provided by highly professional staff.





Chief Minister House Sindh

The International Day of Persons with Disabilities was celebrated at Chief Minister House in Karachi on 3rd December. It was attended by ASDWT team in Karachi, Ms. Ayesha Urooj and Mr Moazzaz Virk.

Inclusion Awards on World Disability Day

On 3rd December 2022, Dr. Salma Khalil was selected for Inclusion Awards 2022 by BINA Education Foundation.

The event was organized on the occasion of International Day of Persons with Disabilities as an important full day event of Sindh Culture Family Festival.



Karachi Vocational Training Centre (KVTC)

On 10th December 2022, Dr. Salma Khalil was invited by KVTC on the occasion of Curriculum Launching Ceremony for Differently abled.

KVTC launched Pakistan's first ever curriculum designed for the differently abled. Mr Sadiq Ali Memon, Special Assistant to the Chief Minister of Sindh for the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities inaugurated the Curriculum.





World Disability Day

The Punjab Welfare Trust for the Disabled, under the able leadership of Dr. Amjad Saqib and Dr. Izhar Hashmi organized the World Disability Day on 21st December at the Alhamra Arts Council in Lahore. Prominent NGOs, Special School Teachers, Special Olympics Pakistan and government officials attended a lively and truly inspiring event.



Role of Artificial Intelligence in Psychological Wellbeing

Team ASDWT Karachi attended a one day workshop on 28th December 2022 on Role of AI in Psychological Wellbeing. Dr. Naveed I. Syed talked about Artificial intelligence and brain chip technology. It was very interesting session full of knowledge about advancements in the modern-day world.

Little Steps Therapy Center

On 29th December 2022, Team ASDWT Karachi visited a new therapy setup, Little Steps in Gulshan-e-Jamal. The centre is providing comprehensive developmental assessment and therapies for children with neurodevelopmental disorders.



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