



ASIA PACIFIC
DOWN SYNDROME
FEDERATION



AUGUST 2023

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PRESIDENT SPEAK



It is a pleasure to come to you with the next edition of the APDSF e-News. We are glad to note the developments happening in the Down syndrome world across countries in the region.

We had more learning and knowledge sharing on a common platform than at any time before, thanks to the virtual world that we are living in. Members should try and bring together parents in their countries to provide them with as much information as possible to achieve our aim – an inclusive society. And virtual meetings probably solve the purpose very conveniently as people do not have to step out of their homes to reach someplace else.

This I believe is just the beginning of more interaction and deeper understanding with one another to make the region one big Family.

Wishing you all the very best. I am looking forward to the day when we take our next leap towards making society accept and give more respect to our self-advocates with Down syndrome and treat them just like anybody else.

N. Ramachandran

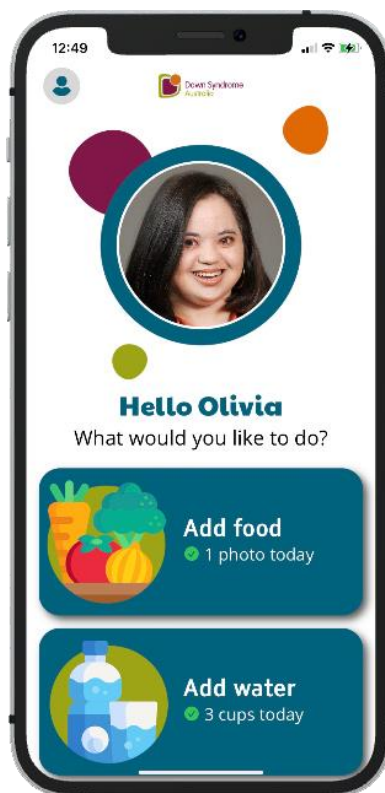
President - APDSF

AUSTRALIA

Good health, in the palm of your hands

In December 2022, Down Syndrome Australia released two exciting new apps: the Down Syndrome Good Health App and the Down Syndrome Health Record App. Our apps aim to support well-being and inclusion for people with Down syndrome in their own health journey.

These apps have a lot of great features, such as maintaining health records, to make doctor and specialist visits easier, and tracking diet, exercise and water intake.

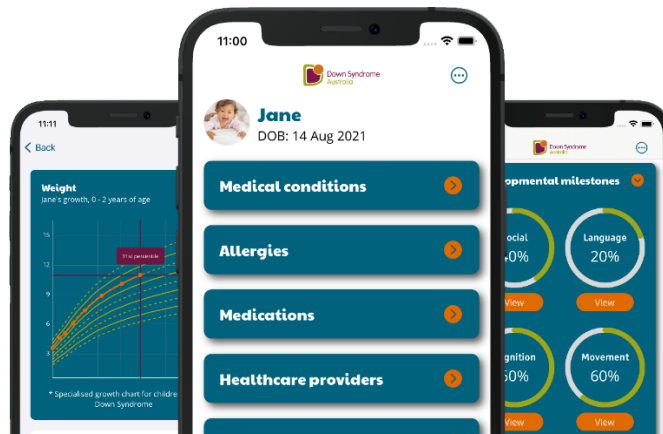


You can find out more on the Down Syndrome Australia website:
<https://www.downsyndrome.org.au/resources/apps/>

Supporting doctors to create supportive health spaces for people with Down syndrome

Down Syndrome Australia has been working hard to educate health professionals about Down syndrome, the benefits of inclusive communication and how reasonable adjustments to practice make a difference. Down Syndrome Australia has a number of Health Ambassadors – who are people with Down syndrome – that speak across Australia, educating health professionals on these topics.

DSA has now released an online learning package, or e-learn, called – Down Syndrome: The Essentials. This course is hosted by the University of Melbourne and accredited by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) points. This course will support doctors to gain knowledge and confidence to when working with, or caring for, people with Down syndrome, which will support better health outcomes.



Voice journal: now online!

Down Syndrome Australia's 'Voice' journal is now available online! Voice contains great stories from people with Down syndrome in Australia and also features information about what DSA has been up to: including further information about the health app, e-learning module.

You can visit the latest version of the Voice here:
<https://www.downsyndrome.org.au/voice/issue/advocacy/>



World Down Syndrome Congress 2024

WDSC 2024 Brisbane is only 11 months away. Preparations are well under way to deliver an educational and informative event that brings together leading international experts and advocates in a broad range of fields, as well as the opportunity to experience Australia with its unique environment. We will also have an exciting social program to bring you the best of Australian music, culture and cuisine.

To find out more about the Congress, go to www.wdsc2024.org.au

To make sure you stay up to date with the Congress, register your interest here [Expression of Interest - Contact Details \(eventsair.com\)](https://eventsair.com)



WDSC 2024
BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA

11 MONTHS TO GO!

World Down Syndrome Congress

9-12 JULY, 2024

Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre

www.wdsc2024.org.au

BHUTAN

World Down Syndrome was observed in four districts including Thimphu, Samtse, Tsirang and Zhemgang. The following activities were carried out in each district;

1. Thimphu

The Chairperson of ABS accompanied by the Chief of ECCD and SEN Division, Ministry of Education and Skill Development (MoESD) graced the program at ABS. The program included a welcome note on the importance of World Down Syndrome Day by the Executive Director of ABS, experience sharing by a parent of a child with Down Syndrome, experience sharing by one of the parent participants who attended the Asia Pacific Down Syndrome Conference in Chennai towards the end of December last year and a music performance by children of ABS. A total of 50 participants including children and parents/caregiver attended the program.



2. Samtse

ABS in collaboration with Norbugang Primary School observed the World Down Syndrome Day on 21st March by conducting an awareness program on understanding disability, types of disabilities especially on Down syndrome, importance of rights of Persons with Disabilities and inclusion. Besides, the awareness campaign on the “rock your socks” was also carried to explain the significance of wearing mismatched socks and that our differences make us beautiful. A total of 317 students and teachers participated in the program.



3. Tsirang

ABS in collaboration with Tsoglingkhar Primary School observed World Down Syndrome Day on 21st March. Awareness program on disability was conducted on understanding disabilities, types of disabilities, signs of various disabilities, rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the importance of World Down Syndrome Day.

In addition, Damphu Middle Secondary School, Phuentsenchu Primary School and Mendrelgang Primary School also took the lead in observing World Down Syndrome Day to raise awareness about disability in their Schools.

Total Participants :

Tsholingkhar Primary School: 13 teachers (M=9 and F= 4) and 169 students (M=90, F=79).

Phuentsenchu Primary School : 14 teachers (M=7,F=7) and 176 (M=91,F=85)

Mendrelgang Primary school: 19 teachers and 372 students.

4. Zhemgang

ABS in collaboration with Zhemgang Higher Secondary School [which has recently begun SEN program] observed the World Down Syndrome day on 21st March 2023. The program was observed by 468 students accompanied by 45 teachers. The observances of World Down Syndrome aimed to create awareness of Down syndrome by sharing some information about Down Syndrome, its causes, intervention strategies for children with Down Syndrome, and some of the challenges faced by them. Moreover, it was to ensure students and teachers realize the difficulties faced by children with Down syndrome and make reasonable accommodations in their school. During the event, we also advocated for the inclusion of children with Down syndrome in everyday activities of the school to help them boost their self-esteem.



CHINA

Up for Down's Shanghai China

Recently, we have three important things to share with our APDSF members:

1. On June 18th, we held an activity of inviting some parents of kids with Down's syndrome to visit UFD office in Hangzhou and holding a concert.
2. From July 22nd to July 24th, we held a rite of passage or coming-of-age ceremony Summer Camp, including the opening party, ice breaking activities, coming-of-age ceremony, cap-wearing for boys and hair- spinning for girls, and leisure time for mothers. 39 families of kids with Down's syndrome (altogether 92 people) from 13 provinces and cities across the country participated in the ceremony. Among them, 15 participated in the coming-of-age ceremony and 24 participated in the cap-wearing ceremony.
3. On August 7th, we became a member of DSi.

PART1: Visit UFD office and hold a concert

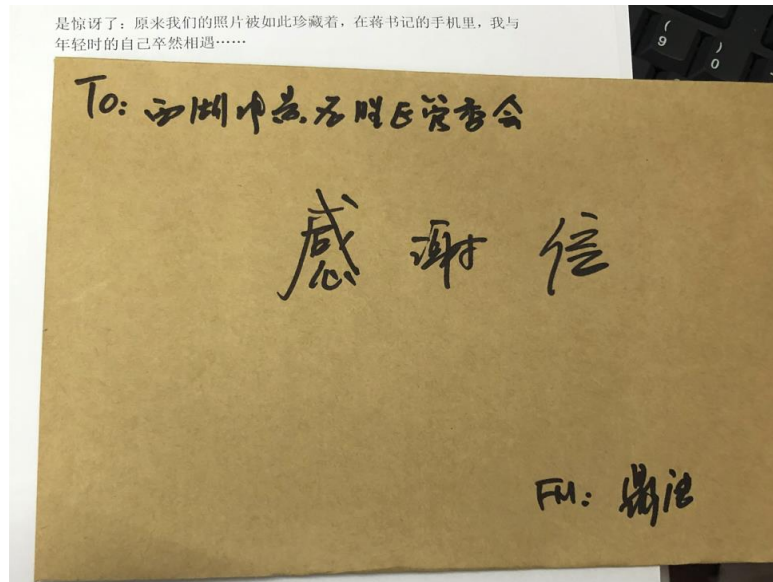
On June 8th, Jinglutang, full of artistic atmosphere of calligraphy and painting, became UFD Office and has the hope of turning into the Down Syndrome Youth Vocational Training Base in the future.



On June 18th, in celebration of UFD's establishment of a new office, we held a small concert. The music was played by Jasmine Mao, the co-founder of the predecessor of UFD, and the photography was taken by Xiong's Dad.



A thank- you note from Lena Ye to Hangzhou Huanhu Sightseeing and Tourism Co., Ltd.



PART2: Coming-of-age ceremony and cap-wearing ceremony

Environment of Zhixin traditional Academy, from Tonglu Zhejiang.



The volunteers are made up of practitioners from the academy, most of whom are college students.



Opening Party, including flag-awarding ceremony and performance of the kids.



The ice-breaking ceremony organized by the academy teacher Zhao.



The rite of passage and cap-wearing ceremony.



Leisure time for mothers when children were looked after by volunteers at the traditional academy.



INDIA

This year is proving to be another big year for Down syndrome in the country. As a country with such a diverse population, the toughest ask is reaching out to every corner of the country and creating a support group there to assist and guide parents in their endeavor to create a better world for their self-advocate with Down syndrome.

MOM's Meet

DSFI organizes a Mother's Only Meet every year, where only women are taken to some location to relax and rejuvenate. This year, our destination was the picturesque Srinagar, in Jammu and Kashmir. While the mothers who were visiting Srinagar for the first time had a refreshing break, there was an event for the mothers from Srinagar and nearby areas that was organized by us. These mothers came with their children and interacted with our group for about four hours on how they could guide their children and help them learn. The Chief Guest for the formal interaction was the Commissioner of Disability in Jammu and Kashmir, Mr. Iqbal Lone.



First Medical Camp at Baramulla

The result of this interaction was the first medical camp for persons with disabilities at Baramullah a district of Jammu and Kashmir. It was the first time that the Government was taking the initiative of organizing a camp where their doctors and their educationists were coming together for the betterment of persons with disabilities.





Dental Hygiene Booklet

One of the biggest issues faced by Persons with Down syndrome is teeth and gum related. In order to address this, our team of Dentists – Dr. Anurag Gupta and Dr. Nidhi Gupta have come up with a dental booklet which gives an idea about the various aspects to be considered when it comes to Dental Hygiene. This booklet is in the form of easy to follow FAQs that provides an answer to multiple questions that the parents might have with regards to Oral Hygiene.





IIDSC 2023

The 7th Edition of the India International Down Syndrome Conference (IIDSC) is being organized at Jaipur, Rajasthan. More than a hundred families of persons with Down syndrome have registered for the event. The event will have a Panel discussions of Doctors and another Panel Discussion for Therapists. There will be a medical camp for our self-advocates where the doctors would be checking each child individually.

The theme of the event was done by a self-advocate, Angelina Magdalene.



Practical Session on Special Education and Speech Therapy

At the conference, another highlight is a practical training session for our Parents by our Speech therapist and Special Educator. They will be teaching parents practically on how to help their self-advocates with their learning skills. These sessions are meant to empower parents and make it easier for them to train their child or adult with Down syndrome.



Doctors Meet Doctors

At Jaipur, a new initiative being launched by DSFI is the Doctor's Training Program. DSFI's specialists will be having a panel discussion with Doctors at Babylon Hospital in Jaipur about the various things to consider while looking at a child with Down syndrome. This is another first time activity and we hope to replicate it across the country.



INDONESIA

1. March

Celebration of World Down Syndrome Day 2023. Many interesting performances from people with Down Syndrome and public figures. There are Ear Cleaning and Hearing Screening events, Fashion Show Contests, Stimulation Games, and Bazaars. As well as collaborating with Cordlife in the Trisomy Awareness Month and Down Syndrome Got Talent Season 3 events Thank you to the sponsors, Friends of POTADS, supporting artists, and of course the people with Down Syndrome who have enlivened this event.





2. April

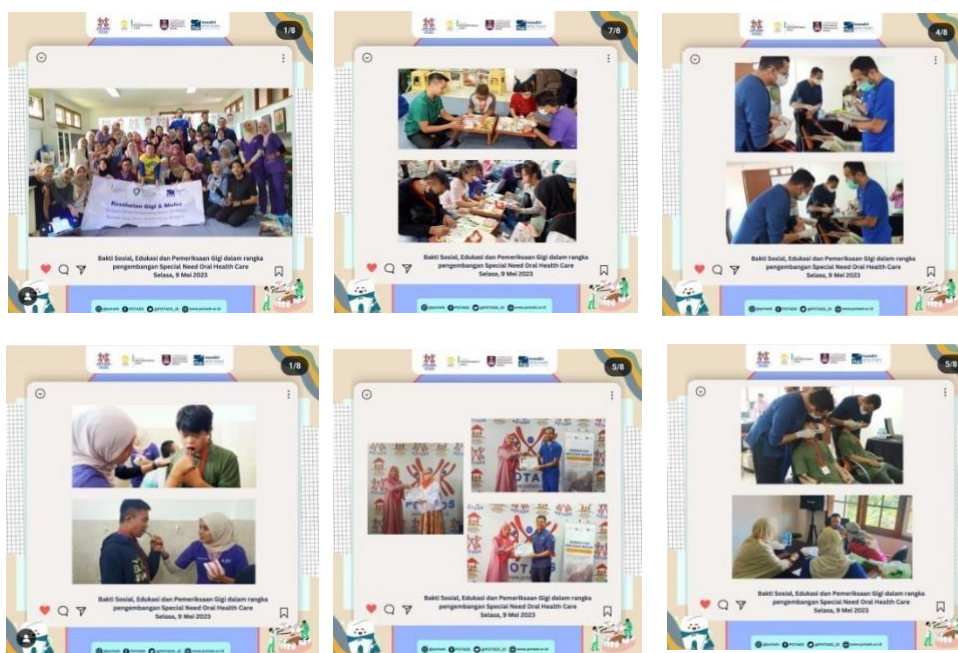
RCDS by POTADS Podcast. For this inaugural edition, the resource person was Muhammad Ikhlas Dwi Kurnia, one of the RCDS by POTADS barista class student. Ikhlas told about his activities in the barista class and his feelings about being selected as a participant in the study program at the Grand Melia Hotel Jakarta. This podcast hosted by Dian Rosdiana Rahayu (Principal of RCDS by POTADS). Let's give space for people with Down Syndrome to explore their potential and do their best.



3. May

a) May 9th

POTADS and RCDS have collaborated with the Faculty of Dentistry, University of Indonesia, the Faculty of Dentistry, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Malaysia, and Mandiri Amal Insani have held Social Service, Education and Dental Examination activities in the context of developing Special Need Oral Health Care.



b) May 25th

POTADS has been a resource person in the Technical Guidance for Legal Services for Disabilities for the 2023 Fiscal Year held by the General Judiciary Body of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia.

The participants consisted of chairpersons, deputy chairmen, secretaries and general heads of district courts throughout Jabodetabek. On this occasion the Chairperson of POTADS Eliza Octavianti Rogi presented material on "Services needed by persons with intellectual disabilities in the general court environment".

Hopefully the material presented can provide new awareness for law enforcement officers regarding the proper handling and provision of services to persons with intellectual disabilities in court.



Podcast episode 2 : Izza,

(https://www.instagram.com/reel/CsIKiquA_i2/?igshid=MzRlODBiNWFlZA==) and episode 3 : Dika

(https://www.instagram.com/reel/Csz_X0LRtBX/?igshid=MzRlODBiNWFlZA==)



c) May 13rd

POTADS was held an Ethics and Personal Development Workshop on Saturday, May 13 2023 for POTADS administrators. This activity aims to maximize one's potential and improve communication skills, appearance, and behavior in society. Hopefully in the future, POTADS administrators will be more skilled and confident in socializing Down Syndrome and POTADS to the wider community



d) May 6th

Friday, May 6th, 2023 POTADS has started a work training program (apprenticeship) for people with Down Syndrome at the Gran Melia Hotel Jakarta. This internship program was attended by M Ikhlas Dwi Kurnia, a 20 year old person with Down Syndrome. Ikhlas will do an internship every Monday, Tuesday and Friday. Thank you to the management of Gran Melia

for giving people with Down Syndrome the opportunity to gain experience working in hotels. Hopefully this step can be followed by other institutions/agencies



4. June

The podcast has entered its fourth episode. For this episode, the resource person was Syakira Khairunisa, a student from the RCDS by POTADS Music and Karate Class.

Syakira has a special advantage.. Fluent in two-way communication with good pronunciation, good at reading, and also able to chat in simple English.. Wow, that's great... Syakira will tell you about her activities in music and karate classes, as well as other activities of Syakira. Come on, watch the RCDS Podcast by POTADS **Mgobrol Bareng Anak Penyandang g Down Syndrome** on YouTube POTADS

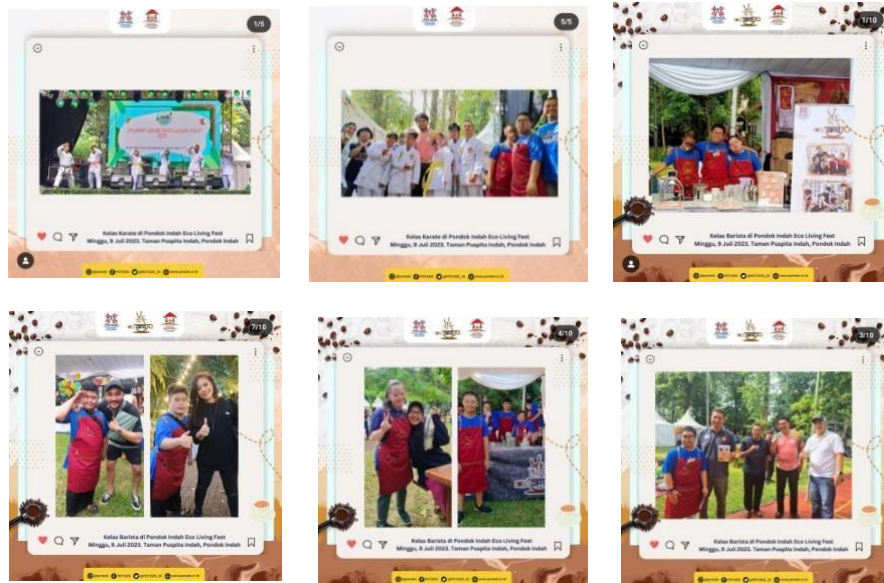
Here's the link: <https://youtu.be/zPsLtS3XTf0>



5. July

a) July 9th

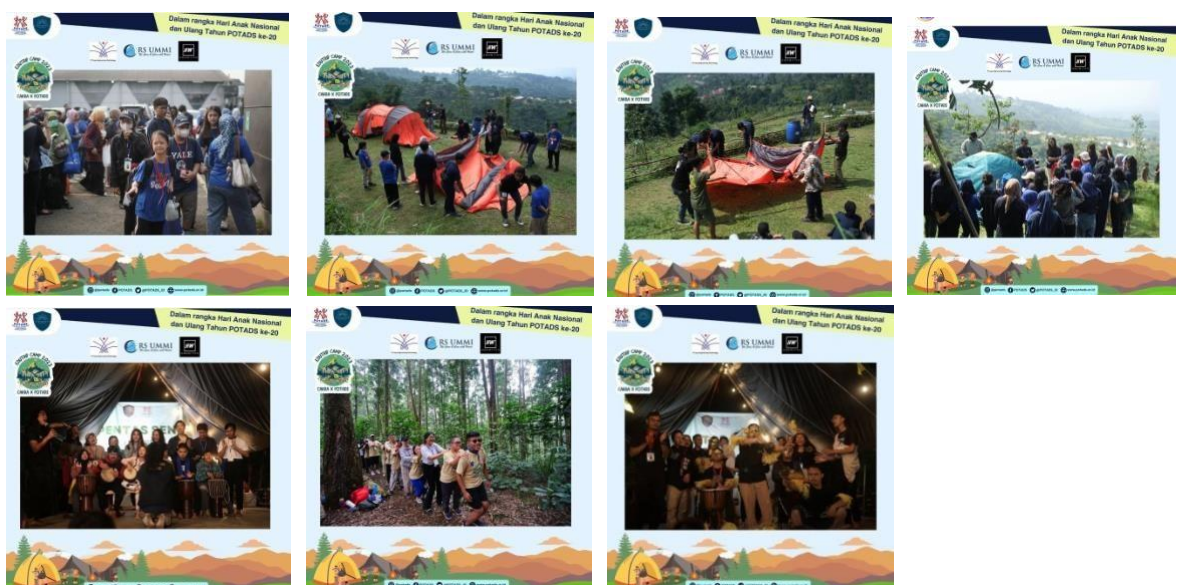
POTADS has participated in enlivening PIEL Fest 2023 which took place at Taman Puspita, Jalan Sekolah Duta VI, Pondok Indah, South Jakarta. In the event enlivened by Atta Halilintar (@attahalilintar) and Aurel Hermansyah (@aurelie.hermansyah), students from the RCDS by POTADS Karate Class appeared! And Barista Class (POTADS Coffee) which opened a booth there, and sold 288 cups of coffee.



b) 22-23 July

The special moments of National Children's Day 2023 and the 20th Birthday of POTADS are celebrated with various activities. One of them was CAKRA X POTADS EDUTRIP CAMP 2023

This activity held on 22-23 July 2023 at Joglo Java Neglasari Camp Cigombong Bogor. The activity was attended by 33 people with Down Syndrome and accompanied by 72 young volunteers from Cakra Abhiraya Responsive. This activity was successfully carried out well and smoothly. Thanks to Cakra Abhipraya Responsive, Land Rover Community Indonesia, PT Jaya Engineering Technology, PT. Hodwitch, and RS Ummi Bogor, for their contribution to this activity. Thank you to the parents and of course to the Great Kids who have proven that they were able to be independent in their activities without parental assistance.



In the framework of National Children's Day, TRANS7 invited POTADS to played and studied together in Ruang ImmersifKu: Rainforest. This activity has taken place on: Tuesday, 25 July 2023 at Ruang ImmersifKu

This activity was attended by 15 RCDS by POTADS students who were accompanied by 15 buddies from TRANS7. Children with Down Syndrome learn together about the Rainforest, listen to story telling, color pictures, and sing together.



6. August

a) August 23th

POTADS collaborated with Camille Beauty held POTADS X Camille Edutrip Goes to Taman Safari Indonesia. This activity was held in the context of National Children's Day 2023 and the 20th anniversary of POTADS.

As many as 50 people with Down Syndrome along with 50 companions took part in this Edutrip activity. They were invited to get to know the life of the animals that were there. There were also singing and dancing activities together to celebrate POTADS's birthday. Thanks to Camille Beauty for sponsoring this activity



JAPAN

Top-rated YouTube "Haru-channel" by a 30-year-old woman with Down syndrome

"**Haru-channel** by a 30-year-old with Down syndrome" is a top-rated YouTube program with approximately 90 thousand followers. The channel introduces Haruka's daily life, filmed and edited by her sister Natsumi.

Q. You started "Haru-channel" in May 2020. How did you get started with the Haru Channel?

Natsumi: Natsumi started "Haru-channel" in May 2020. "My sister lived in a group home. After the pandemic began, she could not go to a community workshop. I saw my sister spacing out at our house. She seemed to be bored at that time. Making her film would motivate her. I also realized that my sister is no longer ordinary to me but is not customary to others.

I started distributing the videos hoping people who have never been involved with people with Down syndrome will see them and get to know them. They will inspire those who watch them.



Photo Natsumi (left) and Haruka(right) at a lavender field.



Photo Haruka (left) and Natsumi (right)

Q. Haruka, how does it feel to have so many different people watching your videos?

Haruka: Eh, I don't know (Feels shy).

Natsumi: She always says "I don't know", but maybe she is embarrassed.

Q. What do you keep in mind when creating your programs?

Natsumi: When filming daily life, you may firmly say things because you are a family member. Especially in videos of fights. To prevent people who don't understand from getting the impression that "it's terrible to talk that way to the weak" when they watch it, we try to soften the expression and avoid misunderstanding by adding tickers and annotations as much as possible and making the text pop with font and color.

Q. What do you enjoy about making a program?

Natsumi: I enjoy filming and editing. When I laugh when I edit, I can be sure everyone else will enjoy it too. Looking at the comments on the videos, I see that "the time has come for people to say Haruka is cute!" I am happy to see that!

■■■Information for "Haru-channel" by a 30-year-old woman with Down syndrome■■■<https://www.youtube.com/>

@86ka_downsyndrome



MYANMAR



The life of a person with Down syndrome is like the sunflower which has its own beauty it is more beautiful under the light of the sun. The help and support from the community is like the sun for them. The more we can support them, the more they develop.



but

In 2023, Myanmar team targeted the personal development and empowerment of Persons with Down syndrome (PWDS). Under the restrictions and challenges, we struggle to raise their lives by training them both physically and mentally. By advocating for the business group, we got the CSR program from one of the International Schools to use their place every Saturday.

Therefore, we started the program of “Dancing with the music” under the title of Music Therapy. By learning international dance and traditional dance, the memorizing skill of PWDS is improving and their mental health situation is healthier as they can keep in touch with society every week. In addition, we can enhance community cooperation. As long as we promote the status of PWDS, people recognize them. As a result, some of the companies, hotels and schools have offered CSR activities but we carefully accept those offers depending on the criteria and values of our organization. On the other hand, we continue the caring and sharing sessions for the Myanmar PWDS community. We provide them Vaccine for Seasonal Flu, Dental Care Service and Weekly gathering for their social skills. At the same time, we do the capacity building activities not only for the EC team but also the volunteers who are interested in the development of PWDS. So, we are standing strong with our resilience and never-say-die spirit although the country is facing different kinds of disaster. In order to live sustainably, we have to keep continuing by helping and sharing with each other the true mindset and right attitude which leads to a brighter future for PWDS.

NEPAL

Member of Parliament Dr Chanda Karki inspired by WDSO 2023 program she attended as Chief guest organized by Down Syndrome Support Health Association -Nepal (DSSHA-Nepal) raised the issues relating to Down syndrome as Early detection & Intervention, separate category in Disability classification of Government, Inclusive schooling, Habilitation services, Health Insurance coverage for associated medical issues , Vocational training for Employment opportunities and Multidisciplinary clinics in Government hospitals etc. in the Zero Hour of Parliament House session



Awareness program for Teachers, Child caretakers, Driver, Administrative staff, Students at Sunshine English Boarding School organized by DSSHA on 10 June. The need for inclusion in mainstream school for children with DS emphasized as it benefits all students. It fosters friendships, appreciation and acceptance, respect, greater academic outcome and builds self-esteem and self-confidence in child with special needs



Preliminary meeting on 10 August 2023 of DSSHA- Nepal, SGCP Nepal and Carers Worldwide discussed issues as Importance of Capacity Building and Training for Carers , Awareness for drivers and conductors of **Sajha Yatayat** , the first disabled-friendly green bus, , known for its inclusive approach to disability and involve them to motivate other transport companies Training of Professional Carers , Expansion of **SewaMaa Helpline** program for carers .



Start of pre and postnatal counselling in Shree Birendra Military Hospital by DSSHA President Dr Lalita Joshi for the first time, kindling hope and confidence in new parents with full enthusiasm to raise their child with Down syndrome to reach great potentials.



Shree Birendra Army Hospital

PHILIPPINES

Congratulations to the Down Syndrome Association of the Philippines, Inc. (DSAPI) on receiving the Apolinario Mabini Organization for Persons with Disabilities Award. This is a recognition of all our combined efforts in the past 31 years that have helped to develop all of the various programs and services that DSAPI provides today. All of us have benefited from these programs from the day each of us joined DSAPI and many more will continue to benefit in the years to come. DSAPI is volunteer-based and all who have volunteered throughout the 31 years all share in this milestone award. Special thanks to all for their contributions, time and treasure, personal sacrifices and generous sharing, dedication and loyalty. Words aren't enough to express our deep gratitude and appreciation. Thank you to all our sponsors for your generosity and tireless support to DSAPI through the years!!! Most of all, thanks be to God for our children and all the blessings that have come along with them. DSAPI has been blessed abundantly! Congratulations to all!

Elmer F. Lapeña Chairman

Down Syndrome Association of the Philippines, Inc



Apolinario Mabini Award
Organization of Persons with Disabilities Award
is given to
DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES

For its dedication and commitment for the last 31 years in promoting the acceptance and inclusion of persons with Down Syndrome across sectors of society, for continuing to educate and provide emotional support to families and their children, for forging partnerships in the provision of medical care, meeting educational needs, opening employment opportunities and the realisation of recreational, sports and artistic pursuits.

*Given this 18th day of July 2023
Heroes Hall, Malacañang Palace*

Audrey Zubiri
Chairperson
30th Apolinario Awards

Edgardo F. Garcia
President
PFRD

Philippine Foundation for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled, Inc.



SINGAPORE

Greetings from the Down Syndrome Association (Singapore)

World Down Syndrome Day (WDSD)



DSA commemorated World Down Syndrome Day (WDSD) with more than 400 participants on 18 March 2023. We were honoured to have Mr Eric Chua, Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Ministry of Social and Family Development and Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth grace the event.

Aligned to 2023 WDSD theme, “With Us Not For Us”, the event highlighted the rights and capabilities of individuals with Down syndrome. Our ambassadors, Avina Yik and Nina Sara Faizal, co-hosted the event with our volunteer Brynner Janato. Avina and Nina who have Down syndrome also addressed the participants and advocated for the rights of individuals with Down syndrome to be involved in decision about their lives and their rights to fair treatment and equal opportunities as everyone else.

Granted that we may take a bit more time to learn and adapt to society around us. But I firmly believe that we are all Differently Abled and given the appropriate environment, we can thrive and be productive citizens.

- Avina Yik, DSA Ambassador



Our beneficiaries also led the contingent in the community walk, symbolising the capabilities of individuals with Down syndrome to lead in their lives and enjoying the journey with the community.



Charity Movie 2023



During the June school holidays, DSA hosted a two-day Charity Movie Screening of “Transformers: Rise of the Beasts” for over 600 of our members, partners, and supporters. The event allowed participants to bond with their family and friends over popcorn and drinks while enjoying the show and more importantly supporting DSA’s cause to support individuals with Down syndrome.

Caregiver Support Group ‘Kopi Chat’

The caregiving journey is one of exploration that is in constant evolution. At times, it can be challenging and isolating, and even result in burnout. DSA Singapore Caregiver Support Group (CSG) aims to provide a safe space for our caregivers to meet and empower each other. It also seeks to build lifetime friendships and strengthen our members' support



network within the DSA family.

On 29 April, the DSA Family Support Services (FSS) held the first 2023 CSG Kopi (local colloquial term for Coffee) Chat. During the session, caregivers were encouraged to share their thoughts on how CSG could best support them.

We invited two caregivers, Ms Suryani Lim who care for her adult child with Down syndrome and Ms Amirah Ismail, parent of a toddler with Down syndrome, to share their experiences in caring for their children with very different needs while balancing their personal well-being. They shared the importance of respite care and tips on time management to create personal care time and creating self-care routines.

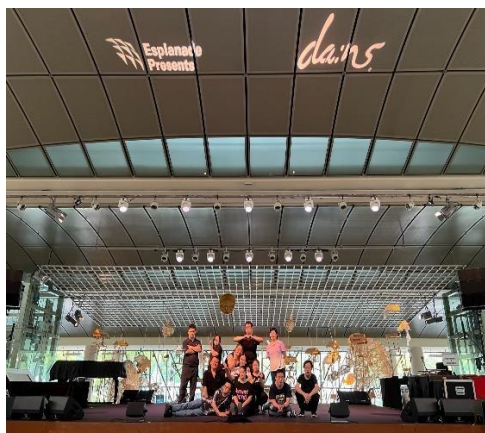
It is important for caregivers to take time off from their care responsibilities to recharge their mind and body such that they can keep themselves physically and emotionally well to provide quality care. DSA will continue to organise different activities as part of our CSG initiatives to support our caregivers' well-being such that they can in turn provide the necessary and quality care for their loved ones with Down syndrome.

'EveryBody Dance Now'

Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay invited DSA's Fusion Dancers to perform and teach dance during a 30-minute session as part of their event, 'EveryBody Dance Now'. The event promoted inclusivity, diversity and participation and encouraged everybody to experience dance over a weekend of dance- related activities.

In collaboration with Danz People's Mini Groovers kids crew, 10 DSA Fusion Dancers performed a 5- minute K-pop dance to their favourite songs before teaching the audience key choreography highlights. It was a fulfilling experience for our DSA Fusion Dancers as

they collaborated with other dancers and became the experts to teach the audience various dance moves. The collaboration allowed our members to pursue their passion and love for dance, while developing friendships with other dancers and showcasing their capabilities to the community. Needless to say, our members had a blast throughout the interaction and engagement!



DSA's Thrift Shop

DSA operates a thrift shop which provides our members with training and practice opportunities to develop their capabilities for retail work. Job Hardening is conducted at the thrift shop for our beneficiaries who attend our centre-based programmes.

The thrift shop is also opened to the public on certain days to provide our learners with the opportunities to practice their customer service skills in a real retail setting. To increase the valuable learning opportunities, we increased the number of days which the Thrift shop is open to the public. Besides performing customer service duties, our members also carry out retail tasks such as preparing price labels, identifying, and sorting products, and keeping our Thrift Shop neat and tidy. To enhance our members' capability through further training, DSA collaborated with the Institute of Technical Education to provide a certification course in customer service specifically designed for our members with Down syndrome and other special needs.

To keep up with the times, our thrift shop has also started selling products on digital platforms such as Carousell. Our members attended training courses in areas such as photography and were able to put their skills to practice by listing our items online for sale.

In the purpose-built retail outfit, our members undergo training to increase their employability and can practise their skills in operating the thrift shop and serving real customers. At the same time, they get to interact with the community and form connections with regular customers who enjoy the good bargains. The various benefits show in our members' eagerness to be at the thrift shop and makes running the thrift shop even more rewarding.



'Our Lives Our Voices' Self-Advocacy Programme

'Our Lives Our Voices' (OLOV) is a self-advocacy programmes organised by the Down Syndrome Association (Singapore) and another social social service agency serving individuals with intellectual disabilities. The programme guides individuals with special needs through an introspective journey to explore their strengths and weaknesses, their likes and dislikes, and find ways to communicate them to others. It enables them to find solutions or support to address challenges along the way. This programme nurtures them to be confident and independent individuals as they learn to take ownership of the choices they make.

Over the past year, a joint interest to develop Assistive Technology solutions for Persons with Intellectual Disability (PWIDs) saw self-advocates from 'OLOV' come together to work with students from the School of Computing and Information Systems in Singapore Management University (SMU). Channelling their knowledge for a good cause, the students tackled pertinent problem statements faced by persons with Down syndrome or intellectual disability and ideated innovative solutions that sought to enhance their quality of life. The latest run of this collaboration in January 2023 saw the students delving into the problem statement areas of Transport and Independent Living. They were supported by two self-advocates from OLOV, Milford and Anna, who played a pivotal role in sharing about their lived experiences, actively testing the prototypes and contributing invaluable feedback to the SMU students.

The dedicated efforts by both self-advocates and students spanning 14 weeks culminated in a showcase of the various prototype solutions. Held on 10th April 2023 within the University grounds, the showcase was an exciting opportunity for Milford, Anna, and fellow attendees to witness and try out each group's proposed solutions. Two noteworthy prototypes eventually emerged as the crowd's favourites:

- (1) Project Recollie, a platform that aims to nurture a sense of responsibility and ownership among PWIDs within their households through gamification and interactivity between the PWID and the avatar.
- (2) Project ESOS, which rallies the broader community to serve as responders for PWIDs in times of distress.



CONTACT

For more information and updates about our programmes and services, please visit our website downsyndrome-singapore.org or connect us with through the following:

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THAILAND

Activities of The Rainbow Room Foundation

The Rainbow Room Foundation, Thailand's first neurodiversity awareness center, together with Bangkok Arts and Culture Center presented the 6th Language of The Soul Inclusive Exhibition titled "Community". With participation from various artists and organizations, including Healing Family Foundation, the exhibition was successful and well attended by the public



Recently, The Rainbow Room Foundation, Thailand's first neurodiversity awareness centre, has launched the second season of TV programme for kids from 4-9 called "Tink Tink The Rainbow Window" on Thai PBS channel. Comprising 36 episodes, this season aims to help children as well as the parents and teachers to understand neurodiversity and inclusion in the society, emphasizing of Executive Functions. We also distributed 100 board game box sets and ten story books inspired by the show to all Special Education Needs Centers in 77 provinces and our partners. The project was funded by Thai Media Fund.





After three years, for the first time in May, the Rainbow Room Foundation has organised The Rainbow Fun Run 2023, our annual fundraising project to fund the activities of the foundation. The theme of the run is “Hug Diversity” which implies the acceptance of neurodivergents in our community. The event was attended by more than 1000 people.

