

# Newsletter ASDWT

January to March 2023

Hello everyone,

One of the most pressing issues in Pakistan for parents of children with neurodevelopmental disabilities such as Autism is that once the parents and caregivers are no longer alive, their children or adults will not have any safe home to go to. This is a very real fear because usually these orphans are divested of their property and income by close relatives, and even by guardians and trustees appointed to look after their interests.

In India, parents are actively involved in developing their own residential and respite facilities on a self-help basis. There are more than 80 different models for Autistic adults' homes run by parents' groups, ranging from large residential complexes like Ananda in Delhi and Badlapur in Maharashtra, to smaller housing options in Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Kerala. These Group Homes not only provide assisted living in safe and CCTV-monitored spaces, but also cater to the specific needs of persons with Autism and related conditions by providing structured activities, academics, vocational training, sports, gardening and medical support. These homes are financed by parents and run by governing bodies comprising both parents and professionals.



To address this problem, and mobilise stakeholders in this direction, the ASD Welfare Trust organised its Annual Conference in Karachi on this topic in March 2023 and presented possible models along with their financial implications, organisational challenges and legal options. The Conference was attended by parents, philanthropists, lawyers, shelter home providers and prominent government officials.

To start a Pilot Project, parents would first need to agree on the concept of a residential or respite facility, with amenities and costing. They will also need professional training in trust-building, financial and administrative management, budgeting and accounts. Average costs of utilities, food and other expenses could be worked out for three years and equal contributions by parents placed in a bank account to be run by the Governing Body. This first step could become a game-changer for parents and I hope that they will take it soon!

Cheers!

Rukhsana Shah



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# Special Events

## ASDWT ANNUAL CONFERENCE, 2023 (INDEPENDENT LIVING FACILITY)

ASD Welfare Trust organized its Annual Conference 2023 on "Independent Living Facilities for Adults with Autism" on 4th March at Dr. Zaki Hassan Auditorium, Sohail University, Karachi. The session was opened by Ms. Faiza Ilyas who gave a brief introduction of ASD Welfare Trust, followed by Dr. Salma Khalil's Presentation on the topic. She highlighted the dearth of parent-initiated residential facilities in Pakistan compared to their peers in the region, and put forth a proposal for launching a pilot project for an independent living facility in the country. She urged parents and philanthropic organizations to join hands and move forward in this direction.

The Keynote speaker, Ms. Neena Wagh, mother of an autistic adult and founder of Assisted Living for Autistic Persons (A.L.A.P) India, joined via zoom and spoke about how she developed her own Assisted Living Facility in Delhi with the help of three other parents. She highlighted parents' responsibility in this area and gave practical and down-to-earth suggestions for initiating a Pilot Project. Her talk was followed by Q&A in which many participants gave their inputs, including Mrs. Saba Edhi, wife of Faisal Edhi, who expressed her support for independent living for all adults with disabilities.

Dr. Savio Perriera, President of Dar ul Sukoon, showed a video on the history of Dar ul Sukoon and the facilities available. He talked about the changes being brought in now to allow parents and caregivers to visit the residents on a regular basis, rather than abandoning them as had been done earlier. Ms. Komal Anwar, Advocate High Court, explained laws and regulations to protect the rights of those with Autism and other disabilities across Pakistan, particularly in the domain of inheritance.

The Presentations were followed by Q&A sessions and interspersed with discussion by participants. Finally, it was proposed that initially a Pilot Project for Full Day Care would be set up, leading to a residential facility with a range of services including therapies, academics, sports and leisure activities would be set up by a group of parents.

ASDWT is grateful to Dr. Syed Jaffar Ahmed, Dr. Kamran Kamal and Mr. Ahsan Raza of Sohail University for their facilitation of the Conference.

**Annual Conference 2023**  
Independent Living Facility for Adults with Autism 4<sup>th</sup> March Dr. Zaki Hassan Auditorium, Sohail University, Main haheed-e-Millat Road,



## BEHBUD SPRING FIESTA

On 4th February 2023, ASDWT Karachi participated in BEHBUD Spring fiesta at Beach View Park, Karachi. The stall was setup to create Awareness about Autism and related neurodevelopmental conditions. Information Material and Resources along with Educational toys from "UNAIIS Toys" were displayed. Many dignitaries including CEO, NAPA Mr. Junaid Zubairi, ex-senator Abdul Haseeb khan, Ms. Eva Baerner SLP from Austria, parents and general public visited the Stall.



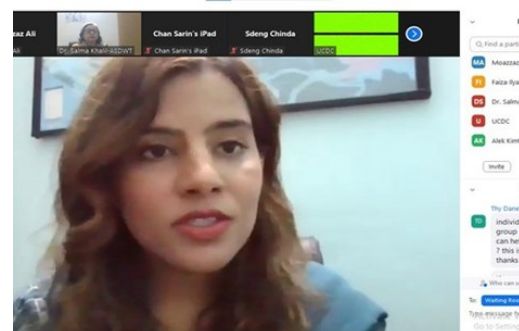


## WORKSHOPS FOR CAMBODIA (on Zoom)

From February 7<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> March, ASDWT conducted 11 Training Workshops for “Hands of Hope Community”, a Cambodian organization working with children with ASD and Intellectual Disability. The Trainings were arranged by Dr. Salma Khalil who had earlier met Mr. Sarin Chan, Founder and Executive Director of the organisation at the 6th Congress of ASEAN Autism Network in Kuala Lumpur.

The Trainings were conducted in English by ASDWT teams in Karachi and Lahore along with two Guest Speakers, diligently translated by Dr. Hong Chea into Cambodian. The Workshop were on the following topics:

- Introduction of ASD & ADHD by Ms. Faiza Ilyas
- Specific Learning Disabilities by Mr. Moazzaz Ali
- Childhood Assessment by Ms. Faiza Ilyas
- Sensory processing Disorder by Dr. Husna Albab
- Speech & Language Therapy by Ms. Asra Adil
- ABA application and Techniques by Ms. Ayesha Arooj
- Classroom Management Strategies by Ms. Farah Amanat
- Sensory Integration Therapy by Ms. Neelum Zehra



## Webinars and Workshops

### Management Through Sensory Integration.

On 10th January 2023, ASDWT organized an online webinar on Behavior Management Through Sensory Integration. The session was conducted by Dr. Husna Albab, Physiotherapist at the ASDWT Lahore Office. She explained that many behaviour problems in persons with Autism were due to poor sensory integration and processing issues. She gave a detailed presentation on Sensory Integration Therapy and techniques to help children improve their behaviours.



### Institute of Business Administration (IBA)

On 21st and 22nd January 2023, ASDWT in collaboration with Karachi Down Syndrome Program and Institute of Business Administration (IBA) conducted a two-Day workshop on “Learning Profile of Individuals with ASD & ADHD” arranged by KDSP in collaboration with IBA, Karachi as part of their “Annual Inclusive Education Training”. Ms. Faiza Ilyas and Ms. Ayesha Urooj conducted the training and were appreciated by the participants.

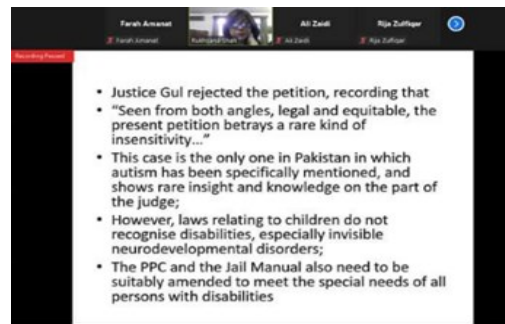
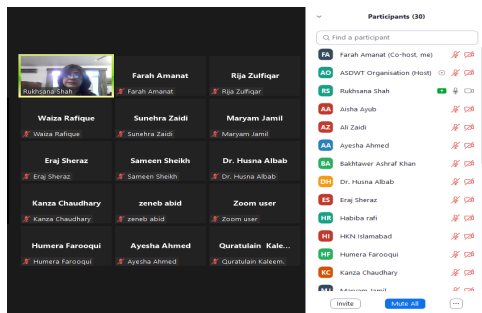
## Workshop At Headway Institute.

On 24th January 2023, a workshop for parents and teachers was conducted by ASDWT Lahore at Headway Institute for Learning. Presenter Ms. Munazza Saeed talked about different neurodevelopmental disorders and management techniques appropriate for children with special needs. She also explained how different parenting styles affect outcomes, while, Dr. Husna Albab, Physiotherapist stressed that many behavior problems in persons with Autism were due to poor sensory integration and processing issues.



## Zoom Session for Lawyers on Autism, ADHD, Conduct Disorder and Juvenile Delinquency

On 11th February 2023, ASD Welfare Trust Lahore organized a Zoom session for Lawyers on "Autism, ADHD, Conduct Disorder, and Juvenile Delinquency". Ms. Rukhsana Shah, CEO of the Trust, explained different Neurodevelopmental Disorders and said that the judicial system needs to recognize the individuals with these conditions so that they can get due consideration and a fair trial. She also talked about Disability Laws in Punjab and Sindh, and pointed out that at present, there were no provisions in the Juvenile Delinquency Act, PPC, Prison Manual and others for Neurodiverse and Disabled Persons. ASDWT is grateful to Ms. Nida Usman Chaudhary, Founder of Lahore Education & Research Network and Women in Law Initiative Pakistan, for providing this platform.



## Motor Dysfunction in Neurodevelopment Disorders

ASDWT Lahore organized a training workshop on "Management of Sensory Issues and Motor Dysfunction in Neurodevelopment Disorders" on 23rd Feb 2023 at ASDWT premises. Dr. Husna Albab discussed sensory behaviors and motor problems faced by children with neurodevelopmental disorders. During her presentation, she talked about sensory protocols, the importance of sensory circuiting, movement breaks, and Sensory Integration Therapy.



## Shadab Training Institute for Intellectual Disabilities

ASDWT Lahore conducted a Training Workshop for teachers and parents on "Conduct Disorder" on 9th March 2023 at Govt. Shadab Training Institute for Intellectual Disabilities, Lahore. ASDWT Psychologist Ms. Sunehra Zaidi explained signs and symptoms of Conduct Disorder along with a detailed management plan for managements and alleviation. Ms. Saima Saeed, Secretary Special Education, Punjab and Ms. Seema Niazi, Principle of the School facilitated the Workshop.



## Seminars

### Roshan Pakistan School

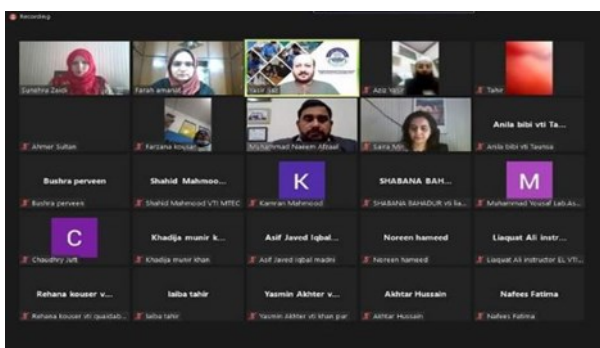
A seminar was conducted by ASDWT, Lahore at Roshan Pakistan School on 25th Feb 2023. Ms. Farah Amanat, Senior Clinical Psychologist talked about early signs and symptoms of Autism, its assessment, and management. Ms. Sunehra Zaidi, Psychologist, explained Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in detail and Dr. Husna Albab, Physiotherapist & Sensory Integration Therapist, talked about common sensory and behavioral issues that occur in Neurodevelopmental Disorders. Over 70 parents and teachers attended the seminar. ASDWT is grateful to Ms. Arifa Aziz and Mr. Yousaf Ali, Ex-Chairman of People Welfare Center, Lahore for inviting the ASDWT Team.



### Zoom Sessions for PVTC

ASDWT, Lahore organized two days' Zoom Awareness Sessions in collaboration with Punjab Vocational Training Council (PVTC) on 27th and 28th February; 2023. Training sessions were attended by 311 School principals of PVTC centers from all over Punjab.

The Awareness Sessions covered Autism Spectrum Disorder, ADHD, Learning Disabilities and Sensory Processing Disorders. A session was also conducted by Mr. Ahmer Sultan, IT Executive of ASDWT on Learning Apps that are available on the Net and Mobiles for children with Learning Difficulties. These training sessions were interactive and followed by Q&A session.



### Women's Day Seminar at TEVTA

ASDWT, Lahore organized an awareness session for Professionals at Technical Educational and Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA) on 8th March, 2023. Ms. Farah Amanat, Senior Clinical Psychologist talked about signs and symptoms of ASD, its assessment and management opportunities available in Pakistan. The presentation ended with Q/A session.



## Visits and Meetings

### World Memon Organisation

ASDWT Karachi was invited on Tuesday, 10th Jan 2023, for a meeting with Dr. Iqbal, member World Memon Organization (WMO) from Sharjah, UAE to discuss "advancement in speech and language pathology". Mr. Moazzaz Ali, Clinical Psychologist at ASDWT, Karachi participated in this useful conversation.



## Research

### Ms. Farah Amanat, Senior Clinical Psychologist, Lahore

Ms. Farah Amanat's Research Paper on "Autistic Savants: An Astonishing Island of Ability and Brilliance" was published in a peer reviewed journal in The Clinical Psychologist, Issue No. 6, 4-5, ISSN2518-4482.

### DISABILITY WELFARE ASSOCIATION

On January 18th, 2023, Team ASDWT Karachi visited Disability Welfare Association, Jacob Lines.. DWA is run by Mr. Tariq Samuel while Miss Samina is the focal person. DWA offers services comprising academics, Computer based skills including graphic designing, video editing, social media, management for individuals with physical disabilities. They are also providing living facility followed by ADL's and remedial training and have recently introduced Vocational Training on their premises.



### COSARAF CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

On January 20th, 2023, Team ASDWT Karachi visited “The COSARAF Charitable Foundation” a UK based organization working to help Persons with disabilities in the UK, UAE and KSA. They had invited many organisations including ASDW to introduce their set up. CEO of COSARAF, Mr. Haroon shared the information, their working and vision for the future. He showed keen interest to collaborate not only with ASDWT but also with ACELP, DEAF REACH, and Dr. Ayesha Mian, a brilliant child psychologist.



### KIRAN FOUNDATION

On 21st Jan, 2023 ASDWT attended the Annual Inter school Gymnastics Championship arranged by Kiran Foundation in Lyari. Many schools like Habib Public and KGS participated. The enthusiasm of students of Lyari was remarkable, from gymnastics to singing and Band performances were all showing hard work done by Kiran Foundation.



### Meeting at TEVTA

ASDWT team held a meeting with Mr. Akhtar Abbas Bharwana, Senior Director General (DG) and Mr. Mohammad Waqar, Director Curriculum on 30th January 2023. Ms. Rukhsana Shah, CEO ASDWT discussed the need of vocational training and employment of people with Autism & I/DD and to sensitize the trainers and peers. Mr. Akhtar Abbas Bharwana appreciated the ASDWT work and showed keen interest in working together for awareness.





## Visit to Punjab Vocational Training Council (PVTB)

ASDWT Lahore held a meeting with Maj. Shahnawaz Badar, Chairman PVTB and Maj. Ghazanfar Abbas, Senior Manager Curriculum on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2023. The purpose of meeting was to discuss about the need of vocational training and employment of people with Autism & IDD. The modified curriculum came under review and the Team further discussed other courses which may be simplified for adults with Autism & IDD.

## Visit to Voice Society

On 1<sup>st</sup> February 2023, ASDWT Karachi visited the Voice Society organisation. Mr. Humayun Zaheer, President, Mr. Farooq Raza, Co-Founder & Ms. Azra Nazir, PR officer welcomed ASDWT team. Voice Society is an independent living center for physically disabled children. About 20 children from poor backgrounds are living there starting from about 4 years to 18 years. They are being provided vocational training with collaboration of Nasheman Center in computer skills, cooking etc. The residents also go to PSRD for Occupational Therapy and counselling.



## Visit to Bunyad Foundation.

ASDWT team, Lahore visited Bunyad Foundation on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2023 and met with Ms. Shaheen Atiq-ur-Rehman, Chairperson and discussed the need of awareness about Autism, ADHD, I/DD among their teachers and also training in identifying and dealing with such kids when come across. Bunyad has a network of schools and are also working in Public-private partnership. They also have community centers for women in Sialkot, Multan, Hafizabad and a school and a vocational training center for girls in Lahore. It was decided that ASDWT will conduct training sessions for the teachers and parents of their schools.



## KARACHI VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTER (KVTC)

On 30<sup>th</sup> March, ASDWT Karachi Visited Karachi Vocational Training Center (KVTC). Team of KVTC introduced and presented their specialized Curriculum for special needs. Plans to create awareness about autism and related disabilities were discussed. Deliberations were also done for further collaboration for implementation of curriculum devised by KVTC.

## UNIVERSITY OF EXETER, UK

On 5<sup>th</sup> February, ASDWT Karachi had online discussion with the University of Exeter UK. Ms. Faiza Ilyas, Senior Clinical Psychologist Karachi Office, talked about sign, symptoms, and diagnosis of Autism. Also on 11<sup>th</sup> February Ms. Farah Amanat Senior Clinical Psychologist from Lahore Office talked about Specific Learning Disorders. The idea was to explore possibilities to jointly conduct behavior research in future.



## SARDAR YASIN MALIK DEVELOPMENT CENTER UNIVERSITY OF KARACHI



On 8th March, Dr. Salma Khalil, COO ASDWT Karachi and Mr. Moazzaz Ali, Clinical Psychologist attended a two-day workshop organized by Dr. Atif Saeed Anjum at Sardar Yasin Malik Development Center University of Karachi.

The topic of this course was Opportunities for Disabled Persons Under PWD Act-XL VII, 2018. Senior lawyers and professionals talked about the rights and legislation and its implementation in Pakistan.

### Mother's Retreat

The ASDWT Lahore team hosted a refreshing event for mothers with neurodiversity children on January 31, 2023. Yoga expert, Ms. Gul-e-Rana Mubashar gave a demonstration on basic Yoga exercises and gave tips to relieve daily stress. Musicians Nazar Abbas and Mohsin Darbhuka (Sultans Band) played various songs and the guests enjoyed the music. This was followed by a cake cutting ceremony and refreshments.



### Yoga Session with Mothers



On February 14, 2023 ASDWT Lahore organized a free yoga session for mothers of children with neurodiversity to relieve day-to-day stress. Yoga Instructor, Ms. Gul-e-Rana Mubashar, CEO of Ranai Wellness Club, Lahore demonstrated different yoga steps, and breathing exercises for the participants to follow. It was a fun activity which everyone enjoyed. Team ASDWT is very grateful to Ms. Gul-e-Rana for volunteering her valuable time and expertise for this activity.

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