



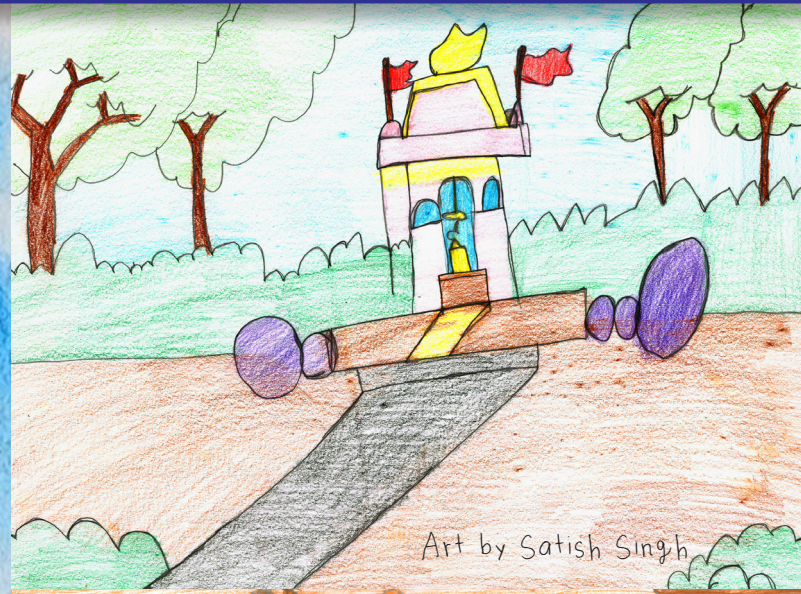
अटिजम केयर
नेपाल सोसाईटी
"A National Center for Autism"

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Fiscal Year 2079/080



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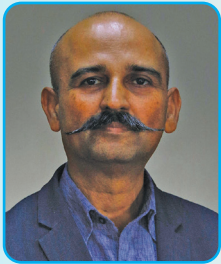


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Message from the Chairperson

This year 2022-2023 has been very engaging for AutismCare Nepal Society (ACNS) in terms of Awareness, Advocacy, Training, Education and Research.

The year began with kick start of our first ever Research Grant "NAMASTE" "Neuro-development and Autism in South Asia Treatment and Evidence". This global Health Research grant from NIHR is Global Health Initiative in collaboration from University of Manchester-UK with Sangath-India, Paediatric hospital, Srilanka College of Pediatrician and AutismCare Nepal Society. ACNS is very proud to be part of this 5 years project which is paving path for Early Detection, Early Intervention, Community inclusion and Research in the field of Autism and Neuro-development disability. NAMASTE will be an asset for Nepal in terms of Screening tools development, Human resource development, commence of Evidence Based Intervention and advocacy promotion with Research ground.

Awareness activity highlight for this year became "Concert on Autism" **#EmbraceAutism**. The concert was the vision HE Felicity Volk Australia's Ambassador to Nepal, . It is unique of its kind which has added feather on our ongoing awareness campaign with accelerated cognizance of ASD in the country. Our Advocacy effort continued with continuum of promotion efforts for the Rights to education health and social protection for Person with Autism. Our voice has also been there for legal Rights, support decision making for our pupil. This year, we have also been able to take our championing in different occasions through our self advocates which we feel proud of.

ACNS services have been provided to more than 1000 families. Diagnosis 378 cases, functional assessment 328 Cases, Intervention 487 cases, parent training 96 cases, teachers training 50 teachers , Diploma in Special Education on ASD course 15 Students. School provided services to 24 students, Aakar vocational provided services to 10 adolescents and adult.

We are connected to our Parent network group across the country. I would like to

address them with respect for every initiation they have take to help families affected by Autism. Thank you AutismCare Society Gandaki, Friends of Parents of Children with Autism, AutismCare Chitwan Society, AutismCare Society Lumbini, AutismCare Nepal Society Karnali, Autism Pathsala Nepal Gulmi, AutismCare Nepal Society Jhapa, Aavani Foundation, AutismCare Nepal Society Dhangadhi.

For the first time, we were able to organize one day "National conference on Inclusive education" with more than 200 participants including parents, teachers, principals, professionals from different walks of life . The conference highlighted on the need to Respect and Embrace Diversity in order to create conducive learning environment to learners with different need. We are determined to promote the need of Inclusive education for our marginalized group of children whose basic educational need is out of reach.

We have developed Android Apps to support education for Children with Autism and NDD named "ACNS Sunaulo Bihani" and recently developed new app "Beautiful Minds" with support of World Education.

Our development and growth has been in our own small ways. We have been extremely fortunate to have friends and organization who have trusted us , been ally in our pathway and allow us grow to meet our Vision, Mission and Goal. I take this opportunity to thank Ministry of Woman Children and Senior Citizen of Nepal, Nick Simon's Foundation, Health Care Nepal, MyRight Autism Sweden, Abilis Foundation - Finland, Australian Embassy Nepal, World Education Inc., Nepali Children Trust, Manchester UK. With all your support, we continue to dream big to move ahead confidently. Friends in Nepal and abroad have motivated us to continue to pursue what we have been doing.

I also, would like to thank my Board, Advisors, dedicated Staff members, professionals. Without your support, we won't be able to reach this far. We continue to work whole heartedly with passion to stand strong for the Rights of people with Autism across the country. We would like to work harder to find possibilities to create employment opportunities, support living system for Adults with Autism.



Dr. Sunita Maleku Amatya

Message from the Chief Administrator



PT. Surendra Bajracharya
Chief Administrator

Ten years journey at AutismCare Nepal Society has been a wonderful, remarkable and fruitful in terms of my career achievement along with increase in level of autism awareness and advocacy, organizational networking, visibility and development. While writing this message, I just went to flashback when I joined ACNS on 1 October 2013 at the age of 25. My journey began with Autism Awareness Campaign Nationwide with limited resources at that moment. There was lack of Autism awareness and now level of autism understanding has been improving day by day. Every year we follow ACNS vision and Mission, and give our best to achieve our goals.

This fiscal year 2079-80 (2022-23) has been active year of ACNS with lots of activities, programs and services. This year our ACNS team grew up to 62 staff members adding more project staff and special educators, increasing the strength and power of organizational capacity building focusing on robust team. The number of beneficiaries has been tremendously increased in this year in comparison to previous years. We serve more than 1000 children, adolescents and adults with Autism, parents, caregivers, teachers through our regular services, programs and activities from all geographical variations with 53 districts coverage of Nepal so far till date.

All our departments; Administrative and Finance, Assessment and Diagnosis, Therapeutic and Intervention, Parent and Child Training Program, Aarambha Pre- Primary School, Aakar Vocational Unit, Projects, Caregivers, Guards and Volunteers all have been working very hard with dedication for organizational development, growth and progress. I would like to thank all our key staff members for their continuous perseverance and working all by heart. Similarly, I would like to reassure that as a Chief administrator and Office head I would always be everyone's team mate and focus on good leadership, communication and management within the organization and beyond.

On behalf of all staff members, our special thanks goes to our Chairperson Dr. Sunita Maleku Amatya, Executive Board Members, Advisors and Parents of ACNS, who have always believed us and has given supportive working environment. The support, motivation, encouragement and guidance has always been blessings to us to be more energetic, enthusiastic and innovative in our tasks for holistic development of our organization. With the Motto "Learn to Lead" we are learning to be one of the leading Autism Organization in Nepal with International recognition.

Finally, I would like to wish for great success of 16th Annual General Meeting and 8th Convention of AutismCare Nepal Society going to held on 14th October 2023 at Yak Palace, Pulchowk, Laitpur. Thank you !

अटिजम जनचेतना



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Introduction

AutismCare Nepal Society

AutismCare Nepal Society (ACNS) was founded on 2nd April 2008 on the occasion of the World Autism Awareness Day. It is the only active Autism organization in Nepal that is run by passionate parents that care for Persons with Autism. It is a non-governmental, nonprofit making, non-political NGO registered in District Administration Office (Regd. No. 1067/2065) and affiliated to Social Welfare Council (SWC No: 25314). ACNS is also Income-tax exempt organization under the Income Tax Act 2058 Clause 2 (DHA) recognized by the Internal Revenue Department of Nepal, having PAN No: 302973565. It is the only active autism organization in Nepal, which provide support and information services to Person with Autism and people who work with Person with Autism.

The group's initial goal was to raise awareness and provide support to parents and caretakers of Children with Autism. As ACNS progressed, it became clear that what was really needed was a center that would help families throughout Kathmandu and Nepal to raise Awareness, Advocacy, provide basic Therapy Services, Inclusive Education and to develop knowledge base and expertise in the field of autism. ACNS provides support and information services to Persons with Autism and people who work on Autism in Nepal.

We wish to work with organizations worldwide to share information, resources and assist families and children at a national level, and look forward to continuing our contact with families and professionals worldwide. We educate, aware and act for the rights of Persons with Autism throughout Nepal.

ACNS now has gained credibility and become a model center for working with Persons on Autism Spectrum in Nepal from the government stakeholders, line ministries, various agencies, concerned stakeholders, international and national donor organizations.

Vision



"A society where Person with Autism enjoy independent and dignified life."

Mission



"Empowering Person with Autism to protect and, promote their rights and utilise their skills to have a meaningful and effective participation in the society."

Goals

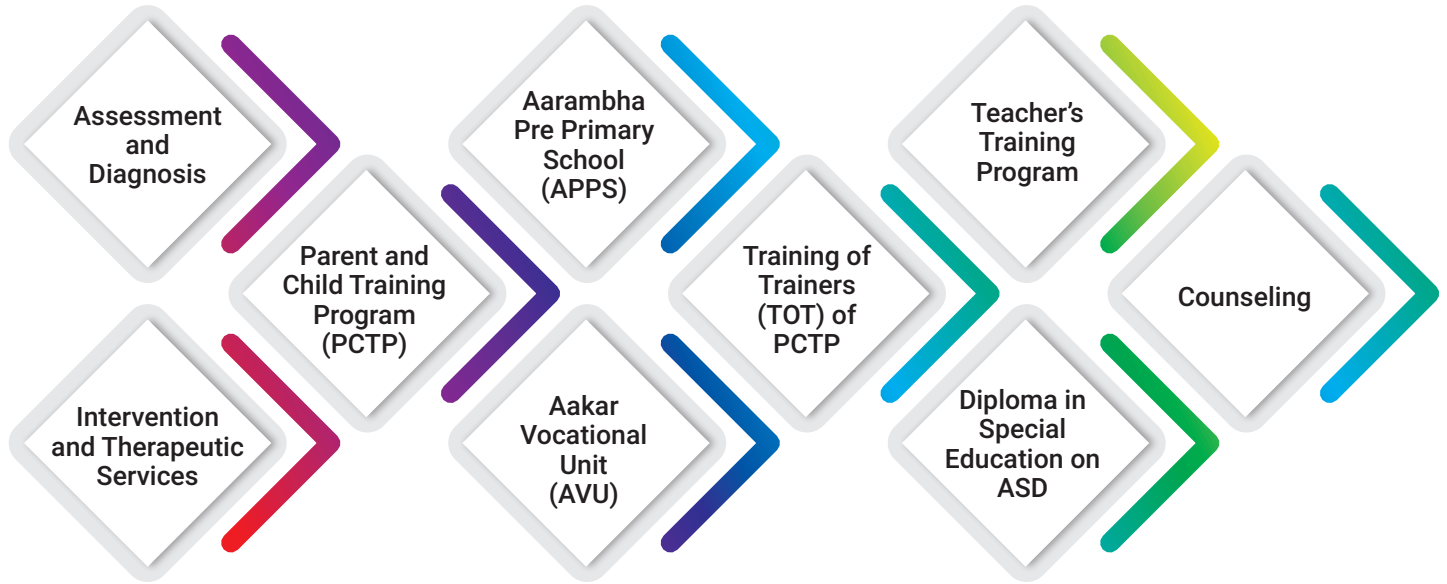
A condition where there is;

- Easy access of Persons with Autism to health, appropriate education, employment/livelihood, empowerment, social participation, use of all facilities, assistance and support, reasonable accommodation, including all services, facilities and opportunities connected to their special needs as their rights.
- Accessible, unbiased and accurate clinical diagnosis, assessment and therapies; for children with Autism
- Adequate constitutional provisions, policies, laws to address the all human rights and needs of Persons with Autism.
- Availability of legal representation and assistance to Persons with Autism and their representatives for full protection of all legal rights.
- Equal access to all facilities, services and activities in the community.
- Sustainability of ACNS.

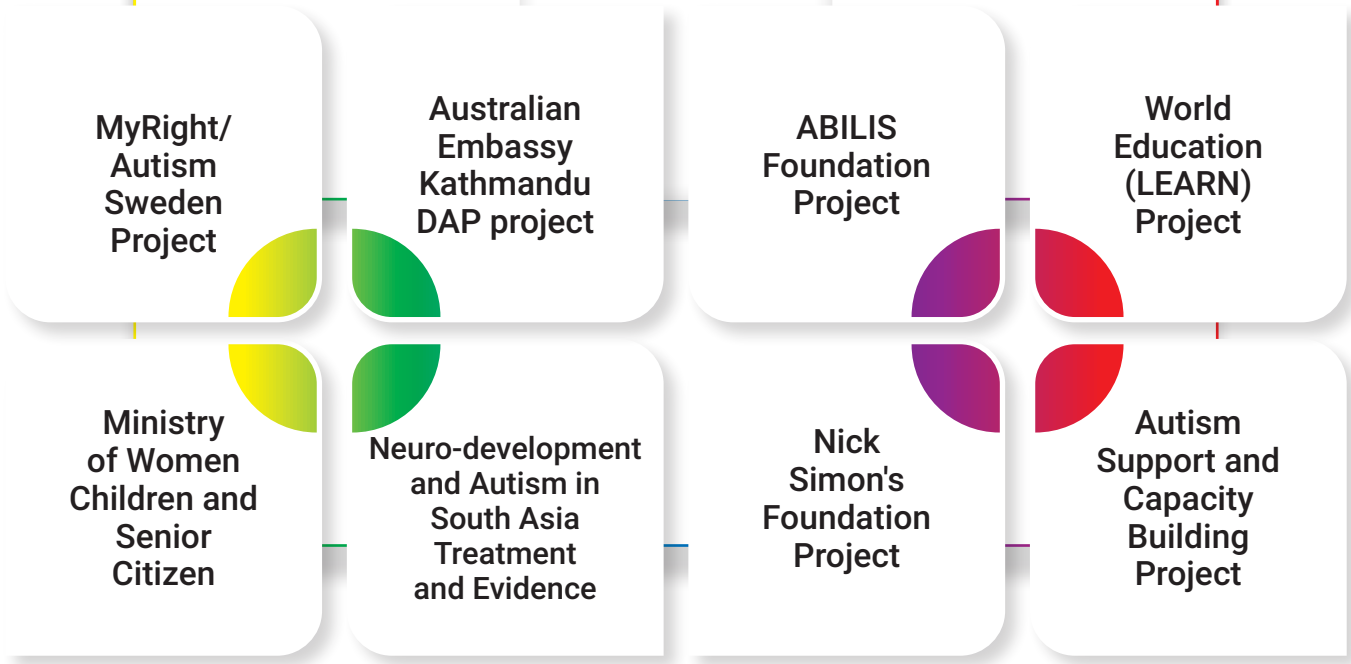
Objectives

- To increase awareness on Autism.
- To increase understanding on Autism among health care professionals for early diagnosis and intervention.
- To increase understanding skill among the parents, carers, teacher and policy makers.
- Advocacy for the rights of Persons with Autism
- To increase knowledge and skills of Person with Autism in vocational activities to increase independent and create employment opportunity.
- Advocacy to ensure the inclusive education of Children and Persons with Autism.
- Formation of Parents Network group of Children and Persons with Autism throughout the country.
- To create job opportunities to Adults with Autism.

ACNS PROGRAMS



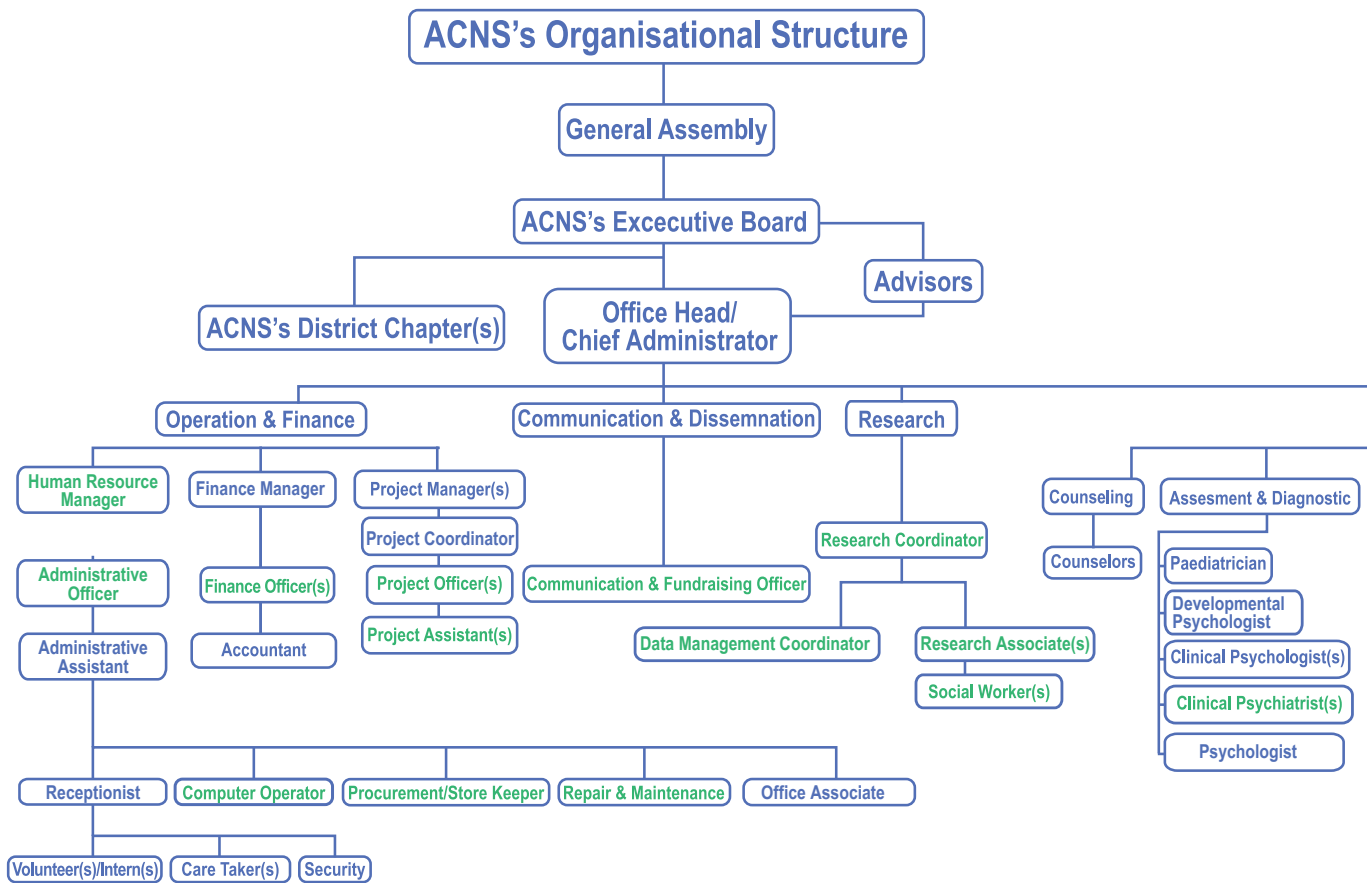
Projects





Autism Care Nepal Society

“A National Center for Autism”



Highlights of ACNS Activities Fiscal Year 2079/80

Year	Event	Result
21st July, 2022	ACNS meeting with H.E. Felicity Volk Australian Ambassador to Nepal at Australian Embassy, Basbari, Kathmandu, Nepal.	Continuous support to ACNS from Australian Embassy to support Autism Community in Nepal.
22nd July, 2022	Workshop among Professionals for Ed. Tech Development for Neuro-development Disability at Center for Education and Human Resource Development (CEHRD) office.	Valuable Constructive feedback and recommendations on content for Ed. tech Application were collected from authorized government stakeholders during the development phase of Ed. Tech application aimed at addressing Neuro-development disability.
23rd July, 2022	Movie show "Minions" at Chhaya Center.	Opportunities to watch movie at Movie Hall with family and friends with inclusive environment.
1st August, 2022	Opening of 48th Batch of Parents and Child Training Program (PCTP) with parents with children and 1 parent as a observer was started	23 Parents and Children with Autism and 1 parent observer were participated in the program
9th August, 2022	Ms. Valerie Siwotso, Program Manager of All Children Reading from Washington DC visited to ACNS	Supported in the process of Ed. Tech application development ensuring its suitability for diverse group of disabilities
19th August, 2022	Students of Aarambha Pre- Primary School (APPS) and Aakar Vocational Unit (AVU) performed Community Visit at Harisiddhi Temple Area	Sensitized the local community of Harisiddhi and raised the awareness on Autism
14th September, 2022	National Children Day celebrated at ACNS	Community education about the Children rights
23rd September, 2022	1st Quaterly Parents Meeting of APPS	Parents were informed about school activities as per the Annual Plan and parents shared about the child activities at home
23rd September, 2022	Closing of 48th batch PCTP	Increased confidence level of parents to deal with their children
11th November, 2022	Students of ACNS Hiking at Bisankhu Narayan Temple	Community Involvement of students and raised awareness on Autism



Year	Event	Result
18th November,2022	ACNS conducted third Workshop on “Workshop among Professionals for Ed. Tech Development for Neuro-developmental Disabilities” under the LEARN project	25 professionals specializing in various neuro -developmental disabilities field attended the workshop, and contributing their expertise to refine the content of Ed. tech application, ensuring its suitability for a diverse range of disability
31st October,2022	Opening of 49th Batch of PCTP	22 parents with their children were participated in the training
3rd December, 2022	Participated on the rally of World Disabled Day	Community Awareness about the disability rights and inclusion
15th December, 2022	2nd Quarterly Parents Meeting of APPS	Presentation of School Accomplished, class and home activities and distribution of ISP Progress Reports
25th December, 2022	ACNS Picnic Progsram at Sallaghari, Bhaktapur	Gathering of students, parents, caregivers along with the Board Members in friendly environment
4th January, 2023	ACNS conducted the first pre-testing "Workshop on Pre-testing of Ed. Tech (Android and Web) Application among the concerned Stakeholders." at ACNS premises.	A total 20 professionals including trainers, Special Educators, Teachers, Occupational therapist from ACNS as well as WEI team actively engaged in the workshop. They brought their expertise to conduct meticulous analyses and provide valuable insights to develop suitable Ed. Tech Application
6th January, 2023	Students Hiking at Swayambhunath Stupa	Students had fun and entertainment and aids in social inclusion
13th January, 2023	Closing Ceremony of 49th batch PCTP	Improvement of Children with Autism and increase the Parents understanding about taking care of Children with Autism.
6th, February, 2023	Opening of 50th Batch of PCTP	21 Parents Children and 3 observers parents were participated.
9th March, 2023	Students Community Visit at Harisiddhi River Side	Engagement on local community and enjoyment in nature
17th March, 2023	Concert of 1974 AD Band-Tundikhel Kathmandu with the theme <i>#EmbraceAutism</i>	Sensitize the general public on Autism
23rd March, 2023	Art Event organized by Srijanalaya Group at ACNS premises	Children and Adults with Autism were engage in creative art activities outside the classroom

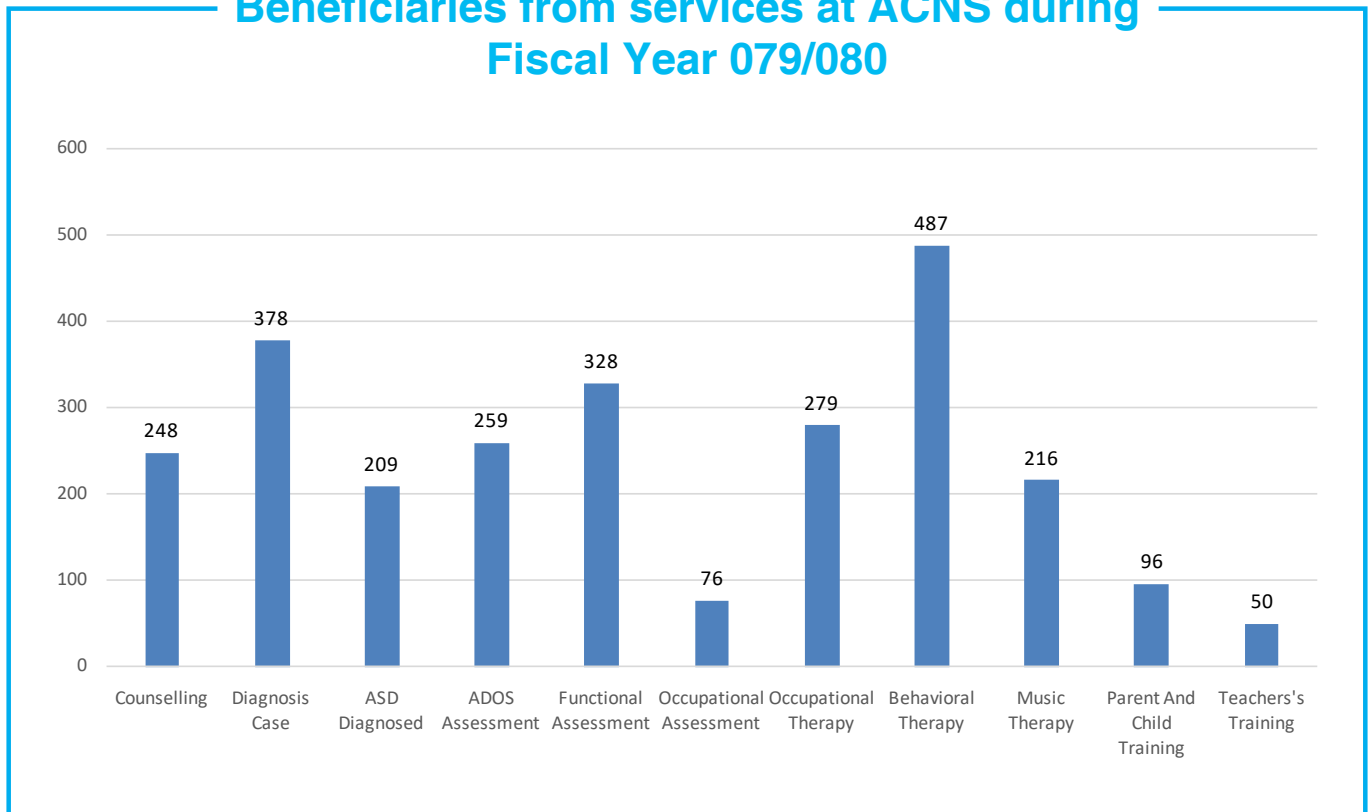
Year	Event	Result
24th March, 2023	3rd Quarterly Parent Meeting of APPS	School activities and initiation, new plan was shared. Feedbacks and suggestions were taken from parents for betterment of service
27th March, 2023	Presentation of the NAMASTE Project to Godawari Government Officials, including the Mayor, Vice-Mayor, In-Charge of Health Posts, Godawari Municipality, Nepal	The major stakeholders of the project from Godawari Municipality were oriented on autism and the objective, targets, activities and outcomes of NAMASTE which will be implemented in Godawari itself.
28th March, 2023	Senior Leadership Team (SLT) from UK and India visit to Bishakhunarayan-2 and Jharuwarashi-13 health posts, Godawari Municipality, Nepal to discuss on the possibility of mobilizing Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs) as Non Specialist Providers (NSPs)	The SLT got an opportunity to have direct communication with the FCHVs and to explore possibilities of mobilizing them as NSPs in the project later.
29th March, 2023	Interaction program with relevant stakeholders of health sector and presentation of NAMASTE Project, including the Secretary of Ministry of Health and Population, others organizations	All major stakeholders were familiarized with the aim, objectives, major activities and outcomes, working modality of NAMASTE.
2nd April, 2023	Celebration of World Autism Awareness Day (WAAD) 2023 at ACNS premises	Sensitized the concerned stakeholders about the need of Autism Spectrum Disorder
5th and 6th April, 2023	Meetings with the Health Post In-Charge of Thecho-12, Godawari-3 and Godachaur-1, Chapakharka and Kotdada Nagar Health Clinics of ward no 2 for social mapping, rapport building and exploring FCHVs as the NSPs in respective venues, Godawari Municipality Nepal	Rapport building with major focal persons of Health Posts was done which also helped in social mapping of respective areas.
8th April, 2023	Annual Sports Day of ACNS	Students along with parents and caregiver staffs were engaged in sport activities
12th April, 2023	Golden Jubilee Celebrations of PCTP and Demo Session of LEARN App	Reuniting our past PCTP trainees and presentation of LEARN app with its usefulness and previously trained parents shared their children's improvement after PCTP.



Year	Event	Result
13th April, 2023	Closing ceremony of 50th batch PCTP	Improvement of Children with Autism and increase the parents understanding about taking care of Children with Autism.
17th to 29th April, 2023	22nd Batch Teacher Training Program on Autism Spectrum Disorder organized at ACNS premises	14 participants from Hemric National Pre School, Aakar Foundation, Buds Montessori, National Autism Care Center Society and ACNS were benefited
23rd April, 2023	Meeting with the Health Post In-Charge of all 14 wards to familiarize them with NAMASTE project, autism and Neuro-developmental Disabilities in Bajrabarahi Chapagaun Hospital-10, Godawari Municipality, Nepal	All Health Post In-Charges were acquainted with autism and NAMASTE's aims, objectives and activities which will ease in the smooth implementation of the project.
27th April, 2023	ACNS organized the Ed. tech "Beautiful Minds" Android and Web Application Launch (Application dissemination program) at Yellow Pagoda Hotel.	Over 100 participants from various organization including government entities such as CEHRD and Curriculum Development Center, actively participated in the program. These attendees demonstrated a keen understating of how to integrate the application into the student learning and teaching process. Ms. Divya Dawadi expressed a commitment to explore the integration of this application into their curriculum system.
4th to 13th May, 2023	ACNS facilitated teachers training program on ASD in collaboration with CEHRD at Dhulikhel Training Center	20 Teachers from Special and mainstream schools were benefited from training on ASD.
15th May, 2023	Opening of 51st Batch of PCTP	22 Parents and Children with Autism and 3 observer parents were participated .
31st May and 1st June	Female Community Health Volunteer (FCHV) orientation on NAMASTE Project in Godawari Municipality	The FCHVs who will be involved as NSPs in the project were familiarized with autism and NAMASTE project. The eligible FCHVs will be selected using the criteria for further action.

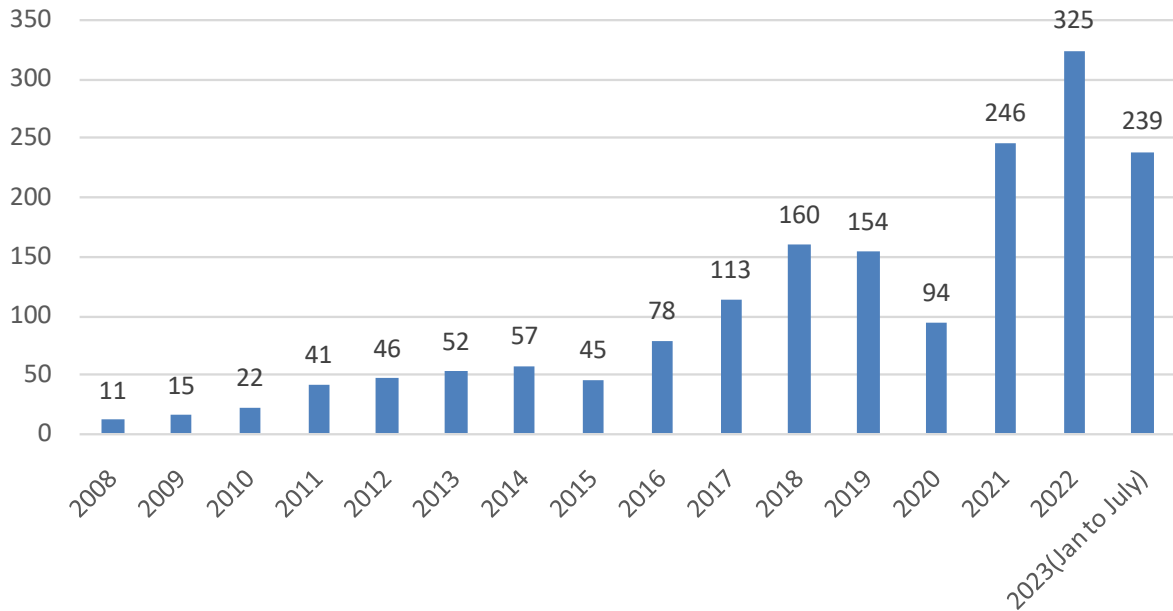
Year	Event	Result
2nd June, 2023	4th Quarterly Parents Meeting	Class wise Parents Meeting in presence of occupational therapist, progress report of new IEP was distributed.
16th June, 2023	LEARN project dissemination program organized by World Education Inc. (WEI) at Shankar Hotel, Lazimpat	Disseminated the Android Application -Beautiful Minds
7th July, 2023	Stall Exhibition of Vocational Products at Ncell Center, Durbar Marg	Promotion of products prepared by Vocational Trainees
12th July, 2023	Students visited at Jump Kathmandu park -Mandikatar	Engagement on fun activities enhance socialization and awareness
28th July, 2023	Closing Ceremony of 51st Batch PCTP	Improvement of Children with Autism and increase the parents understanding about taking care of Children with Autism.

Beneficiaries from services at ACNS during Fiscal Year 079/080

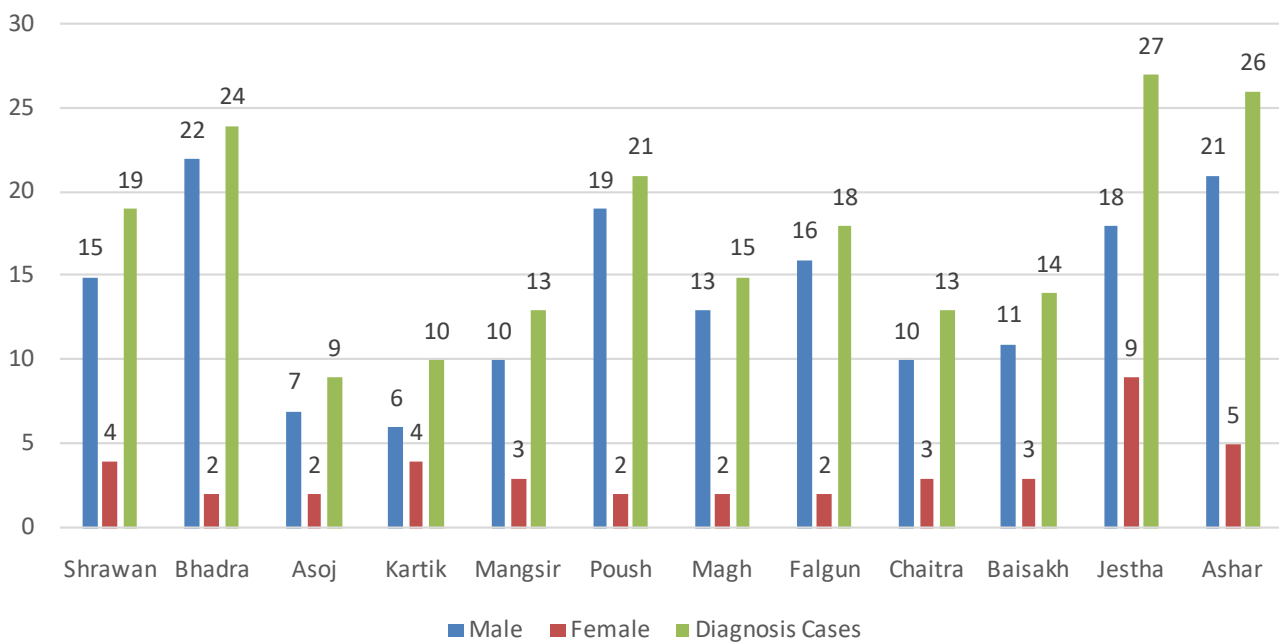


Graphs of Autism Diagnosis Details

**Total Cases of Autism Diagnosis Cases at ACNS
(Total 1698)**



**New Diagnosis cases of Autism in Fiscal Year 079/080
(Total: 209, Male: 168, Female: 41)**



Marking the World Autism Awareness Day 2023 Concert for Autism #EmbraceAutism



The global observance of the 16th World Autism Awareness Day (WAAD) on April 2, 2023 with aims to spread awareness about Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This year WAAD was celebrated with the UN designated theme *“Transforming the narrative: Contributions at home, at work, in the arts and in policy making”*.

This year, AutismCare Nepal Society celebrated World Autism Awareness Month from the March month with Concert for Autism #EmbraceAutism. with the valuable support from Australian Embassy of Nepal in joint collaboration with Kathmandu Metropolitanity. On 18th March 2023, ACNS organized the “Concert for Autism” of renowned band 1974 AD at Tudikhel, Kathmandu to do mass autism awareness among the general public. The program was lively broadcasted from Himalaya television. The initiative aimed for sustainable and long term impact on autism awareness in Nepal.

The Autism Awareness Concert featuring the renowned 1974 AD Band is a significant milestone in



the history of Autism Awareness in Nepal. The event has been deemed the most noteworthy occurrence in Nepal's history for creating broad awareness about autism through the medium of music. Mr. Soumil Manandhar; adult with autism showcased his musical talent with a performance during the concert.

On 2nd April, ACNS celebrated the event and marked World Autism Awareness Day and Light It Up Blue Program at ACNS premises. The event was graced by esteemed presence of distinguished Chief guests including H.E. Ms. Felicity Volk, Australian Ambassador to Nepal along with guests from various organization of Persons with Disabilities, Board Members, and teachers, parents and staff members of ACNS. Dr. Sunita Maleku Amatya, delivered an insightful addresses, emphasizing the significance of celebration of WAAD for the promoting social inclusion of Children and Person with Autism within

the community. She also focused on accepting, supporting Person with Autism and their caregivers and advocating for their rights. The chief guest of the event, Her Excellency Ms. Volk, extended hers well-wishes and presented awards to Children and Adults with autism who performed at "Concert for Autism" and presented certificate of Appreciation who actively participated in the art program. This commendable gesture was aimed at recognizing and motivating their achievements.

At the event, Children and Adult with Autism showcased remarkable performances, serving as a key highlights of the event. Additionally, ACNS organized the Sport Day and Art Event for the Children and Adult with autism in the Month of April 2023. ACNS conducted various autism awareness program throughout the month of April 2023.



Aarambha Pre-Primary School

About APPS

Aarambha Pre-Primary School (APPS) was established as day care center on 2 April 2010 for the holistic development of Children with Autism. As a special school, it was registered in Kathmandu Metropolitan city on 10 December 2016. Children who have difficulty to learn in mainstream schools are enrolled in APPS. The main goal of APPS is to regulate the self-help skills of Children with Autism and practice well. As well as engage children with autism in social and community related activities.

There are 4 classes Green, Blue, Yellow and Red where 23 students (19 boys and 4 girls) are enrolled. Each class has the capacity to enroll 6 students. The performance of each student is supervised and guided by the Special Educators. Activities in the classroom are set according to the class schedule. Students are categorized on each class based on their age, function, capability and ability. Each classroom has a Teacher, Assistant Teacher and Caretaker. The school starts from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm from Monday to Friday and there is a transportation service for the students.

Strategies Used in APPS

APPS is using strategies like Treatment and Education of Autistic and Related Communication Handicapped Children (TEEACH), Onetoone interaction, Social Story, Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA), Verbal Behaviour Analysis (VBA), Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), Audio Visual, Play Therapy. Besides this, students are enrolled in Occupational Therapy and Music Therapy. On the need-based approach, students are enrolled individually in both Occupational and Music Therapies. There is a timely parent and teachers meeting regarding the changes and progress of students as well as enhancing to upgrade better education and services.

APPS Class, School and Outdoor Activities

APPS class activities are performed on individual and group according to need based approach. Teachers prepare each student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) and Progress Report twice a year and Functional Assessment once a year. Adolescent student's activities are more focused on practical, pre-vocational, social skills, functional, physical, outdoor, daily living skill and physical based activities whereas young children and teenagers are more focused on attending skills

such as sitting behaviour, eating, toileting, waiting skills, motor skills, checking schedule, turn taking, daily living activities etc. There are regular table work, Sensory and Occupational Therapy, Yoga and Meditation and timely outdoor activities.

APPS school activities are carried out in accordance with the Annual Plan. The annual plan is concentrated on attending skills, daily living skills, group interaction, social skill which include school and outdoor activities. School activities include festival celebrations, community education, health check-up, potluck sharing, self-servicing, TV time, art and sports events whereas the APPS outdoor activities are home and community visit, hiking, swimming, movie time, shopping at the local markets etc. The ultimate goal of the school and outdoor activities is to enhance and ensure inclusion for children with autism.





AAKAR VOCATIONAL UNIT

Aakar Vocational Unit (AVU) started in 2013 in AutismCare Nepal Society (ACNS). It mainly focuses on vocational and independent living skills of adults with autism. Students with autism learn vocational activities during the pre-vocational period at school and get transited to AVU after they reach 18 years. Altogether, 8 Adults with Autism have been enrolled in AVU during the fiscal year 2079/2080. Among them, 7 are male and 1 is female. There are 6 staff in AVU.

The students are doing variety of work i.e., domestic chores, handicraft, food for sales (bakery and chocolate), gardening, office work, grocery shop etc.

AREAS OF AVU



Currently, the students are also involved in yoga and meditation for about an hour as it benefits them in enhancing self-control, patience and relaxation. The students cook food for their friends and serve it as well. The main objective of this is to enhance independent living skills and socialization skills.

In this fiscal year, AVU organized Workshop and Meeting of Autism Inclusive Club and conducted some fun-filled activities such as games, arts and crafts etc. for students with autism. The main objective of this workshop was to support them with socialization.

Young adults with autism are utilizing their vocational skills gained through various training which eventually helps develop their independence, self-reliance and better life.





Parent and Child Training Program

PCTP has proven to be a significant and effective training program for young children with autism. As early intervention is crucial in improving the lives of children with autism, PCTP focuses on the same. It is a 12 weeks training program for parents of children with autism which intends to empower them with knowledge and skills of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), Verbal Behavior Analysis (VBA) and Sensory Integration Therapy.

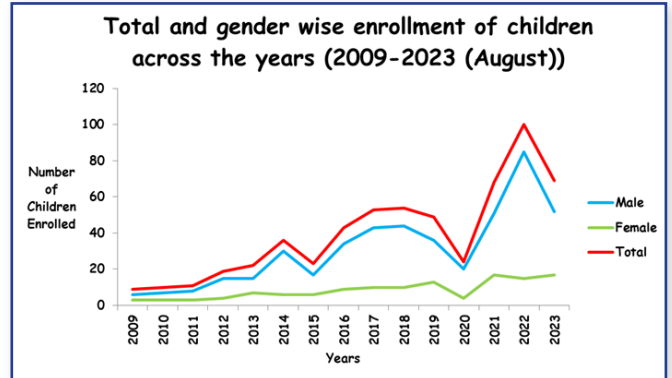
This fiscal year (2079/80), ACNS successfully conducted four batches (48, 49, 50 and 51) of Parent and Child Training Program. The 48th batch started on. Parents were not only from Kathmandu valley but from various regions of Nepal such as Panchthar, Darchula, Biratnagar, Itahari, Chitwan, Okhaldhunga and Dhangadi. Among the enrolled children, 21 were male and 2 were female.

On 14 Kartik, 2079, 49th batch started with 22 parents with their children. The enrolled parents were from Kathmandu as well as from Birtamod and Dhangadi. In this batch, 5 were female and 17 were male. This batch ended on 29 Poush 2079.

21 parents with their children and 3 parents as an observer were enrolled in 50th batch of PCTP. Among them 6 were female and 15 were male. Parents from different places like Panchthar, Itahari, Chitwan, Dhankuta, Manang, Solukhumbu, Dang, Hetauda, Kathmandu and Kailali participated in this batch. This batch started on 23 Magh and ended on 30 Chaitra 2079.

PCTP celebrated its Golden jubilee on completion of 50th batch. All participants from previous batches were invited in this program.

51st batch of PCTP started on 1 Jestha 2080 with 22 parents with their children and 3 parents as observers. Parents enrolled were from Dhankuta, Makwanpur, Gorkha, Siraha, Nuwakot, Urlabari, Jhapa, Nawalparasi, Itahari, Solukhumbu and Kathmandu. 8 children were female and 14 were male. This batch ended on 12 Shrawan 2080.



This fiscal year, altogether 95 families benefitted from PCTP. Not only mothers there was also active participation of fathers, grandparents and siblings.





Testimonials about PCTP by parents

Shreyansh was non-verbal. After PCTP, I gained ideas on handling and teaching children with Autism. Now my son can point and tell about his basic needs verbally. His understanding level has increased which has made both of our lives easier. Thank you PCTP for making me realize autism more than a disability.

Prajita Pokhrel(mother), 48th batch

Soon after diagnosis we were totally lost and misguided. It was just waste of money and time taking him to different therapies and school. PCTP was a booster for me and my husband. It has built my confidence in dealing with my son Yuvan's day to day activities. At present he is enrolled in regular school and seems enjoying learning.

Suprava Dhakal(mother), 49th batch

After PCTP I understand my son Jayam very well. I can now confidently handle his behavior and teach him new skills. His eye contact and socialization has improved a lot. I do one on one session with him almost every day as a result of which he is improving day by day. Thank you AutismCare Nepal and PCTP.

Jyoti Thapa Bhandari, 50th batch PCTP

Before PCTP I was totally dependent on therapists. Although I was aware about Autism, I didn't have any ideas on handling behaviors and teaching new skills. There were times when I used to get frustrated for not being able to understand my son Nirwansh's behaviors. After this training I am not only helping my son but also other parents in this journey which is again building my confidence and gaining more experiences. Thank you PCTP and ACNS.

Nesa Phuel, 50th batch PCTP, Jhapa

Ayam can now use toilet. He has learnt to express his needs using visuals. I plan his day using visual schedule which lessens his anxiety resulting in a calm and happier child. Thank you PCTP for making my life easier. I have learnt a lot about autism.

Sabina Niroula, 51st Batch PCTP

I used to surf internet for different therapeutic intervention on autism. I tried to apply those with my son Sayujya. But then I found it useless as it was not helping my son. I learnt the steps to teach new skills to my son in PCTP. I understood about behaviors, breaking skills down and errorless teaching as a result of which my son does his school assignment independently. He is socializing more. He understands turn taking and waiting and his verbal behavior has improved. His academics are improving day by day. Above all, not only me but my family has also accepted his autism and learnt to see the world differently. Thank you PCTP and ACNS.

Rama Neupane (mother), 51st batch PCTP



TOT Parent and Child Training Program

Introduction:

Training of Trainers (TOT) Parent and Child Training Program (PCTP) is advanced version of Parent and Child Training Program to train the parents to become Trainer. This training program is the first human resource development program of AutismCare Nepal Society in order to replicate the Parent and Child Training Program in different districts of Nepal.

ACNS started the 1st Batch of TOT PCTP on 20th Kartik 2074. Since then, we have conducted 5 batches of training program so far till date. 16 parents has been graduated from TOT training program representing from Parents Network Groups of Kaski, Jhapa, Rupandehi, Surkhet, Gulmi, Chitwan and Kathmandu. After graduating from this training program PCTP has been started in all these districts which is one the most important milestone of dissemination of ACNS services in different parts of Nepal.

Principles:

- 1) Every child with autism can improve and can be helped to lead a dignified and meaningful life with consistent and appropriate intervention.
- 2) A child is better understood by his/her parents only when the parents know how to use appropriate teaching strategies with their children, they can be the ideal people to help the children learn and grow in different environment.
- 3) When the parents know appropriate methods to teach their children they are empowered to take an active role in shaping their child's and family's future.
- 4) When parents are taught strategies of relating to and educating their children, the parent child interaction becomes more meaningful, productive and enjoyable for both parent and the child.

Objectives:

1. To help new parents by TOT trained parents understand Autism, understand their child, the unique ways in which their child thinks and learn.
2. To make the trained parents more skillful and teaching essential skills to become PCTP trainer
3. To decentralize the PCTP to various parts of Nepal



TEACHERS TRAINING ON ASD

With evidence indicating the increase in the diagnosis of autism, as well as the complexity of working with individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), providing effective education and training programs specializing in ASD has become an educational necessity.

This can be a strategy or intervention in teaching Children with Autism.

ACNS, outlines the following points in the preparation of teacher from the teachers training program:

- 1) Training will be huge eye openers in enhancing understanding the condition of student with Autism.
- 2) Teachers are committed to student with autism and their learning in the classroom.
- 3) Teachers know how the student with Autism learn.
- 4) Teachers make a list of the child's strengths which will help them to teach those subjects to student with Autism
- 5) Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from training

With these realization, ACNS has been organizing “Teachers Training on Autism Spectrum Disorder” since 2011 at ACNS. The concept emerged with the strong realization of ACNS on “Education for all” and inclusive education for people with autism. However, depending upon severity of children with autism also need special education. It was a 1 week training in the starting focusing on the different topics such as understanding Autism, Understanding Behavior and Behavior Modification, Structure Teaching, Enhancing Communication, Acceptance, Inclusion, Occupational Therapy. This course at present has been expanded into 2 weeks course with some practical sessions and observations.

ACNS offers a chance to participate in the training twice in a year. Starting from 2011 up to this year 22nd batch have been completed.



Different mainstream and specials schools have been the part of this training program as follows since 2011:

S.N.	Schools' Name	Participants
1.	Samadarsi	5
2.	Elims kids	5
3.	Montessori School	1
4.	Purple Home	2
5.	Phoenix School	14
4.	SSDRC	1
5.	SERC	5
6.	Padma Kanya	1
7.	British School	10
8.	Mother Ganga Pre-school	1
9.	Maitri Griha	2
10.	Euro kids	4
11.	Ullens Kindergarten	5
12.	CBR (Community Based Rehabilitation)	11
13.	Sirjana School	1
14.	Self-Help Group for Cerebral Palsy (SGCP)	4
15.	Ansara Montessori	1
16.	Kakhara school	1
17.	Motherland Montessori	5
18.	Chautari Nepal Health Foundation	1
19.	Mano Spandan Nepal	1
20.	Montessori kids paradise	3
21.	GNSS	1
22.	MKH	1
23.	Aarambha Pre Primary School	38
24.	Bodhi Batika International Montessori Pre-School	1
25.	Best Montessori	3
26.	Aakar Foundation	12
27.	Parlance Int'l Academy	3
28.	Montessori Kinder House	10
29.	Patan Mental Hospital	4
30.	Kidzee School	4
31.	Wisdom Kids	1
32.	Barakhari Kids Foundation	3
33.	Montessori Kids World	1
34.	Center For Autism	3
35.	Hemric National Pre School	2
36.	Anmol Special Education Center	7
37.	Kids Dream	3
38.	Aadarsha Secondary School	5
39.	Peoples Academy	2
40.	Montessori Kids World	4
41.	Sama Nepal	2
42.	The Vinnance Pre-School	2
43.	Different Organizations	45
Total Participants		240

Volunteering

Help people with autism live the life they choose by contributing your time and effort. Get the satisfaction of making a real difference in people's lives while meeting new people and potentially learning a new skill. From volunteering at ACNS you can do to improve the lives of people affected by autism in Nepal.

Dear applicant,

Thank you for your interest in AutismCare Nepal Society. Below you can find a list of the most frequently asked questions to do with volunteering at AutismCare Nepal Society.

- **How long can I volunteer?**
Very short (e.g. 2 days to 1 week)
Short-term (250h, 1 to 3 months)
Long-term (e.g. 6 to 12 months) is possible
- **In which fields of work can I collect experiences?**
In fields as special school, vocational unit, parent-child-training, therapies (occupational, music, speech), assessment and diagnosis, functional assessment and individual interventions.
All these fields are specialized for children with autism.
- **Which languages do I need? Is Nepali necessary?**
English is required. Nepali is helpful but not necessary.
- **How are the working hours?**
Monday till Friday from 10am to 4pm.
- **Is there a payment for internship/volunteering?**
No but you will be rich in experiences.
- **Is lodging provided?**
No unfortunately we cannot provide any lodging.
- **Where can I live?**
There are different possibilities as homestay, hostel and hotel...
- **Is a meal during the working hours provided?**
Yes, all employees receive a daily lunch.
- **Are there any holidays?**
ACNS has closed on the weekend (+Sundays) and some official holidays as for example the Dashain festival, Tihar festival, Shivaratri, Holi etc. as well as two weeks of winter holidays in January. You can refer to ACNS website to view the calendar of ACNS.
- **Will I get a letter of reference free of charge after I volunteer?**
Yes you will be receiving letter of reference free of charge.
- **I am an international student/newcomer to Nepal. Do I need a work permit to volunteer?**
No, for an internship or volunteering a tourist visa is sufficient.
For long term working visa may be preferable or you may required official Visa if you come from any Institution e.g. Australia Volunteer International

- **Is a contact person/supervisor provided for me?**
Yes, we provide a contact person/supervisor for all students and volunteers.
- **Which expectations are put to me?**
ACNS expects that the student/volunteer is motivated to take part in the work of ACNS.
As per your specialty or profession skills we do expect your professional knowledge and skills and applied manner.
- **Is foreknowledge in the field of autism necessary?**
It will be helpful to inform yourself about the neuro-developmental disorder autism.
- **Are there several locations of ACNS in Nepal and can I also volunteer there?**
Yes, in Kathmandu, Pokhara, Jhapa, Surkhet, Lumbini, Chitwan and we are expanding in other districts of Nepal too.
If there is something you would like to ask that is not featured on the list then please do not hesitate to contact us at autismnepal@gmail.com

For more details, you also can check our website <https://autismnepal.org/> with several information's about ACNS and videos.



AutismCare Support and Capacity Building Program

After the post COVID pandemic, AutismCare Nepal Society (ACNS) is severely affected by its consequences and had to face lots of difficulty. We had a big challenge in human resource retention due to lack of fund. We were really seeking help to continue our regular services and sustain our human resource. We are glad that we received support grant from Nick Simon's Foundation to provide necessary support to our human resource for retention as well as pay our school rent and school bus hire rent. The project fund mainly focuses on the continuation of regular services of ACNS focusing on Diagnosis, Assessment, Intervention, Therapy, Special Education to Children with Autism through Aarambha Pre-Primary school, Vocational Training to Person with Autism and development of different software and information communication technology to support Person with Autism with in the Center.

Project Objective:

- Strengthen the organization and continue the regular services of ACNS.

Activities to be carried out under Project/Program are:

- Diagnosis and Assessment (ADOS Assessment) of Children with Autism by skillful professional (Clinical Psychologist, psychologist)
- Functional Assessment and Intervention of Children with Autism by skillful Special Educators
- Special Education to the Children/Person with Autism by trained Special educators and teachers
- Pre-Vocational and Vocational training services to the Adolescent and Adult with autism through Aakar Vocational Unit.
- On the job orientation program to adult with autism
- Occupational therapy and Music therapy to the Children and Person with Autism
- Parent and Children Training to parents, caregivers of Children and Person with Autism
- Conduction of workshop and training program to parents, caregivers and teachers
- Establishment of Autism Inclusive club
- Development of different software and Information Communication Technology (ICT) to support Person with Autism
- Counseling to parent of Children and Person with Autism



Output of Project Activities:

Beneficiaries from the services of AutismCare Nepal society
(1st August 2022 to 31st July 2023)

Services of ACNS	Male	Female	Total
Counselling	113	135	248
Diagnosis Case	298	80	378
ASD Diagnosed	168	41	209
ADOS Assessment	209	50	259
Functional Assessment	246	82	328
Occupational Assessment	61	15	76
Occupational Therapy	28	71	99
Behavioral Therapy	365	122	487
Music Therapy	178	38	216
Parent And Child Training	76	22	98
Teachers's Training	3	47	50



Conclusion:

AutismCare Nepal Society is committed to provide all its services to the beneficiaries though there are lots of hindrances and obstacles. After COVID Pandemic, the number of new diagnosis cases of autism spectrum disorder increased tremendously. There was huge demand of all services and ACNS faced all the challenges and provided the quality services to all with the available limited human resources.

We were able to retain our most of the important human resources and recruit new human resources to provide our regular services. This could only be possible because of grant we received from Nick Simon's Foundation. We could serve more than 1000 families so far during the one-year period increasing our capacity and building strong team work. This output has boosted the human resource of ACNS and motivated to work with full potential.

MYRIGHT PROJECT

This envisioned project “Increased Access of Persons with Autism in Education, Health and Social Rights” supported by MyRight in cooperation with Autism Sweden particularly contributed on the following immediate objectives for the year F/Y 2079-80:

- Increased understanding of parents, family members on the needs and issues of Autism for improved social rights of Persons with Autism
- Enhanced competence of Health Care Professionals for early identification and intervention on Autism
- Enhanced competence in Autism among educational professionals in order to increase accessibility for Person with Autism.
- Improved capacity of AutismCare Nepal Society (ACNS) to function more effectively

As a target group, this project targeted to parents of Persons with Autism Spectrum Disorder/siblings, teachers/staffs who were the direct beneficiaries of the project. Media, Health Care Professionals, Government Officials, community and general population were the indirect beneficiaries. There was no geographical boundary for the target population to take part in its specific autism related services such as identification, education, therapeutic services and capacity building activities.

Despite several activities performed throughout the

fiscal year; project realized the most important results observed are:

- Under parents/carers capacity building and social rights component; various training/workshops provided to 123 families of Person with Autism from Lumbini and Kathmandu districts were extremely helpful to address the most burning and immediate needs of the parents. This helped parents understand Autism, understand their child; also increased parent's ability to teach their children. With this; these also gave opportunity to understand the rights of Person with Autism as a disability right. Through this; 39 Person with Autism received disability identity card ensured social security allowance from the government.
- Workshop on Early identification and intervention on Autism to 123 health care professionals resulted in increased of referral cases in ACNS where a total of 43 cases were referred to ACNS of which 36 were diagnosed as Autism Spectrum Disorder.
- Under regular services, ACNS provided different service to Children with Autism for about 100 times in the area of either therapeutic ones (Occupational, Music, Physiotherapy, Psychological assessment) or counseling. Such services contributed in improving living condition of Children with Autism as a part of the project.
- Other area is about education to Children with





Autism. In this connection, project provided training to 50 teachers on how to be inclusive when carrying out teaching-learning activity in the private and public schools, and such learning in the actual classroom setting. After this; ACNS's data showed that there is a total of 17 Children with Autism enrolled in the schools across the country in both public and private schools. ACNS developed a curriculum for Diploma course in Autism where a total of 15 passed the course and are working as special educators in ACNS and its local Chapters/associations.

- Established model Autism Shop (grocery and bakery) at the premise of ACNS contributed 7 young adult with Autism with the knowledge on selling skills/salesperson. This has been the model shop led by adult with Autism in Nepal.



Some Impact and Experienced Changes:

"This workshop was able to explain in a more detailed way to the parents of an autistic child and can empathize the parents of an autistic child as well as see the child from a different perspective as well as the practical aspect of autism".

-Dr. Sanket Risal, Pediatrician, Nepalgunj Hospital

"Earlier, I was unaware about caring and handling techniques of child. I used to get angry, shout and beat him when I saw his irritating behaviors like playing with soap and surf, tearing pillow cover and bed sheets, beating his elder sister, eating whatever he found. I used to lock the door and cry alone. But after attending Parent and Child training at ACNS, I came to know that I should not beat him, rather I should control myself with positive thoughts and keep working with my son. I can control the behavior of my son!"

-Father of Kavya Lamsal, Kavre

"I was keen to learn about autism. With the training that ACNS offered, I am indebted to the organization. I can now better handle the Autistic students at my class"

-Ganga Maharjan, Montessori Kids Paradise, Kathmandu

"I am indebted to Autism Care Nepal Society for transforming such knowledge so well; now I am equipped to handle student with Autism in my school. As, I am the principal of the school; I am happy to welcome student with Autism in my school."

-Asrila Maharjan, Aama Montessori, Jorpati, Kathmandu

Meaningful Participation and Inclusion of Person with Autism in Nepal

Direct Aid Project- Australian Aid

Introduction

AutismCare Nepal Society (ACNS) deeply appreciates the continuous support from Australian Embassy via Australian Aid. This 18 months (January 2023- June 2024) projects primary aim is to promote meaningful participation and inclusion in society of Person with Autism in society. To achieve this goal, we will conduct school awareness and sensitization programs in 10 different mainstream schools of Nepal. Our project's next focus is to strengthen autism inclusive club.

Our comprehensive approach includes a range of program such as autism awareness campaigns, advocacy efforts, workshop, and recreational activities, all designed to facilitate the integration of Person with Autism into society. Additionally, we plan to have the re-functional assessment of Adult with autism. Vocational strategic plan will be developed to offer Adults with Autism opportunities to engage in various interested based vocational and job orientation programs. This will encompass expanding vocational activities like bakery and chocolate making.

Furthermore, we will explore on the job training program beyond the organization to facilitate the inclusion of Adults with Autism in workplaces. To enhance the learning experience for Person with Autism, we will implement necessary transition in schools, moving from Low-Tech to Hi-Tech approaches to make educational activities more accessible.



Accomplished Activities:

1. Adult with autism acquire and enhance various vocational skills, fostering independence and self-sufficiency in Aakar Vocational Unit under the expanding vocational project activities. The expansion of vocational activities for adults with autism can lead to a multitude of positive outcomes, enriching their lives and contributing to a more inclusive and supportive society.
2. Special Educators have conducted a functional reassessment for 7 Adults with Autism, aiming to comprehensively evaluate their skills, abilities and area of growth within vocational activities. Ultimately, this will enhance their overall experience and promote their personal development, empowering them to lead more meaningful lives.
3. ACNS has published an article in Apangata Aawaz magazine with aim of raising awareness and advocating for a cause. We have conducted the workshop and Meeting of Autism Inclusive Club # Embrace Autism # on 2nd September 2023. More than 50 participants, comprising adult with autism, parents, siblings, professionals and caregivers, convened with specific objective of promoting the social inclusion of Person with Autism.



Conclusion:

The project has set a strong foundation for the successful implementation of our goals. This project has promising and significant strides on expanding vocational opportunities and inclusiveness for person with autism. We are committed to creating a more inclusive and supportive society for person with autism in Nepal.

ABILIS PROJECT

This one year project (January 2023- December 2023) is especially dedicated to advancing on social inclusion and inclusive education of Person with Autism. A key aspect of the project involves enhancing the capacity of human resources engaged in supporting individual with autism in Nepal. Additionally, the project prioritizes raising autism in society through various information, education and Communication materials. The trained teachers will conduct the home visit survey program for Children with Autism for providing support at their home environment and assessing their ongoing needs for further support mechanism. The project also includes workshops addressing the needs of parents, caregivers and other concerned stakeholders. International expert will deliver training on step to teaching. As the demand for service has increased with rising number of cases, the project play a pivotal role in enhancing organization services. A significant challenge confronted is the promotion of inclusive education for Children with Autism in Nepal. To address this, the project aims to generate a positive impact on school community through awareness and inclusive program. A National Conference was convened for schools and educational stakeholders to advocate for inclusive education in Nepal.

The project also focuses on intensive Parent and Child training program specially designed for high functioning Children with Autism. The Parents and caregivers of Children with Autism who get newly diagnosed will receive free counseling services through professionals and trained human resources of AutismCare Nepal Society.

Objectives of the project:

1. Enhance the capacity of Human resources engaged in Autism Services
2. Support the Parents and Caregivers of Person with Autism at Home environment

Accomplished project activities:

1. National Conference on Inclusive Education targeting Schools and Educational Centers:

ACNS successfully organized a National Conference on Inclusive Education "Creating Learning Environment for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Neuro Developmental Disability in Nepal", **#EmbraceAutism #EmbraceNeurodiversity** on **16th September, 2023** at the Bougainvillea Events, Tripureshwor, Kathmandu. The program was inaugurated by Chief Guest Mr. Suresh Adhikari, Secretary, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. The participation of different distinguished guests from Ministry of Education,

"Capacity Building of Stakeholders Engaged in Autism Services in Nepal"

Educational Institutions, and Organizations of Persons with Disabilities, parents, school principals and teachers, advocates, professionals with around 200 participations shows the keen interest and need of advancing inclusive education for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Neuro-developmental Disorders (NDD) in Nepal. The Conference aimed to share knowledge, best practices and strategies to improve the educational experiences and outcomes for these needy children.

2. ACNS appointed 12 trained teachers and assistant teachers for the home visit survey program. The home visit program has benefited 14 (10 Boy and 4 Girl) children with Autism to date.
3. The Information Education and Communication (IEC)s materials were developed with aim to raising autism awareness at the community level.
4. In August 2023, ACNS efficiently executed the Training of Trainer Intensive and Child Training, drawing the participation of over the 40 attendees.



Construction of National Center for

AUTISM

AutismCare Nepal Society almost completed its dream project construction of National Center for Autism at Jharuwarasi, Ward No. 13, Godawari Municipality, Lalitpur District, Bagmati Province, Nepal.

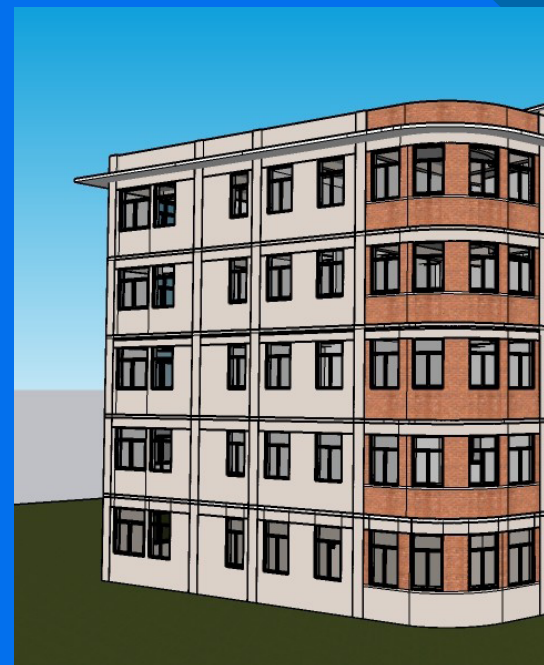
After completion of this structure, Person with Autism and their parents and caregivers will be benefited through education, training and autism related services .

This is five storeyed building. The basement to third floor with total built up area is 22886 Sq. ft. The basement floor consists of Administrative section, Art Therapy, Music Therapy, Speech Therapy, Multipurpose Hall including Counseling areas. The ground floor consists of GYM/ Physiotherapy, Parents and child Training section, Reception and Lobby. The first floor consists of Cafeteria, Sensory Room, five Class Rooms including Quiet Room. The second floor consists of Vocational Training section including Wood Workshop, Bakery Room, Sewing Machine, Envelope Making and Paper Recycling. Similarly, the third floor consists of Teacher Training section and E- library.

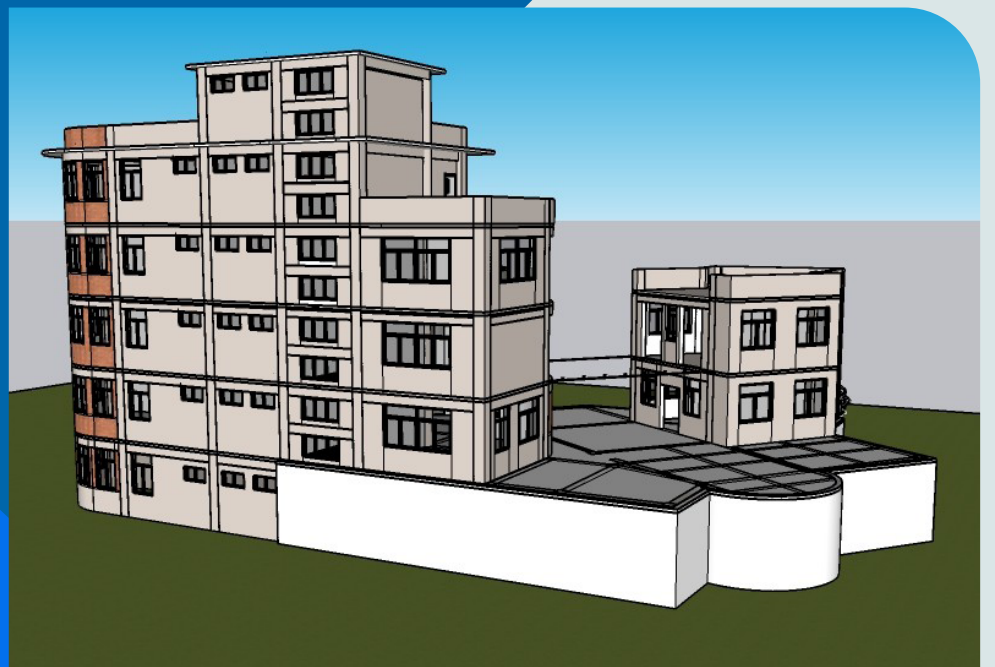
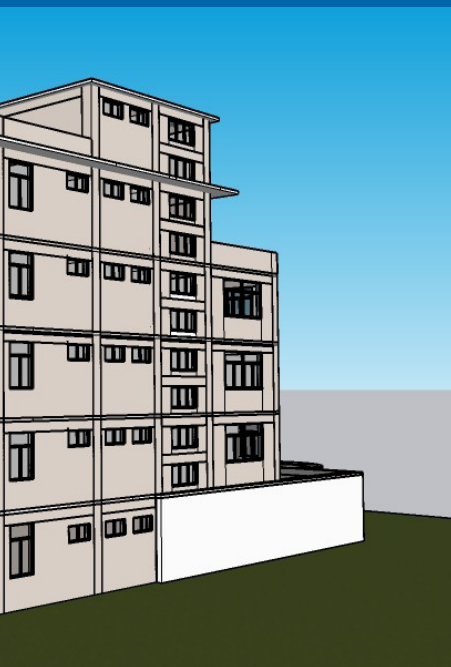
At present, the structure works of the building has already been completed along with 95% completion of brickwork and 85% of completion of plaster works. Our Special thanks goes to the main donor of this building construction project - Nick Simon's Foundation along with Construction partners.



The 3D Designs of proposed National Center for Autism



Ongoing Building Construction Project of National Center for Autism



Neurodevelopment and Autism in South Asia Treatment and Evidence (NAMASTE)

NAMASTE is a research program understood for Neuro-development and Autism in South Asia Treatment and Evidence. Through a combination of research, training, and capacity building in India, Sri Lanka, and Nepal, NAMASTE seeks to design and test a system to ease the journey of families as they recognize their child's differences, seek a diagnosis, and access interventions and support.

This 5-year (2023-2028) research project is implemented by AutismCare Nepal Society, the University of Manchester, and other national and international partners.

Objectives

- Enhance the capacity of staff and non-specialist health workers working in community-level health posts for early detection of children with neuro-developmental disorders (NDDs) including autism.
- Provide an evidence-based intervention for parents and caregivers to address the unique, behavioral, intellectual, and communication needs of children with neuro-developmental disorders and autism.
- Develop community engagement materials for public awareness in Nepal in collaboration with families and self-advocates to improve access to care and intervention for neuro-developmental disorders and autism.

Four Workstreams of NAMASTE

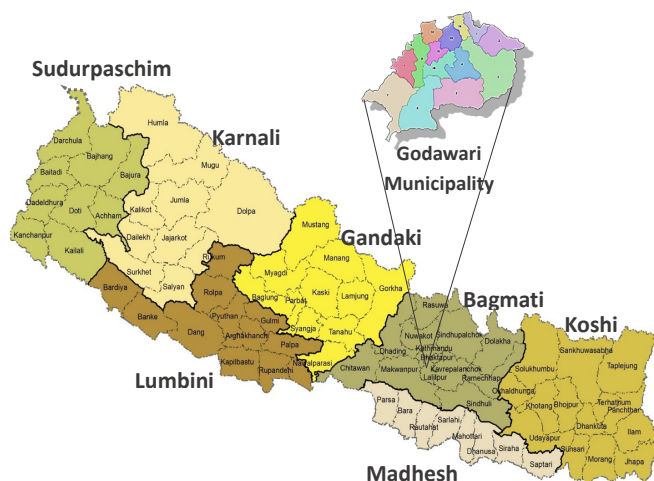


Geographical Coverage

The project covers all 14 wards of Godawari Municipality.

The reasons for selecting this region are:

- Proximity of AutismCare Nepal Society (ACNS) for diagnosis, functional assessment, and therapeutic interventions, feasibility for parents/caregivers
- Peri-urban setting/mixed community to administer a 'model' research project that can be well replicated.



Expected Outcomes

NAMASTE is expected to produce scientific evidence on:

- Scientific Outcomes:** the feasibility, acceptability, and effectiveness of the detection and intervention pathway Public engagement program and their impact
- Policy Outcomes:** advocating for the needs of children with neurodevelopmental conditions Links with experts by experience and service users along with increased community awareness
- Capacity Building Outcomes:** Capacity building and formation of a regional research and training hub.

Activities Conducted so far

1. Detection

- Orientation on autism and NAMASTE project to Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs), Health Post In-charge
- Social Attention and Community Surveillance (SACS) slide has been finalized in English and Nepali. However, Nepali slides needs moderation. The SACS training will be administered to FCHVs.
- Rastriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK) checklist translation is in progress.
- Cognitive Interview has been conducted for SACS checklist
- All the SACS checklist has been translated and adapted
- Field visit to 11 wards to verify the eligibility of FCHVs to administer SACS training
- Selection of NSPs for detection is ongoing research and training hub.

A. PASS Plus

1. Master Trainer Development and Intervention Training Initiation

- The PASS-PLUS intervention training program followed by a three-month internship was successfully launched in accordance with the established research plan.
- Two Master Trainers were recruited and trained who actively participated in an intensive 4-day online training program organized by SANGATH, India.

2. Translation of Key Documents and Terminologies

- The translation of essential documents, including the Participant Information Sheet (PIS) and Consent Form have been completed
- Furthermore, key terminologies have been translated of the PASS-PLUS manual.

3. Ongoing Internship and Ethical Considerations

- Four families were identified and selected residing in the Lalitpur district to participate in practice sessions.
- In adherence to ethical standards, necessary consents were obtained from the selected families, ensuring their informed participation in the intervention process.
- In order to maintain the quality and effectiveness of the intervention, supervision program was established as part of internship.
- Encouraging active participation, Master Trainers are fully engaged in home visits with the autism family.

B. Caregivers Skill Training (CST)

- The Caregiver Knowledge and Skill Test has been translated into Nepali, its items have been modified by discussing with a team of special educators and parents of children with autism in a cognitive interview, and the pre-final draft was subjected to the pretesting with twelve participants. The comprehensibility and relevancy of the items will be analyzed using the data collected from the pretesting.
- The background measures, caregiver, facilitator, and observer feedback forms, home visit participant feedback form, participant information sheet, and consent form have been translated into Nepali.
- The team (project director, master trainers, and CST-coordinator) has been participating in weekly meetings online to discuss the facilitation presentation slides and more.

3. Community Engagement and Inclusion (CEI)

- Orientation on NAMASTE to stakeholders such as officials of NHRC, Health Post In-charge, FCHVs
- Formation of Community Advisory Board (CAB) who will be working closely for community engagement
- Preliminary meeting with CAB members
- Meeting with Deputy Mayor of Godawari Municipality as she is also appointed as the CAB member
- Co-design workshops with parents of children with autism and non-specialist health workers to design toolkit for community engagement and In Depth Interviews (IDIs) with parents of children with autism, autistic individuals and specialist and non-specialist health workers to develop prototype toolkit for community engagement
- Orientation on autism and NAMASTE project to actors of street drama
- 4 days training on street drama for awareness generation on autism and Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (NDDs)
- Field visit to all the health posts and wards of Godawari Municipality to help collect information on the things that is required for the development of CE toolkits

Music Therapy at Autismcare Nepal Society



Amrit Gandhari
Clinical Music Therapist

AutismCare Nepal Society (ACNS) provide Music Therapy Service for the Children with Autism who are enrolled in Aarambha Pre-Primary School (APPS) of ACNS. Music Therapy is the clinical and evidence based use of musical intervention to accomplish individualized goals within a therapeutic relationship by a credential professional who has completed an approved Music Therapy Program.

At ACNS, music therapy room is arranged with variety of musical instruments such as Ocean Drum, Guitar, Piano, range of Percussion instruments etc. that are easily accessible. The child and therapist improvise together, creating music and interact each other with therapeutic processes. It also provides an alternative method of communication and expand opportunities for interaction on a daily basis. Instrument playing in music therapy sessions encourages the development of gross and fine motor skills as well as hand-eye coordination. Music and movement activities include following simple directions in songs such as clapping hands and stomping feet which also contribute to the development of motor skills.

Music therapy sessions foster the development of social skills through the children waiting for their turn, sharing ideas, listening to each other and appreciating each other's playing. Singing words with songs helps the individual to speak and use language. Ultimately, this makes it easier for speech to be transferred to everyday life.

My Working Experiences

I am delighted to share Annual reports of music therapy. Its amazing journey of 10 years of working with children, family and ACNS family.

I have been conducting group and individual music therapy session with children. This year around 18 children got individual music therapy once a week regularly from green class, blue and yellow class. After assessment of music therapy, I have deeply gone through their needs and working upon it. Trying to help them with their daily life to make easy through music therapy. Like communication (hello , Namaste , how are you), and socialization (sharing, waiting , listing).

Red class, Vocational Unit including all 3 classes from Aarambha School received group music therapy. They enjoyed singing, dancing and ways to explore their emotions at group music therapy. It a was really proud moment for us when our children performed in World Autism Awareness Day in front of mass audience including Australian ambassador to Nepal.

Individual and group music therapy really help children and young adults with autism to engage and learn to communicate and enjoy in their life. I hope there will be remarkable moments of music therapy services at ACNS in coming days.



Occupational Therapy Department



Ms. Rojeena Bajracharya
Physiotherapist (Trained on OT)

In the year 2023, the Occupational Therapy department at AutismCare Nepal Society (ACNS) continued its mission to provide essential support and services via assessment and therapy to children with autism. This report highlights our key achievements, challenges faced, and future objectives.

Introduction- Occupational Therapy Department

AutismCare Nepal Society is dedicated to improving the lives of children with autism through occupational therapy. Occupational therapy is a healthcare profession that focuses on helping individuals to participate in the activities and occupations that are meaningful to them. For children with autism, this includes activities like dressing, eating, playing, socializing, and attending school.

Objectives:

The objectives and vision of occupational therapy for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) are centered around improving their overall quality of life, enhancing their functional independence, transition to school/ inclusive education and supporting their participation in daily activities.

Programs and participations:

- Our department continued to offer a range of occupational therapy assessment and therapy services tailored to the unique needs of each child, emphasizing on early intervention, sensory integration, and skill development.
- Occupational Therapy orientation classes in school setting at Teachers’ Training program and Parents and Child Training Program.
- Knowledge and skill transfer and training to co-worker and teachers in ACNS.
- Teacher’s training session at CEHRD, Dhulikhel on 7th May, 2023
- Diploma classes in regard to the topic- occupational therapy and sensory processing
- Completed Master Trainer Training and Fidelity Test and was appointed National Master Trainer to provide supervision and promotion of the CST program.
- Supervising Home Visit Program conducted by John Travis and mobilize participants to home program for children with Autism.
- Poster presentation in National Conference on Inclusive education on 16th September, 2023

Key achievement and service

	Service	No of male Children	No of female Children	Total
School	OT at Therapy room	9	2	11
	OT at Classroom	19	4	23
Out of Service	Assessment	61	15	76
	Intervention	208	71	279

In 2080, the Occupational Therapy department achieved significant milestones, serving a total of 302 children. We were able to successfully transit more than 25 children undergoing OT therapy to inclusive school.

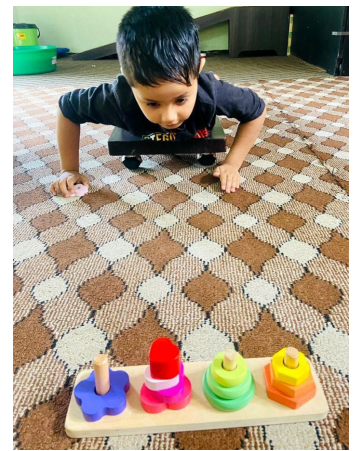


Future Goals and Objectives

Looking ahead, our department aims to:

- Increase the number of assessment and therapy sessions to meet growing demand.
- Enhance training and professional development opportunities for our available human resources
- Continue collaborating with Aarambha Pre-primary Schools.
- Plan for a visit at different school then courage inclusive education.

In conclusion, the Occupational Therapy department at ACNS remains committed to its mission of improving the lives of children with autism. We are inspired by the progress we witness each day and are determined to continue making a difference. We are also privileged to share some heartwarming testimonials from our clients and their families, underscoring the positive impact of our occupational therapy services. We express our deep gratitude to all our clients, their families, our dedicated staff, and our supporters for their unwavering commitment to improving the lives of children with autism through occupational therapy.



Autism Story

Namaste !

My name is Dhanusta Subba. My son's Name is Shamman Subba. Shamman was born in B.P. Koirala Institute of Health Sciences (Dharan) During my pregnancy I had all the necessary investigation done by Doctor and everything seemed normal. As the days went by, I noticed that my child's behavior was different compared to other children.

He never used to make eye contact or respond when we used to called his name. He used to enjoy playing by lining up objects like, bowls, glasses and plates. He used to have difficulty in communication even when he was hungry. When he turned 3 years I enrolled him in pre-school (Montessori) but we didn't see any progress in his behavior. We were really worried about his growth. The teacher suggested that we should take him to the hospital for a check-up. The doctor identified some issues and recommended us for further evaluation in Kathmandu.



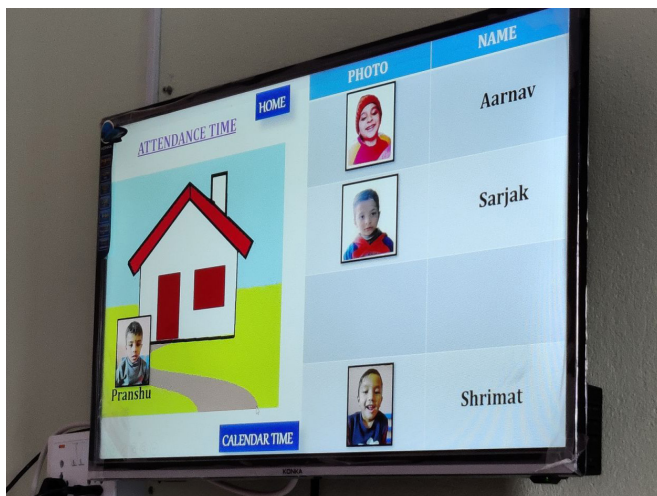
After consulting with a Psychologist, he was diagnosed with ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder) We had never heard about Autism before, and initially we thought it was a curable disease.

When we found out that Autism can't be cured we became even more concerned. However, things started to improve gradually, after I attended Parent and Child Training Program (PCTP) in June 2009 at AutismCare Nepal Society. Now, he is 18 years old young boy and when I see him I feel incredibly lucky to be his Mom. I never gave up despite facing many challenges while he was growing up. Although he can't use sentences, he communicates by using visual support and sign language and we can understand each other. He follows instructions and express his feelings through pictures and gestures. He has to be independent. It's important for all parents to remember that talent and ability should never judged solely by what we see on the surface.

THE POWER OF THE *Audio Visual Learning* — S T R A T E G Y —

Children with Autism have different learning abilities. So, professionals working with them must understand to pair, make a close friend and work with them. As they have special talents, those special qualities must be identified by teacher. The learning capacity and requirement each child may be different from other. A trained and experienced teacher having the quality of patience and hard working can handle those special children. Not only this well resource classroom is most essential for them.

Multiple approaches of teaching methods are required in order to meet needs for CWA. The two way communication between student and teacher is the foundation of learning milestone. As we found that most of the CWA are audio visual learners. The



Aarambha Pre-Primary School (APPS) is using power point presentation along PECS, TEAACH, ABA, Social Story and Play Therapy. It is found that students are more likely to understand using the power point presentation from big screen. The audio and visual support has increased the class interaction and created favourable environment for learning for our students. APPS has already started its classes from this medium. We are using Circle Time for our students at the preliminary phase of this practice which has been more effective for our students. Our students are learning better than before using for this medium. And

we are going to begin more class activities from this. As per the Temple Grandin, famous Person with Autism (PWA), animal scientist and spokesperson of Autism has given the opinion about audio visual. "I think in pictures. Words are like a second language to me... when somebody speaks to me, his words are instantly



translated into pictures...

One of the most profound mysteries of autism has been the remarkable ability of most autistic people to excel at visual spatial skills while performing so poorly at verbal skills." According to her every word that she listens are set as a picture in her mind. So, pictures are the powerful factors for understanding the world. Each student has oppourtunity to learn any difficult tasks in a easier way. The level of understanding is better for CWA. The audio visual teaching strategy is the indispensable factor of well resource classroom to develop the possibilities of each child learning abilities.



Mahesh Bajagain
Teacher/School Administrator

All About Autism

If they can't learn the way we teach, we teach the way they learn. Some might not get along with this statement may not be aware about "autism". What is Autism? Autism where little things are never little and every milestone is equal to the celebrations and all little steps is big achievement.

societies, environment let's all realize that making a fruitful bond with them and living a world with them, it's unique a joyfull. In this journey, not only we teach them but we can also learn from them, for me in my 2 years working experience I learned that immense happiness can be found in every small thing and also they taught me patience.

I learned to become a patient, realized things take time, changes takes time and when there's a slight change as well there is no measure of happiness within us. Our happiness cannot be measured.

I have an example on true incident which was shared by a parent during my PCTP theory class training. She said, "I was very happy when my son blew (fu gareko) for the first time". This might be very normal to other parents but for her it was very big achievement when her son blew. So, this is what I meant by little things actually matters."

When I came to ACNS for first time I was not much aware too, I was scared with the children, but with passing days its just like understanding life from different point of view. I understand that it can be hard sometimes, but through love and kindness



There is no accurate term to define Autism because every individual we meet define autism differently. "Autism" is unique and different yet beautiful. Autism makes us realize that world is not just what we see and assume it to be, rather it can be lived from different perspective as well as still look beautiful.

We can see many people still knowing about what Autism is? People who know as well are not willing to accept it, why? It means there are still lots to learn about. Autism is not only linked with disadvantages, they are also human who belong to this world and it is our responsibility to create the space, environment for them. Despite of negativities coming from different spaces,

AUTISM

जति छिटो अटिजमको पहिचान गरी प्रारम्भिक हस्तक्षेप र सहयोगहरू उपलब्ध गराउन सकियो,



अटिजम भएका बालबालिका तथा व्यक्तिहरूको जीवनको गुणस्तरमा त्यति नै ठूलो सकारात्मक फरक ल्याउन सकिन्छ।

every battle can be fought. We need all kinds of minds to work with them because they can think through where our imagination ends because they are just different not less.

It is responsibility of every individual to create a space for them to make them feel comfortable. We can see many videos related to Autism in social media going viral where parents are compelled to put their children in "khor" by tying them for almost whole day in village areas according to their revelation. This is because people in village areas are still deprived of education and awareness of autism. They do not know what "Autism" is. They perform such activities with children, which is not justifiable. Children should be treated with proper therapies and parents with proper knowledge about autism. Most of the time, Autism is not found to be struggle, but making people understand about autism is struggle.



Government and media should take a step ahead to improve situation all over and give right to the children and let them not suffer because they cannot express but they can feel, they also have feelings but they lack in putting their feelings towards us, they lack in delivering feelings and emotions to us.

Government should look after providing facilities, training to the figures and scopes should be created and managed for our children

to secure life easier in the future and there should be autism friendly environment as well as in places. I can also see many parents coming from different parts of country for Assessment, Diagnosis and looking after Therapies. With no proper income, away from hometown with their child visiting organization, listing names, waiting turns its difficult looking for their school to fit their children in but only few gets chance to do admission of their child in regular school. So, to reduce this dilemma I believe there should be more schools, manpower and therapists to make parents way easier and "Inclusive Education" is most for every child to enhance their skills like regular kids.

In conclusion Autism is square pegs in this round world. Therefore they should be understood. As a parents, teachers, caregivers we should all fight for their rights, on behalf of them. In context of Nepal, there's still a much more awareness is needed. In the end I would like to say that never keep the expectations beyond child's capability. Do it slowly and patiently. Comparison is just not the key. With patience achievement will be there and never trouble or pressure child's with own higher expectations. Be fun, be friend and live a life through their angle of way of living.

Also at last but not a least I would like to express gratitude towards ACNS for different trainings and workshops applicable for the parent and giving fresher's chance to learn and know about what "Autism" is. Also for creating new ideas and facilities for the betterment of the children in the future. Since long back to till date it's only possible because of the great ACNS team.



Rahisha Maharjan
Assistant Teacher (Green Class)

ASSESSMENT AND DIAGNOSIS

Ajita Deuja, MA (Psych), Psychologist, Ujila Maharjan (MA Psych)
AutismCare Nepal Society, Harisiddhi, Lalitpur, Nepal

Introduction

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a complex neurodevelopmental condition that affects millions of individuals worldwide. Understanding and supporting those with ASD begins with a comprehensive assessment and diagnosis process. This vital undertaking not only helps identify the presence of ASD but also provides valuable insights into an individual's unique strengths and challenges. In this presentation, we will explore the essential components of the assessment and diagnosis journey, shedding light on how these processes contribute to improved understanding, tailored interventions, and enhanced quality of life for individuals living with ASD. Join us as we embark on this exploration of the critical initial steps in the autism journey.

Objectives

General Objective

- To identify children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and other developmental disorders using psychological assessment

Specific Objectives

- To detect children with autism spectrum disorder using ADOS.
- To find the early intellectual development of children from 1-6 years old.
- To understand the cognitive abilities and problem-solving skills of older age children i.e. from (6-16) years old.

Methods

- **The Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule-2 (ADOS-2)**

The Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule-2 (ADOS-2) is a widely used clinical tool designed to assist professionals in accurately diagnosing autism spectrum disorders (ASD). It is considered one of the gold standards for assessing and diagnosing ASD, providing a structured and standardized approach to evaluating communication, social interaction, and play for individuals suspected of having autism. This tool includes 5 modules, they are :

Toddler Module, Module 1, Module 2, Module 3, Module 4



Picture 1: Psychologist evaluating a child in ADOS-2 assessment

- **Early Intellectual Development Test**

The Mullen Scales of Early Learning MSEL is a crucial psychological test in the diagnosis of young children who may have an autism spectrum disorder. MSEL is a test that assists in determining early intellectual development and school readiness. It assesses a child's strengths and weaknesses quickly and accurately to determine their overall cognitive capacity and motor development.



Picture 2: Psychologist with a child and the parent in cognitive assessment

Data Analysis

The application of psychosocial assessment methodologies allows the Autism Care Nepal Society to identify more children with autism. Each year, more children are being diagnosed with autism [See Figure 3]. Our preliminary data on children who have been diagnosed with ASD shows a gradual increase in the number of kids who attend our center and have the disorder. Male children acquire more diagnoses than female children, according to the graph's depiction of the children's gender (see Figure 4).

Children Diagnosed Annually at ACNS

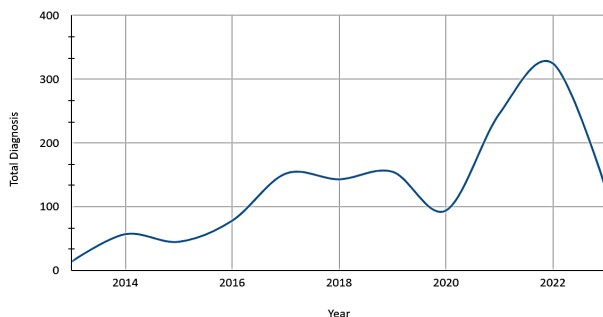


Figure 3 : Annual Diagnosis of children with Autism at ACNS

Female and Male Children's Annual Diagnosis ACNS

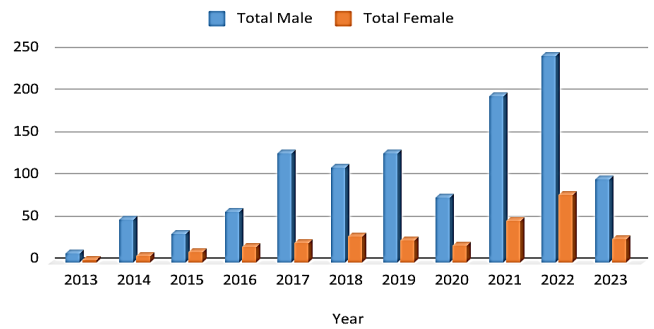


Figure 4 : Bar-graph showing gender of Children with Autism

Results

People are becoming more conscious, and we can see that they are making every effort to support their kids. We are learning how to give these kids the support and atmosphere they need while also establishing strategic techniques to do it.

Conclusion

In summary, our pursuit of identifying children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and other developmental disorders has been significantly enhanced through the use of crucial assessment tools such as the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule-2 (ADOS-2) and the Mullen Scales of Early Learning (MSEL). ADOS-2's structured approach allows for accurate ASD diagnosis across age groups, while MSEL aids in swiftly identifying early cognitive strengths and weaknesses. These assessments are pivotal in facilitating timely interventions and tailored support for these children, ensuring their unique needs are met and maximizing their potential for a brighter future.

Head Gesture and Voice based Learning App for Children with Autism of Nepal

Nepal Associate Prof. Sachin Shrestha, Associate Prof. Amit Shah, Er. Pawan Dhakal, Er. Niraj Dhakal Department of Electronics and Communication Engineering, Nepal Engineering College

Introduction

Autism: Autism is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by differences in social communication and behavior.

Statistics

- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), one in 36 aged 8 years was estimated to have ASD in the year 2020 [1].
- In Nepal, the estimated prevalence of autism is 3 per 1000 children based on a 2018 survey [2].
- According to ACNS's 2022 annual report, they have diagnosed a total of 1339 cases since their establishment, with 288 new cases in the fiscal year 2078/79 BS [3].

ICT based Learning Platform for CWA

Popular mobile apps:

- Language Therapy for Children with Autism (MITA) [4]
- Autism iHelp – Play [5]
- Proloquo2Go [6]
- TEAPP - Autism and videogames [7]
- Autism Counting 123 [8]

Developed in Nepal:

- ACNS Sunaulo Bihani [9]
- Beautiful Minds [10]

Objective

- To develop a desktop-based application that will aid children with autism in learning new words and in recognizing the various objects with the help of pictures and audio in games.

Methodology

- Hardware components included a laptop with a camera, processing unit, monitor, microphone, and speaker.
- The system's design allows for implementation on portable devices like Raspberry Pi.
- The learning platform application was developed using Python version 3.6.4.

- The development approach incorporated gamification elements such as avatars, points, challenges, and feedback.
- The application's main goal was to engage users while teaching them the names of various fruits through challenges.

User Interface

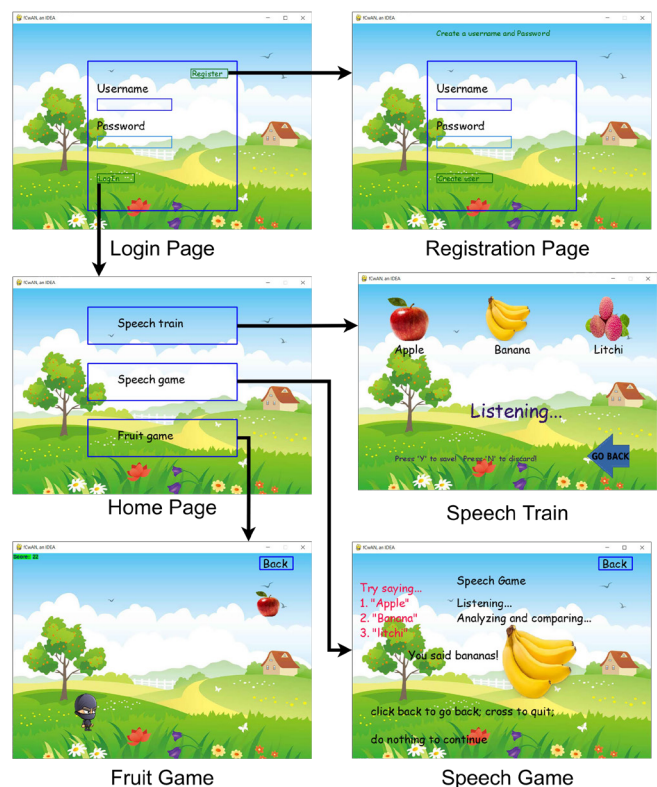


Fig 1: User Interface of the App

Results

- The research presented an application recognizing facial/head gestures, voice inputs, and generating corresponding audio/visuals.
- With 100 different observations, different parameters were calculated.

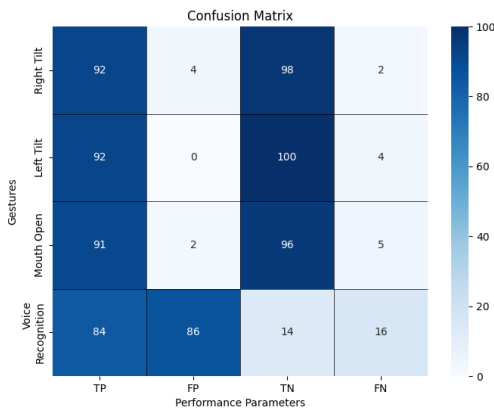


Fig 2: Confusion Matrix – Summarized result for different movements and voice recognition

Table 2 – Impact analysis of the app for CWA

Age	Ability/ level	Learn time	Performance in Fruit game	Performance in Speech section
15	Verbal (2 to 3 words)	10 min	Scored 27 within 25 min	Spoke trained words and random words during the speech game.
15	Non-verbal, hyperactive	15 min	Scored 4 within 10 min	-
13	Verbal (2 to 3 words)	5 min	Scored 12 within 9 min	Spoke random words in speech game
22	Verbal (2 to 3 words as required)	2 min	Scored 7 within 5 min	-

Table 3 – Impact analysis of the app for neurotypical children

Age	Ability/ level	Learn time	Performance in Fruit game	Performance in Speech section
11	Class 6	1 min	Scored 22 within 5 min	Ideal
13	Class 7	Less than 1 min	Scored 45 within 4 min	Ideal
8	Class 4	3 min	Scored 15 within 8 min	Ideal
9	Class 4	2 min	Scored 20 within 7 min	Ideal
4	UKG	3 min	Scored 32 within 15 min	Ideal



Fig 3: 64 points landmark

Conclusion

- The developed system identifies facial and head gestures and voice commands.
- Achieved high accuracy rates: 97.09% for gesture detection and 85% for voice recognition.
- Impressive engagement observed during testing with neurotypical children and CWAs aged 4 to 22.
- Potential as a foundational learning platform for autism community that in turn will be a big aid in creating a **foundation for Inclusive Education.**

Future Plan / Recommendation

- **Enhance Portability:** Make the system more portable, possibly using Raspberry Pi.
- **Leverage Cloud Computing:** Improve processing with cloud computing for efficient analysis.
- **Automate Education Plans:** Develop AI-based tools for personalized education plans.
- **Inclusive Education:** Make it a part of mainstream schools

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Social Skills Application for Children with Autism: An ICT-Based Approach

Alish Shrestha, Chandani Jha and Nitu Yadav

Under the supervision: Assoc. Prof. Sachin Shrestha and Assoc. Prof. Amit Shah

Department of Electronics and Communication Engineering, Nepal Engineering College

Introduction

Autism:

- Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) refers to a group of complex neurodevelopment disorders caused by differences in the brain that affect communication and behavior

Through the Years: Autism Prevalence Rate

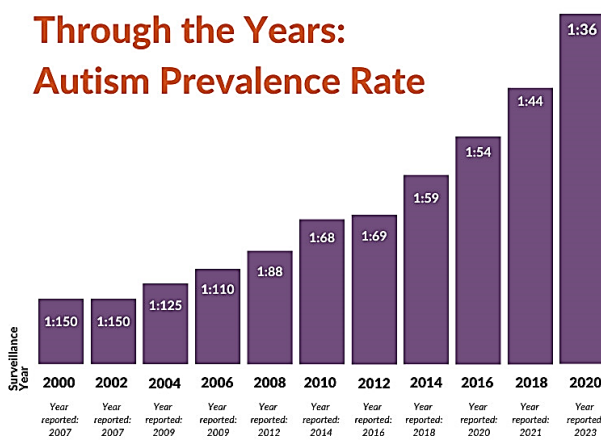


Fig 1 : Graph of New Autism Prevalence Rate Released by CDC [1]

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released new data from the Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network (ADDM) reporting about 1 in 36 children were diagnosed with ASD.

Social skill app

- Social skills apps can benefit children with autism by providing structured, visual, and interactive learning opportunities, along with feedback and motivation.
- Teaching social skills to individuals with autism can be a valuable and challenging endeavor. Some of the available app are Proloquo2Go [2], Create Social Skills Stories [3] and Speech Blubs 2 [4].

Motivation

- App subscription prices can be quite costly, often amounting to hundreds of dollars.
- Apps mentioned in the previous list may not be suitable for the context of Nepal.

Objective

- To design application for children with autism to teach social skills

Methodology

The Web application use

- Frontend: Developed using React
- Backend: Utilizes Node.js.
- AI Model: YOLOv5 is used for training in two areas:
 - Concentration Detection: To monitor user focus and concentration.
 - Gesture Detection: To analyze and assess user imitation of social gestures.

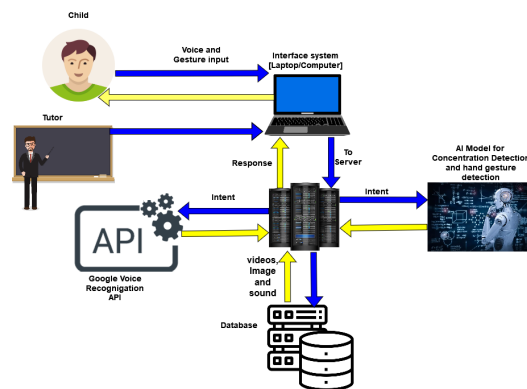


Figure 2: Block diagram of app for children with autism

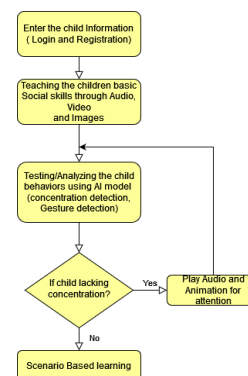


Figure 3: Flowchart of system from child perspective

App Features:

- Basic Social Skill Learning: Offers audio and video content for teaching fundamental social skills, such as greetings like "Namaste", "Hello" etc.
- Testing: Allows users, especially children, to practice imitating these gestures.
- Scenario-Based Learning: Provides scenarios for users to apply their social skills in various situations.



- The web application designed for children with autism utilizes a web-based platform that integrates videos and classroom techniques.
- Engages children through an interactive learning environment and employs AI models for detecting concentration and recognizing gestures using YOLOv5.
- The app includes modules for teaching various social skills, such as eye contact and conversation. It offers an effective and enjoyable therapeutic approach for children, making it a valuable resource for parents, educators, and therapists.

Output

AI model has been successfully trained using YOLOv5, and excellent performance is indicated by the results from the confusion matrix.

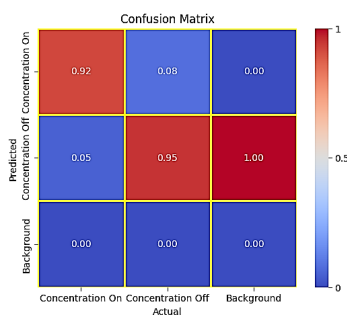


Figure 4: Confusion matrix of Concentration detection

Furthermore, extensive testing of our AI model, including self-testing, was conducted, and notably impressive results were achieved.

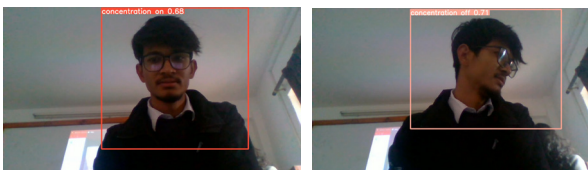


Figure 5a & 5b: Showing concentration on while giving attention to computer screen and concentration off while user distracted from computer screen



Figure 6a & 6b: Gesture detection using trained AI model

App Functionality

The web application platform features distinct login sections for both children and tutors. Within this system, tutors have the capability to assign tasks, and children can subsequently follow these tasks based on the provided instructions.

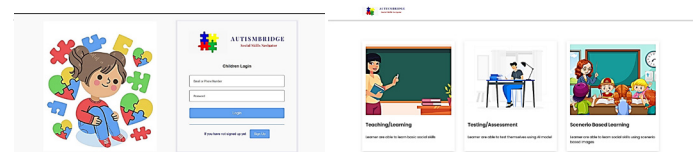


Figure 7a & 7b: Login and Dashboard layout of App

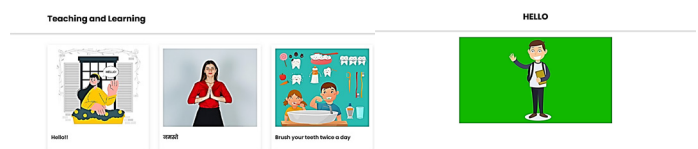


Figure 8a & 8b: Teaching/Learning section Layout

Outcome

- Preliminary testing has been conducted on ourselves and with some non-autistic children, resulting in notably positive outcomes. However, further testing is required with autistic children to validate the system's effectiveness.

Further works

- Enhancing interactivity within the system/web app.
- Conducting tests with children diagnosed with autism to evaluate system functionality.

Inclusion

- This web application empowers inclusive education by teaching vital social skills to children with autism through interactive modules and AI-driven gesture recognition which fosters a supportive environment for their growth and learning.

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Review: Challenges and Enablers of Inclusive Education among Students with Autism

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Introduction

Autism is a lifelong condition characterized by the presence of repetitive behaviors with restricted interests along with deficits in social communication (Hodges et al., 2020). Individuals with autism have difficulties in social interaction and communication areas, which makes them more difficult to adjust to social environments like schools. Also, the period during their adolescent age has other symptoms such as being resistant to any change, and sexual behaviors that may be socially unacceptable including self-harm and other aggressive acts (Levy & Perry, 2011). Thus, without recognizing these differences along with other symptoms of autism among adolescents with autism, the trickier aspects of their social lives may be overlooked or overlooked by the school staff including new parents.

Creating an inclusive education environment as described by the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 24 is essential to making their educational journey beneficial. It states that people with disabilities should receive the support they need to achieve an effective education and that effective individual support should be provided to maximize academic and social development (Bloom & Holmqvist, 2022). The possible enablers of the challenges must be identified and implemented. This not only creates the space for an inclusive education but also for overall independent social development making the school environment less challenging for the person with autism maximizing academic development too.

Objectives

- The aim of this study is :
 - ✓ To understand the challenges and barriers that adolescents with Autism have to face in mainstream schools.
 - ✓ To identify the possible enablers contributing inclusive learning environment for adolescents in mainstream schools.

Methods

Five studies were included in this analysis. In Poland, a mixed-methods study utilized qualitative interviews and surveys with teachers and professionals in inclusive educational settings to identify barriers to inclusion, pinpointing teacher preparation, resource

constraints, attitudinal hurdles, and bureaucratic difficulties as primary obstacles (Hers & Ellet, 2019). In the United States, a study surveyed four elementary school teachers with two years of experience teaching students with autism, uncovering issues related to teachers' lack of training, limited collaboration opportunities, and insufficient school-provided resources for students with Autism (Jaffal, 2022). Another study explored the challenges and support needs of 23 students with Autism in higher education through semi-structured interviews and Grounded Theory analysis (Hees et al., 2015). Two additional studies employed mixed-methods approaches or qualitative research methods to investigate various aspects of inclusion and the high school experience for students with Autism (White et al., 2016; Gavelda & Qunyi, 2012).

Findings

After a thorough review of five different studies, various challenges along with enablers were found that are illustrated in the figure below:

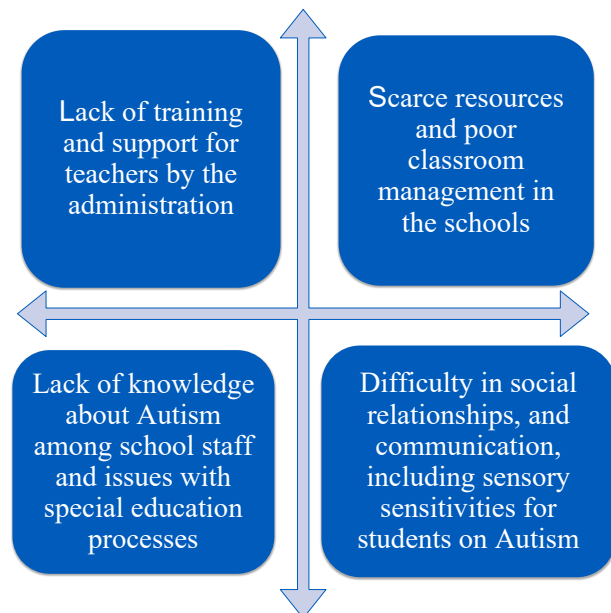


Figure A: Challenges for Inclusive Education

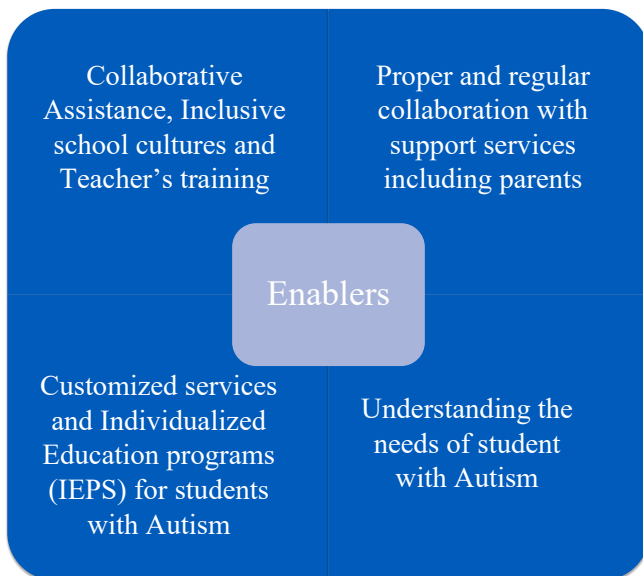


Figure B: Enablers for Inclusive Education

Discussion

The review of five different studies suggest that there are many challenges along with possible enablers to each challenge. The major challenge to inclusive education for students with Autism has been found to be a lack of knowledge among school staff and little or no training for the teachers. The teachers can promote a special inclusive education process if they are trained and regularly supervised by concerned authorities. Also, the essential support from the administration, scarce resources, and poor classroom management have been a barrier to the inclusive learning environment. Besides all these challenges from the side of the schools, adolescents with Autism have their own special characteristics like difficulty in social relationships, communication difficulties, routines and rituals, and other sensitivities that make them difficult in the poorly managed classrooms of mainstream schools.

Thoughtful enablers were extracted from the studies that can help in making the learning environment more inclusive. Necessary collaborative assistance and training to the teachers, regular collaboration, and communication with support systems including parents can be promoted as parents are the first people to help their children. Also, it is necessary to understand the needs of students with Autism which will eventually make the inclusive process easier.

Conclusion

This study identifies a number of enablers, including individualized strategies, collaborative assistance, and targeted teacher training. Peer mentoring, academic accommodations, and supportive campus environments are beneficial to adolescents with Autism. Thus, removing obstacles for both teachers and students is necessary for inclusive education for them. It is essential to have comprehensive assistance, inclusive school cultures, and teacher training programs. Individualized support programs that are catered to each student's particular needs are crucial.

Customized services encourage academic performance and social integration in higher education. In conclusion, a comprehensive strategy is required for inclusive education for adolescents with Autism. With a focus on the significance of continuous research and advocacy for fair and supportive learning environments in mainstream settings, this study offers insights into the difficulties and potential.

Recommendations

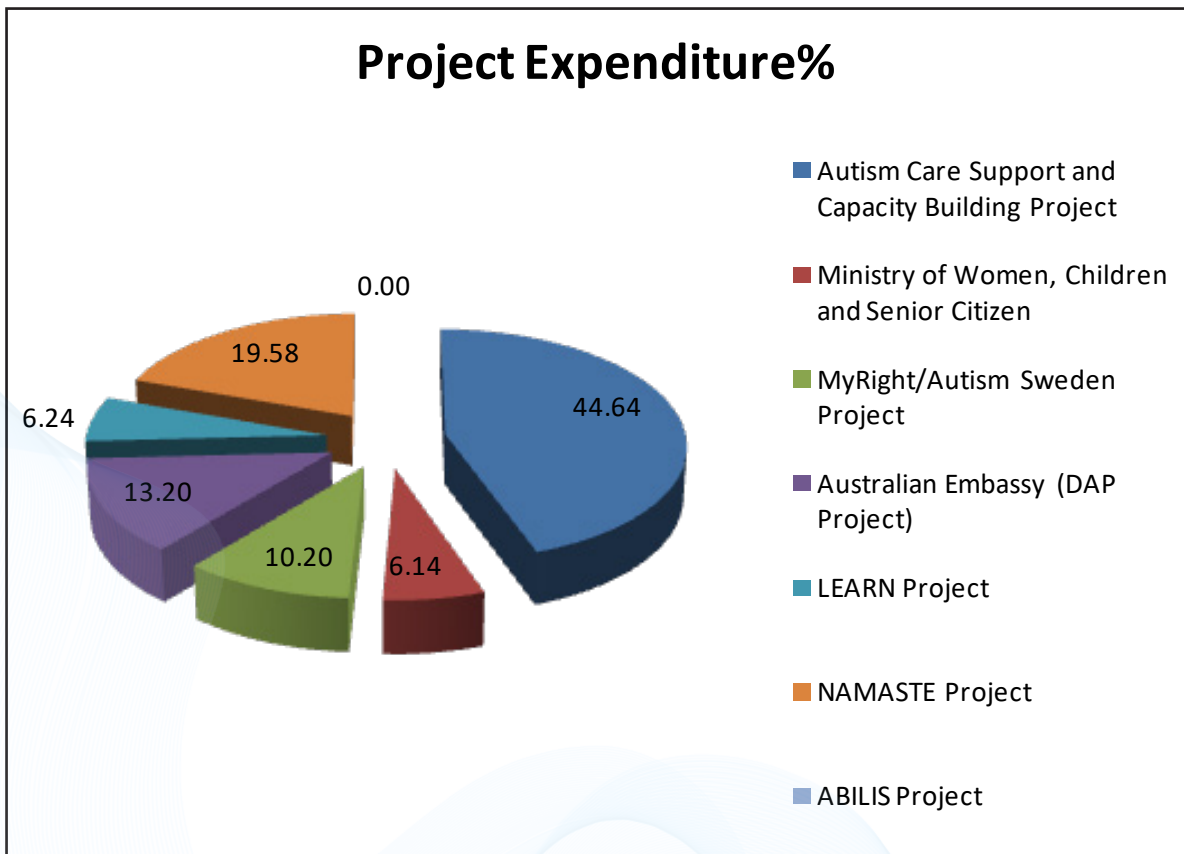
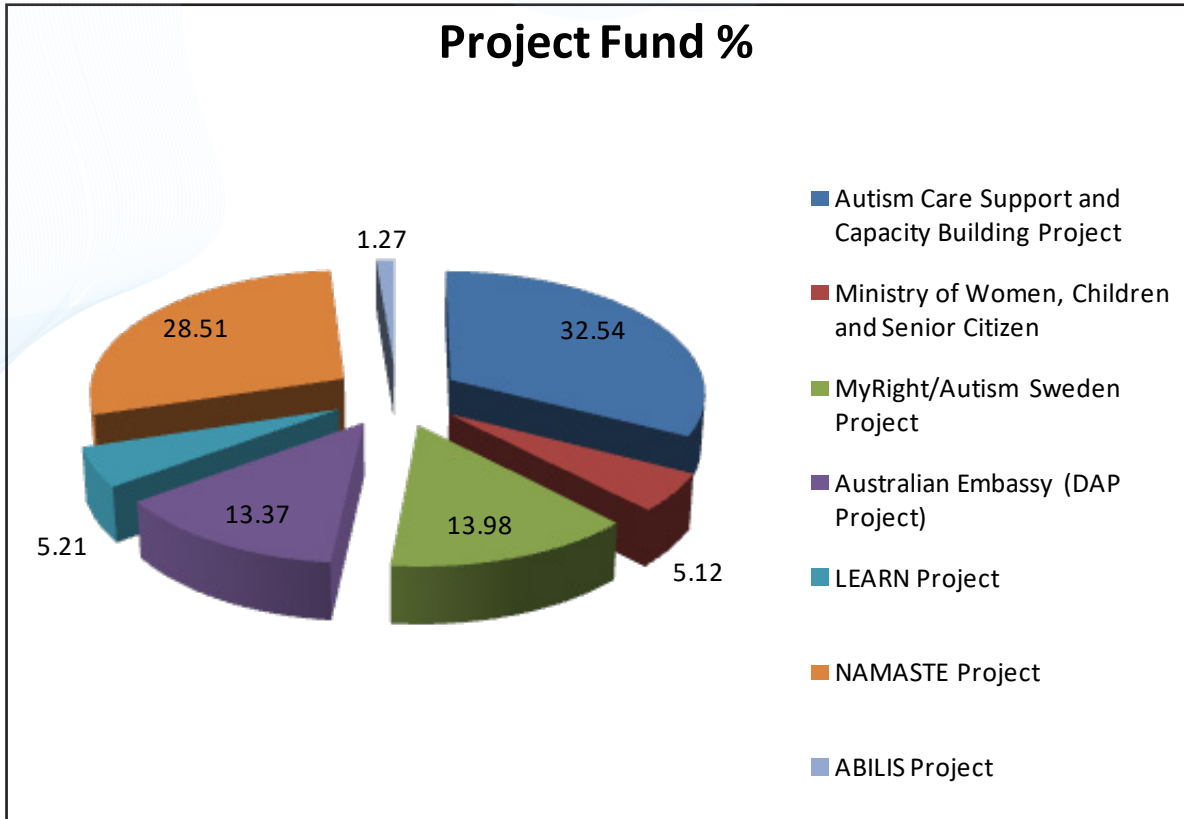
A few recommendations to promote inclusive education among students with Autism or any conditions can be as follows:

- **Prioritize Comprehensive Autism-specific training for the educators.**
- **Foster regular collaboration between the educators and concerned support services.**
- **Develop and monitor the Individualized Education Programmes (IEPs)**

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FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS



Autism Care Society Gandaki

Autism Care Society Gandaki (ACS Gandaki) is a non-governmental, non-profit making organization established by a group of dedicated parents of Children With Autism. It was registered at the District Administration Office Kaski and is affiliated with Social Welfare Council. ACCS is actively working for awareness, the rights and capacity building of Child/Person with autism.

Organizational Objectives:

- To enhance skill development, vocational training and employment for Self dependency of persons with Autism
- To create awareness on Autism
- To monitor and advocate for the right of child/person with Autism

Organizational Services/Activities:

- Day Care for Children with Autism
- Parent and Child Training Program (PCTP)
- Counseling/ Awareness
- Interaction Program
- Occupational Therapy

Organizational Future Plan:

To conduct/ organize the following programs and trainings

- Vocational Training
- Teachers Training
- Human Right



Friends of Parents of Children With Autism

"Friends of Parents of Children with Autism (FPCA)" is a non profit organization run by the mothers of the children with Autism FPCA (Friends of Parents of Children with Autism. It was founded by Ms. Elina Bajracharya Tuladhar and a team of enthusiastic parents of children with Autism. FPCA is catering service to 9 children till date. Mrs. Elina Bajracharya whose own daughter is a child with Autism, took the initiative to establish this learning center after crossing a tiring phase while seeking proper diagnosis and support for her child, and realizing the dire need of additional number of such support system in Nepal. There is a huge gap of services needed by the children with Autism and their parents/families/caretakers in Nepal. This is the reason why, Friends of Parents of Children with Autism envisions extending its services to as many numbers of people/children with Autism as possible in future. FPCA is running its day-care and learning center where more than 10 Children with Autism are enrolled with the following goals and objectives and will work on every possibility to expand beyond the services and support it is providing currently.

Organizational Goal:

- To make our children independent to live their lives in the society.

Organizational Objective:

- To help the children and persons with autism and their families in every way possible.

Organizational Services and Activities:

1. Day care school
 - Education
 - Life skills
 - Sports and games
 - Music Therapy
 - Occupational Therapy
 - Speech and play therapy
 - Craft skills, painting and drawing
2. Autism Awareness
3. Advocacy Program



Autism Care Chitwan Society

Autism Care Chitwan Society (ACCS) is a non-governmental, non-profit making organization established by a group of dedicated parents of Children With Autism. It was registered at the District Administration Office Chitwan on 27th April, 2018 and is affiliated with Social Welfare Council. ACCS is actively working for awareness, the rights and capacity building of child/person with autism.

Organizational Objectives:

- To enhance skill development, vocational training and employment for Self dependency of persons with Autism
- To create awareness on Autism
- To monitor and advocate for the right of child/person with Autism

Organizational Services and Activities:

- Day Care for Children with Autism
- Parent and Child Training program
- Functional Assessment
- Pre- Vocational
- Teachers and Staff Training Program
- Advocacy Program
- Counseling and Awareness



AutismCare Society Lumbini

AutismCare Society Lumbini (ACSL) is a social, non political and non-profitable organization which was established on 13th Falgun 2074 with a registration number of 2567 registered at CDO Office, Rupandehi. It was established by 25 parents of Children with Autism. Its central office is within premises of Sahed Smarak Boarding School, Butwal-10.

Organizational Goal:

- To identify Person with Autism, trained them, enhance their skills for livelihood and independent living.

Organizational Objectives:

- To identify Children with Autism and provide counseling to their parents.
- To provide special education and trainings to person with Autism for their improvement.
- To raise awareness on autism within the society.
- To develop IEC materials on Autism and disseminate them.
- To co-ordinate with local and provincial government for autism friendly environment.
- To co-ordinate with national and International organizations for inclusion of Autism in Society.

Organizational Activities:

- Day Care for Children with Autism
- Parent and Children Training program
- Functional Assessment
- Advocacy Program
- Counseling and Awareness



AutismCare Nepal Society Karnali

Introduction:

AutismCare Nepal Society Karnali (ACNS-Karnali) was established on 25th Falgun, 2073 it is a Provincial chapter of ACNS, Kathmandu which is a social organization working for welfare of person with autism of Karnali province. This is a parent's run organization forming the Parents Network Group.

Presently it is situated at Birendranagar Nagarpalika, Surkhet.

Activities:

- Screening camp two times
- Manage the meeting time to time
- Awareness program were given to main political leaders and doctors and professionals.
- Functional Assessment

Future plan:

- Recently PCTP will be conducted after Kartik.
- Screening camp will be conducted time to time
- Awareness programs will be run in the society.

We are focusing on the autism awareness in the rural areas of the Karnali Pradesh. We conducted the various program regarding awareness and also for advocacy programs to ensure the Rights of Children with Autism and Person with Autism.



Autism Pathashala Nepal Gulmi

Autism Pathshala Nepal, a special school for autistic children was registered on 12 November 2017 in Gulmi District Administration office as a non profit and self help organization to provide special life skill education to the autistic children of Nepal through therapies. It is an organization where autistic children learn life skills and grow to find a home. Our mission is to help Children with Autism.

Organizational Goal:

- Rehabilitate Person with Autism,
- Teach life skills through therapies,
- Construct necessary community houses for Person with Autism,
- Assure easy access to health, social participation, assistance and support,

Organizational Objectives:

- Hire skilled human resource for life skill trainings.
- Run Parent and Child Training Program,
- Increase social communication
- Increase awareness on Autism,
- Increase knowledge and skills of people with autism in vocational activities.

Organizational Services and Activities:

- Awareness programs for the advocacy on Autism,
- Parent and Child Training Program (PCTP),
- Organize Autism Screening Camp in local level and refer final diagnosis,
- Capacity building training programs in accordance with Abilis project.

Organizational Future Plan:

- Teach Children with Autism life skill through therapies,
- Rehabilitate Children with Autism,
- Help them learn life skills and grow to find a home
- Helping Children with Autism to develop as a socialized citizen to live a happier life.



AutismCare Nepal Society Jhapa

AutismCare Nepal Society Jhapa District Chapter was founded on 17th June 2017. It is the active autism organization that is run by passionate parents that care for Person with Autism. Initially ACNS Jhapa Parent Network Group was formed by ACNS Kathmandu and eventually, later it became ACNS Jhapa District Chapter. It was formally established on 4th August 2017.

Organizational Goal:

- Providing quality life and incorporating them into society by helping individuals with autism, their parents, and families.

Organizational Objectives:

- To spread awareness throughout Jhapa district.
- To advocate for the health, education and social security of people with autism.
- To arrange a special school for children with autism.
- Collecting data throughout Jhapa district.
- Development of human resources to provide essential services in the operation of the Autism Education Center.
- Coordinating with auxiliary organizations and concerned bodies.

Organizational Services and Activities:

- Awareness and Advocacy on Autism targeting Local Government Chairperson and Vice Chairperson including Journalist.
- Started School for Children with Autism
- Organized Rally on Autism Awareness Day at Birtamod.
- Connected the Autism Care Centre with Government School (Shree Mahedra Ratna Higher Secondary School).

Organizational Future Plan:

- To empower, protect and promote the rights of people with autism so that they have full and effective participation in society.
- Approach with Government of Nepal Pradesh no. 1 with the proposal for establishment of Special School for Children with Autism.



AAVANI FOUNDATION

Aavani Foundation is non – profit company that works to create a safe and friendly environment for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). We have a special school that aims to teach children and empower them by giving them special, individual attention, along with Speech therapy and occupational therapy. Along with the school, we have an awareness campaign where we go to schools and conduct a teachers' workshop where we teach teachers about ASD and mainstream education in ASD. It has been established on dated, April 18, 2018 (Baisakh 5, 2075) at Shanti Marga, Bhatbhateni, and Kathmandu, Nepal. The founder of the organization is Ms. Pragya Shrestha Pradhan who is also mother of children of autism.

Organizational Goal:

- To create an understanding and supportive society where people with Autism coexist independently and are acknowledged being as capable as any other

Organizational Objectives:

- To spread awareness on Autism in Nepal as much as possible
- Empowering children with Autism enough so that

they can perform daily activities without hindrances

- To control negative behavior and to teach them to control such behaviors
- To teach children with Autism about social concepts and enhancing their communication skills
- To provide an early intervention as soon as possible.

Organizational Services and Activities:

- Special School
- Speech Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Awareness Program
- Parent and Child Training Program
- Parental Counseling



GLANCE OF 15th AGM OF ACNS

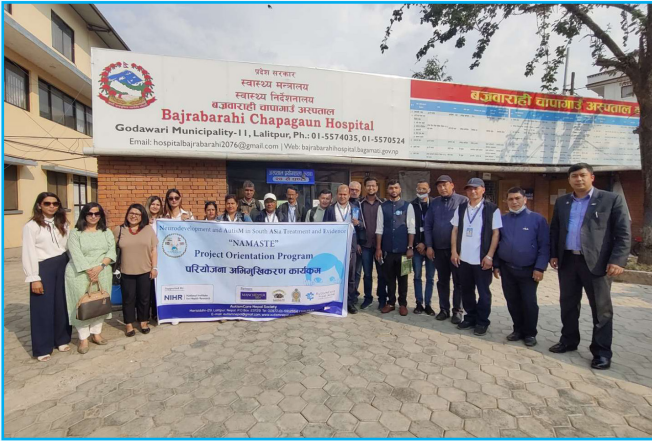


WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY (WAAD) 2023



GLANCE OF AUTISM CARE NEPAL SOCIETY





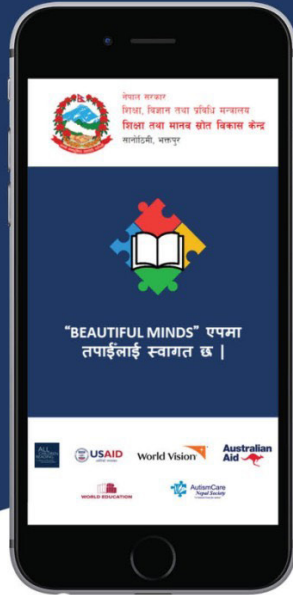






BEAUTIFUL MINDS APP

"Beautiful Minds" app has been prepared under the project Leveraging Existing Accessibility Resource in Nepal (LEARN). The purpose of this learning apps is to improve general communication, basic self-reliance, knowledge and skills and basic literacy skills for children with neuro-development disabilities. In addition to doing this, it is expected that this apps will be useful for parents and teachers to help children learn and read.

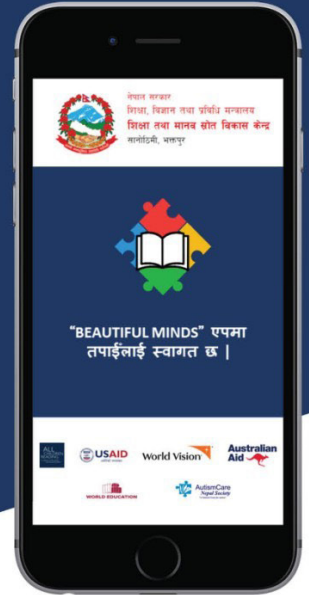


- Increase reading and/or language outcomes of Children with Disabilities (CwDs) by ensuring their reach and engagement on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) based on Information Communication Technologies (ICTs).
- Improve educational experiences of Children with Disabilities (CwDs) by elevating their access to EdTech Solution and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in the classroom.



BEAUTIFUL MINDS APP

"Beautiful Minds" Leveraging Existing Accessibility Resources in Nepal (LEARN) परियोजना अन्तर्गत तयार भएको एप हो । मस्तिष्क विकासात्मक अपाङ्गता भएका बालबालिकाहरूलाई सामान्य सञ्चार, आधारभूत स्वाबलम्बन ज्ञान तथा सिपको वृद्धि गर्ने उद्देश्यले तयार गरिएको हो । यस एपले बालबालिकाहरूलाई स्वअध्ययन गर्नका साथै उनिहरूलाई सिक्ने र सिकाउने कृयाकलापमा अभिभावकहरू र शिक्षक शिक्षिकाहरूका लागि सहयोग पुऱ्याउनका निमित्त पनि उपयोगी हुने अपेक्षा गरिएको छ ।



- भाषिक र पठनपाठन सिप सुधार गर्न Universal Design Learning (UDL) उन्मुख शैक्षिक प्रविधिमा बालबालिकाहरूको संलग्नता र पहुँच वृद्धि ।
- अपाङ्गता भएका बालबालिकाहरूको पठनपाठन र भाषिक सिप सुधार गर्न शिक्षक शिक्षिकाहरूद्वारा शैक्षिक प्रविधि र UDL फ्रेमवर्कको निरन्तर प्रयोग ।



AUTISM CARE NEPAL SOCIETY'S DEPARTMENT AND STAFF DETAILS

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Chief Administrator
and Office Head



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Finance Manager



Ms. Mahalaxmi Karki
Project Manager



Mr. Vesh Ram Pokharel
Project Manager



Ms. Sanu Devi Prajapati
Project Coordinator



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School Head



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Senior Teacher and
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Ms. Lalita Manandhar
Senior Teacher



Mr. Mahesh Bajagain
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Ms. Isha Maharjan
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Ms. Rampyari Chaudhary
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Ms. Bhawana Thapa
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Ms. Gita Dhakal
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Ms. Rohisha Maharjan
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Ms. Susmita Deula
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Ms. Laxmi Chaulagai
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Ms. Dhanusta Subba
Parent Child Trainer



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Psychologist



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Physio Therapist



Ms. Amrit Gandhari
Music Therapist



Ms. Sabita Tamang
Physio Therapist

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Care Taker



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Care Taker

GUARDS



Mr. Ganesh Bdr. Katuwal
Guard



Mr. ACNS
Guard

AutismCare Nepal Society

Vision

"A society where Person with Autism enjoy independent and dignified life."

Mission

"Empowering Person with Autism to protect and, promote their rights and utilise their skills to have a meaningful and effective participation in the society."



**AutismCare
Nepal Society**

"A National Center for Autism"

**Together, brick-by-brick, we can change the face of autism in Nepal
Help us in our quest to help all the Person with Autism in Nepal**

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