

Annual Report 2023-24



TO OUR FRIENDS & SUPPORTERS



As we reflect on the past year I am filled with gratitude for our wonderful stakeholders – our autistic children and adults and their families, and the team at Action For Autism, who have all contributed towards advancing the rights, inclusion, and well-being of autistic individuals and their families.

While AFA continues to serve children with autism we are expanding our work with adults, a group whose needs are often neglected in the predominant discourse of early intervention. Alongside continuing AFA's lifespan programs and reaching out to autistic people and families within India and beyond, we have created new partnerships with schools, universities, businesses that are potential employers, healthcare providers, and government bodies, while amplifying autistic voices. We have ensured that our services are not only comprehensive but also responsive to the diverse needs of the autism community.

One of our achievements has been the initiatives around autistic self-advocacy, including by non-speaking autistics. We have introduced resources aimed at enhancing quality of life, focusing on individualized care, communication supports, and advocacy for inclusive policy reforms. Our work with adults in assisted living is poised to move to the next phase of consolidation and expansion. We continue to place a

strong emphasis on education and hosting workshops and training programs that promote greater understanding and acceptance of neurodiversity.

Our community services around our assisted living has taken firm root ensuring that while the surrounding villages benefit, so do our adults who have been welcomed into the community.

Of course, all of this is possible with not just the dedication of our incredible staff, but also our amazing volunteers, granters and donors. Your belief in our mission fuels our work and empowers us to continue advocating for a more inclusive and equitable society.

We moved into the next year with the firm belief that we will continue breaking down barriers, amplifying autistic voices, and creating a future where autistic individuals have the opportunity to thrive.

Thank you for your continued support.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Merry Barua". The script is cursive and elegant.

Merry Barua

Founder Director

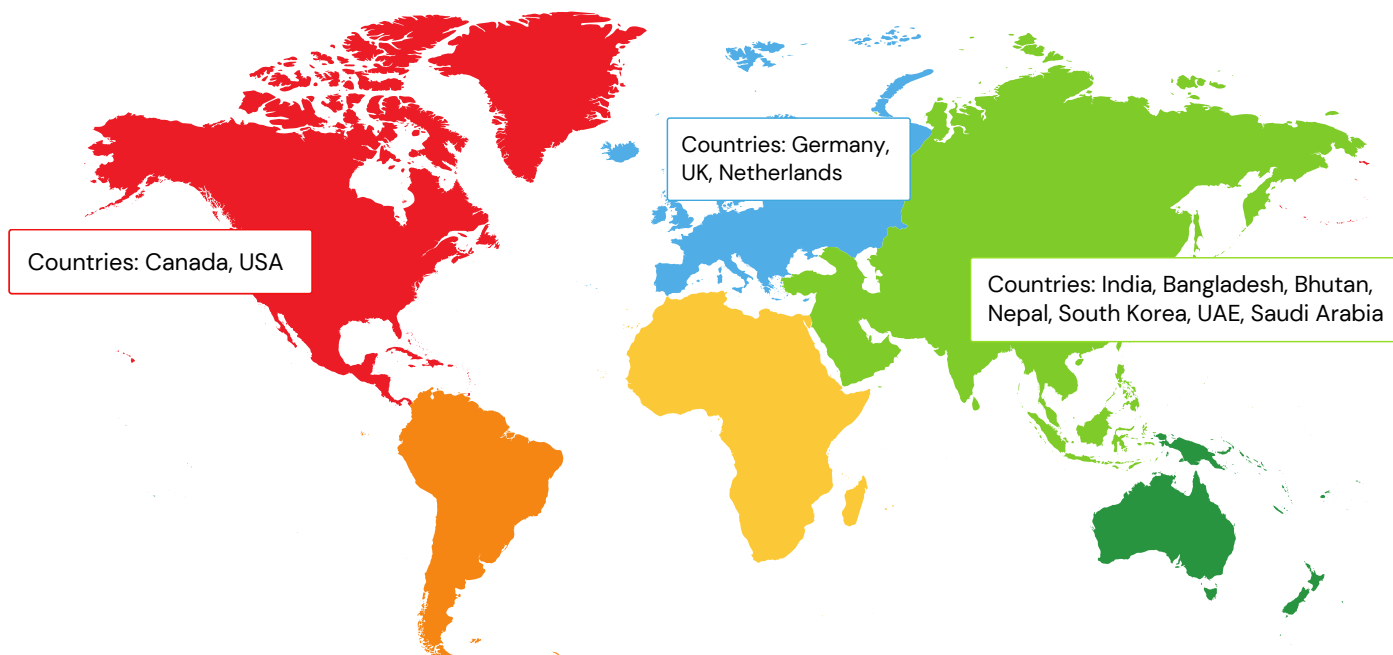
Our Mission

To facilitate a barrier free environment; to enable the empowerment of persons with autism and their families; and to act as a catalyst for change that will enable persons with autism to live as fully participating members of the community.

Our Vision

A society that views the interdependence of people of every ability as valuable and enriching, and seeks to provide equal opportunities for all.





Highlights

Celebrated **International Disability Awareness Week** (Dec 3-10, 2023) in collaboration with Department of Social Welfare, GNCTD.

Sujata Banerjee received the '**Excellent Special Educator**' **SNEHBility National Award**

Mohammad Sahil **celebrated 5 years of employment** at Lemontree Hotels

Organised a webinar series **Autism: An Insider View** the first of its kind in India, led by self-advocate Rakshita Shekhar and featuring neurodivergent speakers

Organised a **panel discussion with non-speaking autistic individuals** moderated by self-advocate, Aditi Gangrade

A **screening of the Spanish award-winning film Campeones**, in collaboration with Embassy of Spain and India International Centre. Campeones is being remade in India under Aamir Khan Productions

Memorandum of Association signed with **KIIT Group of Institutions** for training their teaching staff

Memorandum of Association signed with **Ashoka University** for providing clinical services to their neurodivergent students

5780

Clinical Sessions
conducted

3934

Professionals,
parents, students
trained



Clinical Services

Assessments, Interventions & Counselling

Our Clinical Services are dedicated to offering thorough assessments for early and accurate diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in children and adults. We evaluate functional skills to deliver comprehensive sensory assessments, and focus on teaching essential social, communication, cognitive, and adaptive living skills. Our goal is to foster independent functioning, enabling individuals to lead self-sufficient daily lives within a structured learning environment.



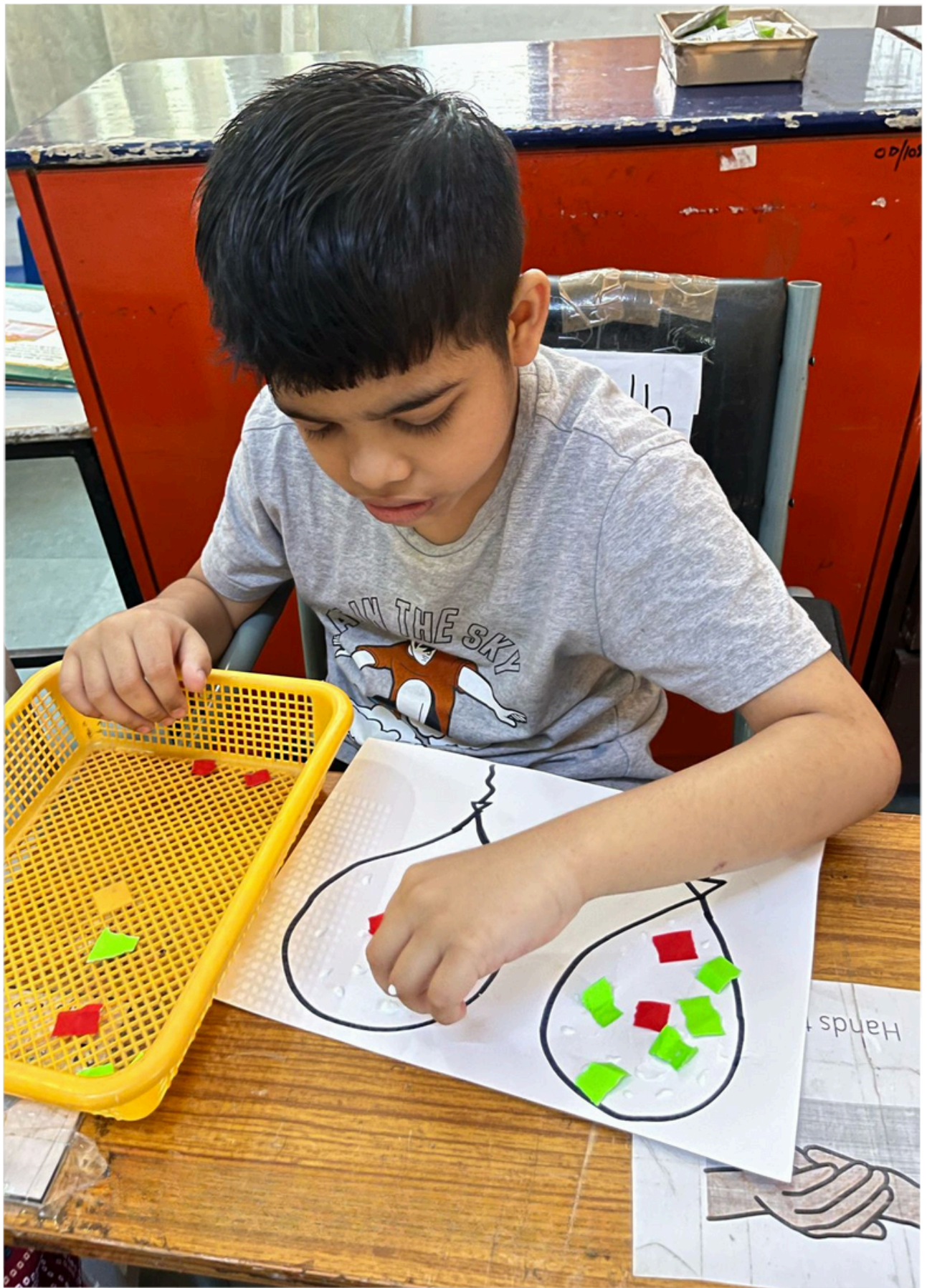
Number of

- ***Diagnosis Assessment - 69***
- ***Special Education Counseling - 137***
- ***Occupational Therapy Counseling - 22***
- ***Special Education Intervention - 3327***
- ***Occupational Intervention - 2101***
- ***Extended Programme - 8***
- ***Functional Skills Assessment - 44***
- ***Occupational Therapy Assessment - 72***

Manas Gangwar, an 8-year-old from Bihar, has been taking online interventions with Action for Autism since 2021. His parents first noticed he was different when he was 4. In the beginning, Manas moved around a lot, used limited words, relied mostly on gestures to communicate, preferred to be alone, and had difficulty following instructions and imitating others.

The family was committed to working with him, and at AFA, we provided them a goal plan, guiding them through each session. His mother implemented the strategies during and after sessions. The work plan was reviewed and updated every 6 months, leading to significant progress.

Manas has made great strides. He can now engage in activities for 45 minutes, follow instructions, and perform well. His writing skills have improved, and he helps his mother in the kitchen. He is also beginning to express his needs through words.



Open Door School

Inclusive outings were scheduled for the students including Goodie Bag Picnic (at Children's Park), Art Workshop at Kiran Nadar Museum of Art among others

Weekly shopping trips were scheduled **in collaboration with Smart Bazaar** Retail in an autism friendly environment

Sanskriti Hooda and Akriti Soorma joined the Open Door team as educators

Dravid graduated from Open Door School

Parent Volunteers, Professionals (from organisations like Saksham) and Interns from educational institutes like Delhi University, Jamia Millia Islamia, Amity University, Punjab University to name a few spent time at Open Door learning how to work with autistic children.

Regular **music and sports classes** are being conducted by experts to ensure holistic development of the students



“When I first met Uttam, he had trouble walking up the stairs and took a long time to get to his classroom. He also found it hard when things in his routine changed.

As we worked together, I learned that Uttam is a strong visual learner and thrives with a consistent routine. Over time, I've seen him make amazing progress. At first, we had to remind him to follow his schedule, but now he can do it all by himself. He can also eat his yummy khichhdi on his own and is getting better at handling changes.”



Parent Child Training Programme

Parent Child Training Programme

45

FAMILIES

The primary goal of the PCTP is to **help the parent understand their child, his autism and the ‘whys’ of his autism**, thus empowering the parent to enable the child to learn more effectively.

It also gives the parent the wherewithal to share these learnings with other family members, as well as people who interact frequently with the child.



Few days ago I attended the PTM at my son's school. While in discussion with the staff.. his shadow mentioned that Kanha doesn't eat any fruits. So the chief of staff said that - aren't you using Reinforcer to introduce fruits, aren't you using first/then technique.. Don't you know how to use a reinforcer - what have you learned in PCTP then???

I told her - what I learnt from PCTP is that Fruits are not that important "Respecting" my child's "Choice" is much more important..!!



"This program is actually a turning point of our lives. It gave me insights into the autism world and in my view, it is the only program that respects the culture of autism.

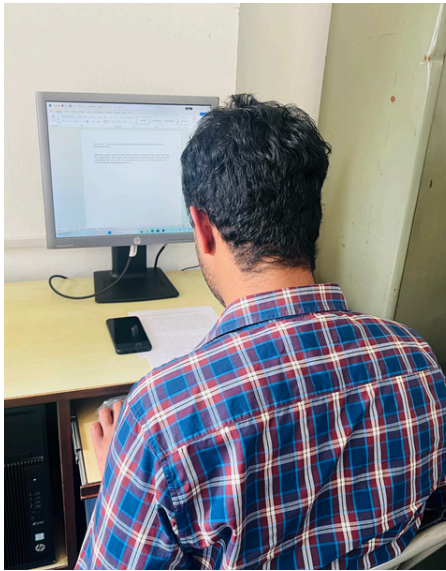
This program has taught me that my son is my pride and not a burden. I started enjoying bonding with my son and being around with him and vice-versa.

I have learnt to understand him; what he actually needs, what is he going through, where I need to give him support and what kind of support he needs.

I got answers for every question that was in my mind before I joined the PCTP."



Work & Employment



Our work and employment services are in line with our belief that if right amount of support is provided, irrespective of the nature of the employment, most adults with autism would be successful participating members in their work place.

Work and employment services at AFA can be categorized in following four categories:

Vocational Training

This programme aims to develop appropriate vocational skills so that young adults with autism can utilize their previous training for work, enhancing their independence, self-reliance, and confidence.

On the Job Training

We simulate work settings to provide training in work behaviours. The programme includes aspects faced in the open work environments such as coping with unpredictability and developing interpersonal skills with colleagues.

Supported Employment

We help neurodiverse individuals to prepare for workplace and assist workplaces get ready to welcome neurodiverse employees

Employment Readiness Programme

We work towards developing interpersonal and social communicative skills of neurodiverse individuals to help them succeed at workplace and maintain meaningful employment.

Technical Training

We provide two technical training programmes for autistic adults.

- Under retail training (in partnership with Sol's Arc and Amazon), individuals are taught skills and concepts needed to succeed in the retail sector like inventory management and packaging.
- Under software testing training, in collaboration with Nagarro, NASSCOM and Atypical Advantage, individuals are trained to become testers.

At a glance,

Individuals placed in job internships	10
Interns placed at our vocational centres	34
Numbers trained in software testing	10
Numbers trained in Employment Readiness Program	14
Numbers trained in Retail Training	4
Numbers in supported employment	6
Number of sensitization trainings	2
Numbers of job offers	3

Employers associated with AFA

Nestle, Amazon, Cognizant, Natwest, CAI, McCann, Nagarro, Sunlife Insurance, WTW, SAP, Lemontree Hotels, ANZ Bank, Thomson Reuters

"Enrolling my specially-abled brother in AFA's retail training program was a game-changer. Not only did they instill in him discipline, systematic approach, and professionalism, but the practical training also gave him a deep understanding of work dynamics. The internship at Amazon's warehouse facility, fueled his zeal for independence and professional growth. The time-bound training, coupled with modern attendance systems, equipped him with invaluable insights into the corporate world's nuances. Now, as we eagerly anticipate his future employment, I can confidently say that this journey has been nothing short of a pleasant experience. Thank you, AFA and its Retail training section, for making this possible!"



Ananda: Assisted Living

Ananda is a **home to adults with developmental disabilities – Autism and Intellectual Disabilities**, and to neurotypical 'Assists' where both groups lead fulfilling everyday lives.

Location: Gairatpur Bas, Gurgaon, Haryana

Residents at Ananda lead structured and busy lives. On weekdays residents go to the vocational centre located in the complex. Here they are busy at activities matched to their skills, which includes weaving, crafting, stitching, computer and office skills, and working on the extensive grounds - planting, weeding, raking. There is a gym and physical activities. Residents also help out with chores at home, based on their ability and interests. Most importantly they learn happy and independent functioning.

Many adults stay at Ananda for shorter customized duration as respite. Our vocational centre at Ananda is also a workplace for individuals who visit the centre only during work hours.





AFA conducted a **sensitization workshop for a 100 member team from Indigo Airlines** at Ananda

The **permaculture project at Ananda** has been steadily yielding vegetables and fruits including onions, brinjals, papayas, lemons, garlic and ginger. Our healthy yields were welcomed in the kitchens of both Jasola Vihar and Gurgaon

Our neurodivergent residents of Ananda took a well-earned **vacation to Mukteshwar, Uttarakhand**

Ananda residents **visited Museo Camera Centre for the Photographic Arts at Gurgaon, Haryana** for an exclusive art event organised by Initiative Nichealt

No. of Residents: 17

No. of interns at Vocational Centre: 15



Community Services @Ananda



Our **computer classes** now have **47 students** enrolled in them with plans for gaining more underway

In collaboration with Max Hospital Gurgaon, we conducted our **free medical camp** with experts in ENT, Orthopedics, Dentistry, General medicine and Gynecology

We also conducted a **female health awareness talk for the village women** with our expert gynecologist

Total patients at community clinic	1994
Patients for general physician	1446
Patients for gynecologist	306
Patients for dentist	126
Patients for optometrist	96



Trainings

AFA provides practical training opportunities year-round to ensure more professionals are equipped to deliver effective autism-specific support. The programs vary in length, from just a few hours to over two years, and are open to everyone—whether you're a parent, professional, or student. Each program is designed with a deep understanding of the autism spectrum and its diverse expressions throughout life.

Total number of participants in webinars & trainings conducted by AFA **3770**

No. of students graduated from B.Ed program **16**

No. of students graduated from D.Ed program **30**

No. of admissions in B.Ed Program **16**

No. of admissions in D.Ed program **35**

Trainings included participants from:

India, Nepal, Bangladesh, USA, UK, Canada, UAE, Malaysia

Memorandum of Understanding Signed:

Ashoka University, KIIT Group of Institutions, Orkids Foundation, Mata Bhagwanti Chadha Niketan Special School, CAI

“My heart is brimming with gratitude and appreciation for the incredible journey I have experienced at AFA. Completing my B.Ed. in Special Education has been a transformative experience, and I am profoundly thankful for the support, guidance, and opportunities provided by this esteemed institution. The completion of this program also marks the beginning of a new chapter in our lives. I am excited to take the knowledge and skills acquired at Action For Autism into the world, aiming to make a positive impact in the field of special education. I feel well-equipped to face the challenges and embrace the opportunities that lie ahead, thanks to the comprehensive and robust education I have received here.”

Trainings/ Workshops/ Lectures/ Conferences

Month & Year	Topic	Resource Person	Organisation
April, 2023	Inclusive Communities : A Conversation with a Caregiver and Change-Maker	Merry Barua	HSBC
April, 2023	In My Words: Autistic Voices	Abigail, BRC, Rakshita, Shardool	AFA
April, 2023	Understanding Autism, Breaking Down Myths and Stereotypes	Rakshita Shekhar	HSBC
April, 2023	Adolescent Management for persons with Autism	Indrani Basu	Bhabna
April, 2023	Neurodiversity at Work	Shubhoneet Chatterjee	Natwest
April, 2023	Differential Thinking, Enhanced Learning & participation of autistic and neurodiverse students in the mainstream classroom	Indrani Basu	Seeking Mind
May, 2023	Structure & Visuals to support Autistic & other learners	Indrani Basu	AFA
May, 2023	Drop in clinics with HSBC team	Nishu Kshetry, Dr Nidhi Singhal, Indrani Basu, Sujata Banerjee, Divya Shikha Verma	HSBC
June, 2023	CISF personnel autism awareness training	Dr Nidhi Singhal	CISF Bangalore
June, 2023	Strategies to enhance participation and learning of autistic and neurodiverse students in the mainstream classroom	Indrani Basu	The Seeking Mind
July, 2023	Understanding Autism	Dr Nidhi Singhal	AFA
July, 2023	Positive Foundations of Learning	Merry Barua	AFA
July, 2023	Autism & Sensory Processing	Rakhshanda Khan	AFA
July, 2023	Structure teaching & Visual Supports	Indrani Basu	AFA
July, 2023	Enhancing Motivation & Communication	Indrani Basu	AFA
July, 2023	Positive Behaviour Support	Indrani Basu	AFA

Trainings/ Workshops/ Lectures/ Conferences

Month & Year	Topic	Resource Person	Organisation
July-Sept 2023	PCTP professional training	Indrani Basu	Anmol special education centre, Nepal
July, 2023	Creating Neurodiverse work environment	Preeti Siwach & Aiman Syed	Vehant Technologies
September, 2023	Strategies to enhance participation and learning of autistic and neurodiverse students in the mainstream classroom	Indrani Basu	Army Public School, Delhi Cantt
October, 2023	Think beyond the Label: Understanding Autism	Amrita Baruah	AFA
October, 2023	Positive Approaches to Autism	Merry Barua	AFA
October, 2023	The Sensory World of Autism	Rakhshanda Khan	AFA
October, 2023	Strategies for success: Structured Teaching & Visual Supports	Indrani Basu	AFA
October, 2023	Motivation & Communication Strategies	Nishu Kshetry	AFA
October, 2023	ABCs of Behaviour Management	Indrani Basu	AFA
October, 2023	Understanding Adolescent with ASD	Preeti Siwach & Shubhoneet Chatterjee	Heritage Xperiential School
Nov-Dec 2023	Steps to teaching	Indrani Basu	AFA
November, 2023	Creative ideas for Play & Leisure for autistic individuals	Anand Kumtha	AFA
December, 2023	United in action to rescue and achieve the SDGs for, with and by persons with disabilities	Indrani Basu	Billabong High International School
December, 2023	Role of social story: Developing social story for diverse situations	Nishu Kshetry	Army Welfare Education Society
December, 2023	Differentiated instructions for curricular and co curricular activities	Divya Shikha Verma	Army Welfare Education Society
December, 2023	Developing Play & Leisure for neurodiverse individuals	Sujata Banerjee	AFA

Trainings/ Workshops/ Lectures/ Conferences

Month & Year	Topic	Resource Person	Organisation
December, 2023	IEP and Structure Teaching	S Kalpana	UDAI Working Together Works!
December, 2023	Assessment of Children with autism for Vocational Skills & Transition planning for Vocational Training of Children with Autism	Preeti Siwach	UDAI Working Together Works!
January, 2024	Hands on cross disability training	AFA Team	SCERT
January, 2024	Autism: an Insider view	Rakshita Shekhar and others	AFA
January, 2024	Interactive session with Merry Barua	Merry Barua	ACE
January, 2024	Interaction with parents	Indrani Basu	Calcutta International School
February, 2024	Decoding Autism	Amrita Baruah	AFA
February, 2024	Positive Foundations to Learning	Indrani Basu	AFA
February, 2024	Sensory Needs & Strategies	Rakhshanda Khan	AFA
February, 2024	ASD, ADHD, Adult ADHD or both?	Dr Nidhi Singhal	adultadhdindia
February, 2024	Strategies to Teach: Visual & Structure	Indrani Basu	AFA
February, 2024	Nurturing Communication Skills	Nishu Kshetry	AFA
February, 2024	Positive Behaviour Support	Indrani Basu	AFA
February, 2024	KIIT Team Training at AFA	AFA Team	KIIT
Feb-Mar 2024	Hands on cross disability training	AFA Team	SCERT
March, 2024	Expert Talk Panel	Merry Barua	ACE
March, 2024	Professional customised training	AFA Team	Keystone Education Society, Nagaland
March, 2024	Transition from home to assisted living (CRE National Conference)	Preeti Siwach	Rainbow Children Hospital, Hyderabad
March, 2024	ADHD- lens of gender and anticapitalism	Dr Sneha Rooh	AFA
March, 2024	Teaching Strategies: Visual & Structure	Indrani Basu	Asha School



Advocacy & Awareness

Advocacy work over the year 2023-2024

Merry Barua attended an event on 'Promoting Investment, Innovation, and Industry for Assistive Technology in G20 countries and beyond' **organised by NITI Aayog and United Nations**

Merry Barua attended the Biennial Meeting of Autism Speaks **Advocacy Leadership Network (ALN)** focussed on growing the global autism advocacy community and also contributed towards development of an advocacy training package to help train new autism advocates in our communities

Merry Barua and Dr Nidhi Singhal attended the **All India SRV Leadership Group Rally**. Dr Singhal was also a facilitator

Merry Barua attended a **roundtable conference organised by World Bank and Nipman Foundation** to understand the concerns that people with disabilities face in using public modes of transportation and the compromises made in choices due to the lack of safe and inclusive adequate transport options

Dr Nidhi Singhal is **part of the Community Advisory Board** for NAMASTE, an initiative by Sangath





Dr Nidhi Singhal was a panelist in a webinar part of a series 'Igniting Abilities: Making PwDs Corporate Ready' by Saarathee.

Merry Barua was invited as a Guest of Honour to the Award Ceremony celebrating the achievements of students at Pathways School, Noida.

Dr Nidhi Singhal was the guest at the Talk to the Expert Series by Spectrum – The Awareness Project where she spoke on myths about autism

Dr Nidhi Singhal participated in a **conclave titled 'The Future of Disability Inclusion in Higher Education hosted by the Office of Learning Support at Ashoka University.**

Dr Nidhi Singhal was featured in an article titled, 'ADHD, autism | Diagnosed neurodivergent as an adult. Now what?' by Menaka Raman for The Hindu

Dr Nidhi Singhal was the **group facilitator at the Advocacy Retreat hosted by Keystone** Institute India in Bengaluru.

Dr Nidhi Singhal participated in an online panel of webinar series 'Igniting Abilities: Making PwDs Corporate Ready' with the objective to understand and help reduce the barriers in inclusion as far as PwDs and corporate opportunities go.

Merry Barua was the **speaker at a policy consultation by National Human Rights Commission and Disability, Equity, Justice Working Group (Civil 20 India)**

Preeti Siwach was a guest on the 'Expert Speaks Series' under 'The Special Needs Children Podcast with Chitra Iyer' of MFA

Merry Barua **participated in developing guidelines focusing on physical environment, accessibility of content and training of teachers** as suggested in the Inter-Ministerial Committee meeting held under the Chairpersonship of Secretary, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment

Shubhangi Vaidya attended a **panel discussion** at the commemorative event of International Day of Persons with Disabilities **at UNESCO New Delhi Regional Office**

Merry Barua was a **panelist at the Symposium on Brain, Behaviour & Society organised by the National Brain Research Centre, Manesar**

Merry Barua was a guest on the podcast Thriving on the Spectrum CanBridge Academy where she discussed long-term living arrangements for autistic adults, diving deep into AFA's assisted living programme - Ananda

Dr Nidhi Singhal is a **member of the Technical Committee responsible for developing a national strategy on Autism**, for information and necessary action under Mental Health Division, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare

AFA suggested **amendments and additions to the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examination(CISCE)** guidelines for supporting students with autism spectrum condition taking board exams

Merry Barua sent expert comments on the **National Disability Policy** for the response drafted by the National Platform for the Rights of the Disabled

Dr Nidhi Singhal was part of the **expert committee responsible for forming the B.Ed and D.Ed curriculum** under Rehabilitation Council of India

With emphasis on sensitizing employers towards neurodivergent talent, Merry Barua participated in discussions with employers like **Accenture, Deloitte, HSBC Technology India and Meyer India.**

Merry Barua was part of the **Expert Committee for identification of posts suitable for PwBDs in Subordinate Statistical Services for Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation** in consultation with Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment

AFA members attended a conclave, titled The Future of Disability Inclusion in Higher Education by **Ashoka University**

Merry Barua attended the National Webinar on Disabled People in Politics organised by NCPEDP in collaboration with the National Disability Network (NDN).

Merry Barua attended a **meeting on Draft National Policy for Persons with Disabilities organised by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities**

Dr Nidhi Singhal was the expert speaker on Special Needs Children Podcast by Chitra Iyer, CEO, MFA Capital



Merry Barua was interviewed by NDTV for a story on Autism and understanding the spectrum for Autism

Merry Barua participated in **panel discussion entitled: 'Addressing Neurodiversity in the Classroom'** as a part of NBRC Manesar's Foundation Day celebrations.

AFA hosted visitors prestigious posts and organisations including **KompAss B.V** from the Netherlands, His Excellency, **Ambassador Jose Maria Ridaio, Embassy of Spain** and Megan McNeice, the Neurodiversity Employment Advisor at **Autism New Zealand**

Merry Barua attended the **'Launch of the Joint WHO/OHCHR guidance and practice on mental health, human rights and legislation'**

Merry Barua attended the Stanford Neurodiversity Summit which focussed on capacity building

Merry Barua attended the meeting by Autism Leadership Network (ALN) focusing on the development of an advocacy training package to help train new autism advocates in our communities

Merry Barua **served on the Selection Committee for the post of Programme Director in National Trust**

Preeti Siwach featured in an **article titled 'Autism at Work: Hiring is juts the first step'** by **Ardra Shankar in The Times of India**

Merry Barua was interviewed by THIP Media, the media arm of The Healthy Indian Project

Merry Barua participated in an interview with NGO Trinayani exploring the challenges and triumphs of navigating life with autism.

Merry Barua participated as an **expert on Doordarshan's special telecast on autism spectrum disorder**



Merry Barua was a **speaker at TedxIMT Hyderabad** where she shared her journey as a mother and autism advocate. In her talk, she challenged misconceptions, advocating for acceptance and understanding

Merry Barua was **invited to speak by Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and Environment (ATREE)** on 'Climate Action on the Spectrum' with multidisciplinary practitioner, Dilip Kumar Mekala. The discussion was featured in The Hindu

Merry Barua made a **presentation on the importance of inclusion of children and adults with Autism Spectrum** with examples of good practice in resource scarce settings for them at the **IFRA IDF 7th Global Webinar**

Merry Barua was a panelist on a discussion by Pallavanjali on Assistive Living for parents of our special needs children and young adults. She also shared her experiences running Ananda. The challenges and the wonderful solutions that come with that

Merry Barua was a speaker at a talk on 'A mental Health Blueprint for Neurodiverse Individuals' organised by Kidskintha

Merry Barua recorded a video which was shown during the physical **launch of the WHO-UNICEF Global Report**

Merry Barua conducted a seminar titled 'Assessment Trends in Special Education: A Shift to Assessment for Learning' at Amity University Noida

Merry Barua was a speaker for an episode of In conversation with series by Deepranjani Foundation. The **episode discussed: "Assisted and independent living in a residential setting- Beyond parental home and primary caregivers**

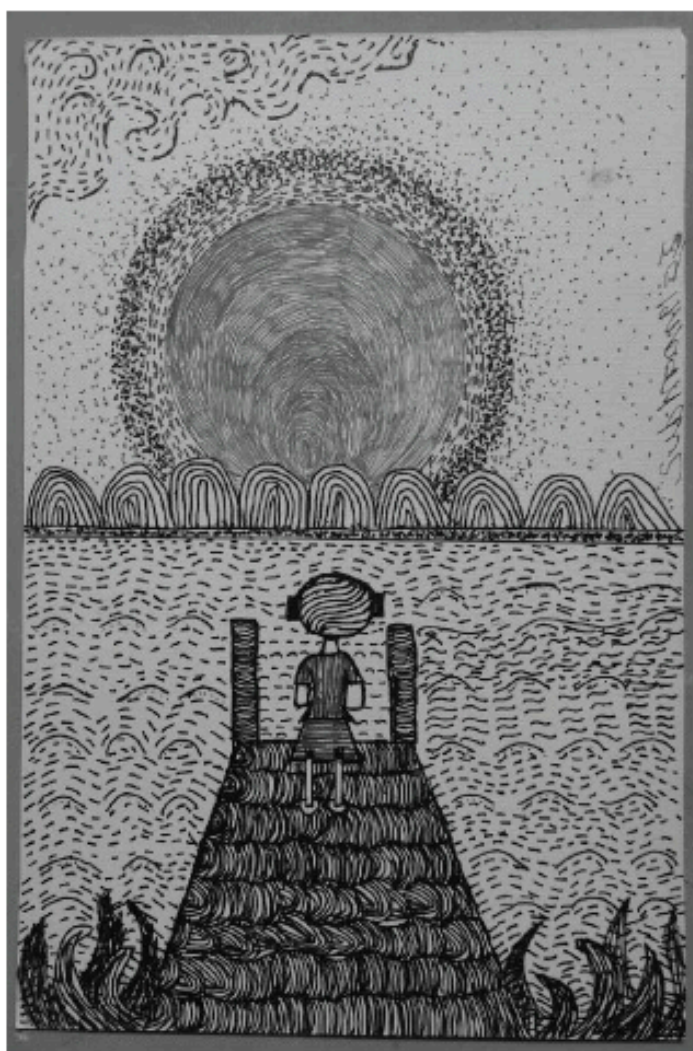
Merry Barua was **covered by SpecialSaathi in a story and interview as a ChangemakerSaathi माँ** on mother's day

Rakshita Shekhar, Merry Barua and Dr Nidhi Singhal presented at the **National Conclave on Autism organised by National Trust**



#autism network

VOLUME 20, DECEMBER 2023



ACTION FOR AUTISM



Research & Publications

- This year, AFA published two impactful **issues of Autism Network**, addressing critical and timely topics. We explored the intersectionality of gender and autism, shedding light on often overlooked experiences. We also published an issue focussing on the urgent need for assisted living, emphasizing the challenges and solutions for independent living within the autism community. Both editions were enriched by the voices of self-advocates, offering firsthand insights, and featured invaluable tools and resources from seasoned professionals, fostering a deeper understanding and actionable support for our readers.
- AFA has started a research **study viewing autism through a neurodivergent lens** unlike most of earlier studies that predominantly view autism from a neurotypical lens. In one of the first studies of its kind, Dr Nidhi Singhal collaborated with Ms Rakshita Shekhar to understand the journey and experiences of autistic adults through an autistic lens. The responses are being analysed and the findings have significant implications for raising awareness about autism, promoting understanding, acceptance, and inclusion of individuals with autism and highlights the need for empowered autistic advocates in Indian society.



Meet the team

AFA is a parent-led NGO dedicated to providing quality care for individuals with autism and their families. By fostering open communication and non-hierarchical structures, AFA encourages active participation from beneficiaries to improve program efficiency. Its dedicated team of professionals and volunteers plays a key role in achieving AFA's goals.

Achyutanal Guha	Accounts Executive
Aiman Syed	Educator, Work & Employment
Amitesh Chaudhary	Coordinator - Assisted Living
Amrita Buzar Baruah	Coordinator - Opendoor
Anandi Prabha	Educator
Aradhana Singh	Library Assist
Ashok Kumar	Security Guard
Ayesha Bibi	Faculty
Barja Bahadur Gurung	Cook
Badal Baidya	Educator Aide
Bhanu Sehwat	Coordinator, Communication
David Kujur	Housekeeping Assist
Deepak	Gardener
Deepa Rawat	Coordinator, Vocational Services
Dharam Pal Singh	Gardener
Divya Shikha Verma	Educator, Special Needs
Dojaram	Security Guard
Gita Devi	Care giver
Indrani Basu	Head, Parent Child Training Programme
Ishu	Coordinator, Vocational Services
Kamlesh	Supervisor, AVC
Kamlesh Kumari	Occupational Therapist
Katha Kali Das Pandey	Head, Projects
Khushboo Arora	Assist Adults Services
Kuldeep Bharti	Driver
Lakshmi Patra	Care giver
Lata Devi	Cleaner
Maya Sarkar	Care giver
Manvinder Roy	Coordinator, Work & Employment
Mandeep	Educator, Special Needs

Merry Barua	Founder Director
Monika Devi	Baker
Mukesh Kumar	Gardener
Neelam	Assist Adults Services
Nidhi Singhal	Director, Research & Training
Nishu Kshetry	Educator, Special Needs
Nilanjana Ghosh	Coordinator - Amber
Nafeesa	Educator, Special Needs
Nitin Bhushan	Photocopier
Pan Singh Negi	Driver
Pappu	Gardener
Prashanth Jaine	Educator Aide
Preeti Siwach	Head, Adult Services
Prem Prakash	Security Guard
Pooja Rani	Assist Adults Services
Rajesh Kumar	Supervisor, Ananda
Rajesh Gupta	Coordinator, Admin
Ram Keval	Cleaner
Rajpal	Security Guard
Rajneesh Sharma	Executive Front Desk
Ramakant Sharma	Accounts Executive
Rakhshanda Khan	Occupational Therapist
Ram Avtar	Security Guard
Ramakant Rajput	Cleaner
Ramji Varma	Cleaner
Rahul Patro	Educator Aide
Reeta Sabharwal	Director - Finance and Operations
Rekha Devi	Cleaner
Ritika Kabiraj	Educator Aide
Salini Bijesh	Manager, HR & Administrations
Sanjay Kanji	Senior Executive Accounts
Sawan Kumar Maurya	Educator Aide - Adult Services
Sharmila P G	Coordinator Resource Materials, Assisted Living

Shikha Das	Care giver
Shubhoneet,Chatterjee	Educator, Work & Employment
Sunil Dutt	Manager
Sushma	Caregiver
Suparna Biswas	Cleaner
Sarvjit Manhji	Gardener
Silvia Devi	Cook
Sujata Banerjee	Educator, Special Needs
Tanvi Behl	Head Trainings
Urmila Taneja	Faculty
Vikram Kumar	Assist Adults Services
Vikas Kumar Jha	Cleaner
Vikram Patil	Head - Finance & Operations
Yasar Saeed	Educator
B Chinna Rao	Educator
Geetu Ahuja	Workplace Incharge
S Kalpana	Special Needs Educator
Kanniraj Mariappan	Assist Adults Services
Babli Das	Cleaner
Syed Isar Ahmed	Manager, Admin & Operations
Akriti Soorma	Special Needs Educator
Pooja Thakur	Special Needs Educator
Prashasti Srivastava	Special Needs Educator
Sanskriti Hooda	Educator
Veebha Kumari	Care giver
Alpana Prasad	Vocational In-Charge
Geeta Bhagat	Faculty

Salary Slabs of Staff Members

Slab of Gross salary/stipend (in Rs) plus benefits paid to staff (full time and part time) per month	Male Staff	Female Staff	Total Staff
Less than 5000	0	0	0
5000 - 10000	0	0	0
10000 - 25000	19	14	33
25000 - 50000	15	22	37
50000 - 100000	3	9	12
Greater than 100000	1	1	2

Salary and benefits of Head and Highest and Lowest honorarium of staff members

Particulars	Designation	Remuneration(in Rs) [Gross yearly+benefits]
Operational Head of the organisation : (including honorarium):	Director	Nil
Highest paid person in the organization (staff or consultant):	Head-Finance & Operations	1800000
Lowest paid person in the organization (staff or consultant):	Gardener	133200

Governing Body

Name	Occupation	Address & Email Address	Education
Ramamani Sundar *	Social Economist	Sector B1, Flat No 1609, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi-110070 ramamanisundar@yahoo.co.in	MA Economics - DSE, Delhi University
Merry Barua*	Disability Activist	A1/51 Panchsheel Enclave, New Delhi- 110017 merry.barua@gmail.com	MA, Calcutta University
Reeta Sabharwal *	Full Time Volunteer at AFA	S-300 Greater Kailash Part 2, New Delhi- 10048 reeta.sabharwal@gmail.com	BA English, Delhi University
Madhu Chawla	Business	C-228, Defence Colony, New Delhi- 110024 madhuchawla4@gmail.com	BA
Gopal Kale*	Service	C-197, Kendriya Vihar, Sector 51, Noida 201301 gopal.k2005@gmail.com	BE
Indrani Basu*	Special Needs Educator	Action for Autism Living Unit - 3rd Floor Pocket 7&8 Jasola Vihar New Delhi-110025 indrani71@gmail.com	B.Com, ICWA, DSC-ASD
Beena Mohan*	Special Needs Educator	32GB, Dakshin Apartments, 4th Seaward Road Thiruvanniyur, Chennai - 600041 beenaahed@gmail.com	M.A Business Economics
Rajat M Nag	Economist	B3 /602, World Spa West, Sector 30, Gurgaon, Haryana 122001 rajatnag@gmail.com	B. Tech IIT Delhi M.Sc. & M.B.A, University of Saskatchewan M.Sc LSE
Dr Shubhangi Vaidya*	Professor	H No. H – 8, Mahanadi Extension, IGNOU Campus, Maidangarhi, New Delhi - 110068 svaidya2404@gmail.com	MA, MPhil, PhD
Celine George	OD and Change Management Consultant.	AG/52, Aspen Greens, Sec – 50, Gurgaon, Haryana celine.george@peoplefacet.com	MA Business Economics, Chevenings Gurukul Scholarship to London School of Economics, UK.
Nidhi Dutta*	Lawyer	Ground Floor, HNo. C -158, Ashoka Enclave Part II, C Block, Sector 37, Faridabad, Haryana 121003 nidhishradha1@gmail.com	LLB
Rakshita Shekhar*	Special Needs Educator & Disability Activist	#1370, Ananth Nivas, 22nd cross, A block, sahakaranagar, Bangalore 560092 rshekhar02@gmail.com	MA Intellectual & developmental disabilities Diploma in teaching & training

*Parent or Autistic member

No member of the governing body receives honorarium. None of the members are related to each other in any way



Our Supporters

A tribute

Ramamani Sundar

5 Nov 1946 - 20 Dec 2023

Ramamani Sundar was a valued member of AFA since its inception and a devoted mother to her autistic son Bharat. After retiring as an economist from NCAER, Ramamani lived life to the fullest writing articles for Tamil publications, attending performing arts events with Bharat by her side, and found joy in the company of her friends. Despite facing health challenges in the past few years, her strength and spirit remained unwavering. Ramamani's contributions to AFA's governing body will be deeply missed. Her absence leaves a void but her legacy of love, dedication, and resilience will be forever cherished.

Thank you!

Aakansha Mishra, Aayushi Darshana, Abhay Dan Trust, Aditya Gotan, Amazon, Anulekha Nandi, Arijit Pasayat, Arjun Basu, Arnika Dewan, Astha Mishra, Atkins India Pvt Ltd, Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiatives, Bhanu Sehrawat, Charities Aid Foundation, Cognizant, CAI, Deepali Taneja, Dalit Solidarity, Entrepreneurs Organisation, Everest Blower Systems Private Limited, Frontline Securities Limited, Gaganpreet Singh Puri, Ganga Acrowools Ltd, Geeta Kampani, Give Foundation, Giving Impetus, Global Giving Foundation, Greencliffe Foundation, Gunjan Nayyar, Industrial Exim Private Limited, Innerwheel Club of Delhi, International Foundation, Jagdish Lal Satija, Janak Kampani, Janeshwaram Vijayakumar, Jitendra Agarwalla, Kanika Styanand, Kapoor Watch Co Pvt Ltd, Kirti Kumar, Kumtha Ananda Pandurang, Kush Wadhwa, Lemontree Hotels, The Lalit, McCann Advertising, Madhu Chawla, Madhu Chawla Design Trend Pvt Ltd, Merry Barua, MJS Foundation, Manovikas Charitable Society, Meyer Housewares India, Mohd Adil Sami, Moldtek Technologies Ltd, MR Tilak, Multani Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Nagarro Software, Natwest, Navneet Garg, Nestle, New Modern Bazaar Departmental Stores P. Ltd, Paras, Online Giving Foundation, Pooja Omi Uttam, Dr Prothit Sen, PRK Sandeep, Rajat Kapoor, Rajat Mohan Nag, Rajdipa Behura, Rajesh Sabharwal, Ratan Lal Barua, Reeta Sabharwal, Ritika Gupta, Rohan Sikka, Rotary Southend Next Foundation, Ruchika Modi, Sai Expo Fab Pvt Ltd, Sahara Means Support, Saathire Social Impact Solutions (Give India), Shubhangi Vaidya, Simmi Embroidery, Sitwit Khalid, Tajsats Air Catering Ltd, Tech Mahindra, Unified Credit Solutions Pvt Ltd, United Way of India, The UK Online Giving, Vikram Raoshab Patil, VH Parekh, Virendra Kumar, Vishal Gupta, Vivek Gupta, World Learning India Pvt Ltd

Volunteers

Nidhi Dutta, Nishu Kshetry, Dr Ashish Sabharwal, Joginder Katiyal, Dr Stitodhi Mukherjee, Dr Shelly, Rahish Ahmad, Ruchika, Ravi Kumar, Dr Geeta Bhagat, Radha, Deepti Zutshi, Roshni, Kavita, Sidra, Aatika Siddiqui, Suleiman Akhter, Nandini, Prashasti, Mahika, Shambhavi, Nasima, Mariyam Mohd, Mariyam Majeed, Unzila, Nasima, Shaila, Bipasha, Wasif, Dhruv, Abhay Nath, Namita, Ruchika, Aishwarya, Padmaja

FINANCIALS

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2024

FUNDS AND LIABILITIES	As at 31.03.2024	As at 31.03.2023
<u>I SOURCES OF FUNDS</u>		
Capital Fund	162,955,561	171,047,077
Corpus Fund	34,101,343	30,626,243
Reserve Fund	27,820,818	27,150,696
Specific Purpose Grants	8,800,064	4,473,487
TOTAL	<u>233,677,786</u>	<u>233,297,503</u>
<u>II APPLICATION OF FUNDS</u>		
Fixed Assets	162,955,561	171,047,077
Investments in Fixed Deposits	62,093,322	54,188,327
Current Assets, Loans & Advances and Other Current Assets		
Cash and Bank Balances	13,875,971	12,948,516
Loans and Advances	1,139,051	881,891
Other Current Assets	<u>3,651,183</u>	<u>2,082,504</u>
	18,666,205	15,912,911
Less: Current Liabilities and Provisions	<u>10,037,302</u>	<u>7,850,812</u>
Net Current Assets	8,628,903	8,062,099
TOTAL	<u>233,677,786</u>	<u>233,297,503</u>

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

PARTICULARS	For the year ended 31.03.2024		For the year ended 31.03.2023	
I <u>INCOME</u>				
Program Receipts:				
Income from Advocacy, Awareness, Rehabilitation, Research & Training Activities	23,555,776		25,045,651	
Income out of Specific Purpose Grants	13,472,756	37,028,532	13,494,989	38,540,640
Donation Income		2,531,714		1,994,547
Interest Income		3,815,611		2,865,239
Other Income		13		1,348,941
TOTAL		43,375,870		44,749,367
II <u>EXPENDITURE</u>				
Program Expenses:				
Expenditure on Advocacy, Awareness, Rehabilitation and Research & Training Activities		39,507,217		34,204,065
Administrative Expenses		2,296,471		2,730,110
Depreciation				
For the year	9,953,512		10,493,250	
Less: Met out from Capital Fund	9,953,512	-	10,493,250	-
Transfer to/ from Capital Fund (Assets purchased from own sources net of Sale of Assets)		703,421		5,340,915
TOTAL		42,507,109		42,275,089
III Surplus / (Deficit) for the year carried to Reserve Fund		868,761		2,474,278

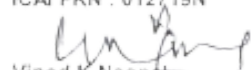
STATEMENT OF RECEIPT AND PAYMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

PARTICULARS	AMOUNT IN RUPEES	PARTICULARS	AMOUNT IN RUPEES
Opening Balance			
Cash in Hand	64,446		
Bank Balance with Schedule Banks		Program Expenses	
in Saving Bank Accounts	12,884,070	<i>Expenditure on Advocacy, Awareness, Rehabilitation and Research & Training Activities</i>	39,134,880
in Fixed Deposits	54,188,327		
Program Receipts		Administrative Expenses	2,283,711
<i>Income from Advocacy, Awareness, Rehabilitation, Research & Training Activities</i>	23,530,576	Purchase of Fixed Assets	1,861,951
<i>Receipts for Specific Purpose Grant</i>	18,736,369	Other Loans and Advances	-
Donation Income		Closing Balance	
<i>Donation Corpus Fund</i>	3,475,100	Cash in Hand	104,208
<i>Donation Non-Specific Purpose</i>	2,531,669	Bank Balance with Schedule Banks	
Interest Income (Net of TDS)	2,592,054	in Saving Bank Accounts	13,771,763
Rent Received	-	in Fixed Deposits	62,093,322
Other Income	13		
Security Deposit Received (Net of Payments)	1,078,200		
Income Tax Refund Received (Including Interest)	169,010		
Total	119,249,835	Total	119,249,835

For Nagpal Nagpal and Associates

(Chartered Accountants)

ICAI FRN : 012719N



Vinod K. Nagpal
(Partner)

M. No. 014099

UDIN: 24014099BKHCZ1007

Place: New Delhi

Dated: 31/08/2024



For and on behalf of Action for Autism



Gopal Kale
Treasurer



Reeta Sabharwal
Secretary



REHABILITATION COUNCIL OF INDIA



Registered with:

Societies Registration Act XXI 1860

Government OF NCT of Delhi, Department of Social Welfare, Rule 22(8)(a), Delhi
Rights of Persons with Disabilities Rules 2018

Foreign Contribution Regulation Amendment Act 2020

All contributions are tax deductible under S80G of the Income Tax Act 1961



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