



# Annual Report

IAA.2024



Iran Autism Association  
انجمن ایسم ایران  
IAA



Annual Report 2024  
Iran Autism Association (IAA)  
December 2024



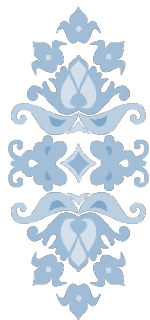
MERRY  
*Christmas*  
AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

We extend our heartfelt congratulations to you and your colleagues for the New Year. May this time of celebration bring you peace, joy and lasting prosperity.

As we begin the New Year, we also reaffirm our commitment to our collective efforts to promote the rights and well-being of people on the autism spectrum. Together, we can make an important contribution to creating a more inclusive and inclusive world in this regard.

We wish you a wonderful vacation season and a year filled with success and fulfillment.

Warm regards,  
Saeideh Saleh Ghaffari  
CEO  
Iran Autism Association



## **Introduction**

Over the past year, the Iran Autism Association (IAA) has made significant steps in raising awareness, providing support and improving access to key services for people on the autism spectrum. This report aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the Association's activities, achievements and ongoing challenges. Through collaborative initiatives, specialized programs and effective advocacy, the Association has worked tirelessly to empower families, build professional capacity and promote greater social inclusion.

This year, the Association has focused on promoting international partnerships, conducting training programs and organizing awareness campaigns, seeking to fill gaps in education, intervention and policy. This report presents key accomplishments and highlights areas for growth. The report outlines the Association's ongoing commitment to promoting the rights and well-being of people with autism while setting the course for future efforts.

## **The IAA Mission, Vision and Core Values:**



### **Iran Autism Association Mission**

Iran Autism Association has accompanied the Iranian autism community since diagnosis and has opened a clear path to achieving maximum individual independence by creating efficient models and providing services based on scientific evidence and appropriate to the situation of a person with autism and their family. By challenging and accompanying organizations, business owners and the general public, it also creates the conditions for individuals and families to lead a social life like other citizens.



### **Iran Autism Association Vision**

In 2030, children will be diagnosed with autism at a golden age, and they and their families will go through educational and treatment pathways with comparable services in the region. Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder live in an autism-friendly society and become independent.



### **Iran Autism Association Core Values**

Core values are fundamental beliefs or guiding principles that dictate behavior, actions, and decisions within an organization or community. The IAA core values are:

- Respecting the Privacy for Families: We are the Autism Family Trustee and the information we hold is for us only. We keep every piece of information from families with heart and soul.
- Results-oriented and data-oriented: We respect effort, but we track results. In every activity, we look for data, record it and make decisions based on the data obtained.
- Patience, patience, patience: We are agile in our organizational work, but we are patient with the family and its potential challenges. Patience is our job, we need to listen, be patient and be patient again. We plan based on what we hear and try to change it. To do the right thing, we ask related organizations and institutions to be patient.
- Transparency and honesty towards all parties involved: We provide stakeholders with relevant information before they ask us for it. We have nothing to hide, except from those who question our values.
- Based on evidence: we follow trends and interesting cases, but what we follow and do in the path of rehabilitation and treatment is based on evidence.
- Learners: We learn from every activity and action and teach others what we have learned.

### Meeting with Government Officials

Regarding promoting rights of people with autism spectrum disorder, representatives from the IAA, along with parents of autistic children, engaged with Vice President Mr. Gholamreza Mokhber to discuss the challenges facing the autism community in Iran. They proposed the establishment of a special committee to tackle these problems. Following this meeting, representatives from various governmental organizations visited the IAA to review progress and discuss proposed actions for supporting the autism community. This ongoing dialogue reflects a commitment to enhancing the lives of those affected by autism in the country.



### “Run and Walk for Autism” Event

To promote awareness and understanding of autism, the "Run and Walk for Autism" successfully brought together over 500 people affected by autism, their families and the public. This initiative served not only to raise awareness of autism, but also to symbolically recognize the ongoing efforts of parents with autistic children. We are aware of the difficulties they face and our aim was to express their solidarity by presenting them with a symbolic medal.



### Visiting “Dubai Autism Center”

The IAA visited the Dubai Autism Center to explore its activities and services. The aim is to bring innovative practices to the development of Iran's first specialized autism center in Tehran. This visit is a crucial step in providing important resources and support to improve the lives of people with autism and their families in Iran.



## Conducting Therapist Training Sessions

IAA conducted training sessions, for 200 therapists. The course, which was offered both online and in-person, was designed for students and graduates in the fields of psychology, counseling, and rehabilitation. The training consisted of two sections, theoretical and practical, and focused on teaching participants how to effectively treat individuals with autism and the challenges that may arise. The theoretical section of the training covered the latest research and developments in the field of autism, including diagnostic criteria, assessment tools, and intervention strategies. The practical section of the training focused on developing the skills necessary to work with individuals with autism and their families.



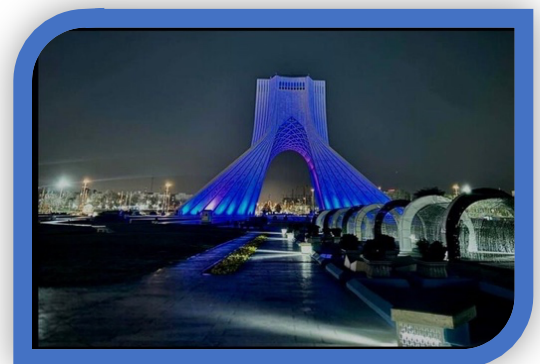
## Raising Autism Awareness Through Public Spaces

In Autism Awareness Month, the IAA made concerted efforts to raise awareness about autism in various cities and utilized a diverse range of public spaces to disseminate their message, including billboards, ATM monitors, and buses. Through these placements, IAA aimed to reach a wide audience and increase understanding and acceptance of autism within the community.



## Iran has illuminated landmarks in blue for World Autism Awareness Day

the IAA made a concerted effort to raise awareness of autism in various cities during Autism Awareness Month. It used a variety of public places to spread its message, including billboards, ATMs and busses. In this regard, the IAA wanted to reach a wide audience and increase the understanding and acceptance of autism in society.



### "Synergy Event; 20+3" - Press Conference

The 20+3 press conference was held on May 13, 2024 in the presence of a small circle of media reporters and news agencies in line with the important themes of the 20+3 conference at the Iranian Autism Association building. This press conference also explained the philosophy of the 20+3 conference and the main mission of the association at this conference to inform society, educate and empower parents and people with social diseases and therapists, and to demand and receive special support from the authorities.

20+3 means that three organizations (the Welfare Organization, the Special Education Organization (SEO) and the Ministry of Health and Medical Education (MOHME)) are directly involved with autism and 20 organizations are indirectly involved.



### Holding the Synergy Event; 20+3

The Iran autism Association has organized the 3rd conferences under the title 20+3 with two objectives, namely to present reports and make demands to stakeholders (families and people with autism, community members and officials).

The focus of this year's conferences was on the challenges of adults with autism and family mental health, which were discussed in the program. This initiative aims to foster greater understanding and support for autistic individuals within the community. Additionally, it highlights the need for enhanced mental health resources for families of autistic individuals.





### Holding the Second Event "Panjare-ha"

Presentation of a one-year progress report of the Iran Autism Association in cooperation with Pasargad Bank with integrated social responsibility: With the stable and continuous support of the Iranian Autism Association and Pasargad Financial Group, a window had been opened to provide services to more than 500 families across Iran, taking an important and effective step. On June 09, 2024, an event was held in the boardroom of the Hazare Bank Pasargad building in the presence of companions and supporters of the Pasargad Financial Group and a group of families with autistic children to present an annual report on the joint collaboration on corporate social responsibility and its importance.



### Providing a Written Statement and two Oral Statements in 56th Session of Human Rights Council

The Iran autism Association has submitted a written statement in "Interactive dialogue with Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health" and two oral statements in "Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health" and "Interactive dialogue with the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity".



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## Approval of the four-year report of Iran Autism Association by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations

After obtaining consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), non-governmental organizations are required to submit a report to the Economic and Social Council every four years on measures consistent with the objectives of the United Nations. ECOSOC approval of the Association's first quadrennial report means that the effectiveness of the Association's consultative status will be maintained for the next four years. The Forum submitted its report to the UN Platform in June 2023, and after an initial approval, it was finally adopted at the Economic and Social Council meeting in June 2024.



## Preparation of the UPR report of Iran Autism Association (Fourth Cycle)

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a unique mechanism of the Human Rights Council that calls for each UN Member State to undergo a peer review of its human rights records every 4.5 years.

IAA submitted the UPR report on the human rights situation, which provides the opportunity to declare what actions they have taken to improve the human rights situations in Islamic Republic of Iran in order to subject of autism and to fulfil their human rights obligations.



## IAA Summer School for Children Aged 7 to 12

The Iran Autism Association organized the second special summer school for people with autism spectrum disorders in Tehran's Bird Park, with the aim of improving social skills and citizenship. This program provided a suitable opportunity for children and adults with this disorder to learn the skills needed for better social interaction and enhancing a sense of responsibility in a natural and tranquil environment. Through the use of various educational and recreational programs, the summer school helped to improve participants' social skills and create a positive and enjoyable atmosphere for their learning and growth.



### Parenting Class for ASD Families

These classes are designed to provide effective strategies for dealing with the unique challenges of these children. These courses help parents to better understand their child's needs and idiosyncrasies and teach them appropriate methods to encourage communication, improve behavior and develop social skills. In addition, the sessions create a supportive environment where parents can share experiences and encourage each other. Under the guidance of experts and counselors, parents can also improve their knowledge and confidence in using modern parenting methods tailored to children with ASD.



### A Scientific Meeting and Training Workshop for Therapists and Trainers of the "House of Hope" in Tehran

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### Submitting Written and Oral Statements During the 57th Session of the UNHRC

The IAA, seeking active participation in the 57th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, has submitted 4 written statements and 4 oral statements. These statements are intended to address important human rights issues and draw international attention to matters affecting persons with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). The written statements will be formally included in the session documents, while the oral statements will be presented during the Council's sessions to contribute to the discussions and decision-making process.



### **The Summer School at Iran Mall**

This Summer School offers a dynamic and enriching program designed for children and young individuals on the autism spectrum. Through a variety of engaging activities, workshops, and educational sessions, the summer school aims to promote learning, social interaction, and skill development in a supportive environment. By incorporating both fun and educational elements, this program provides participants with valuable opportunities to grow, explore their interests, and connect with peers, while receiving the guidance and care they need.



### **The Workshop on Maturity and Sexual Behavior for Special Education Teachers in Rasht**

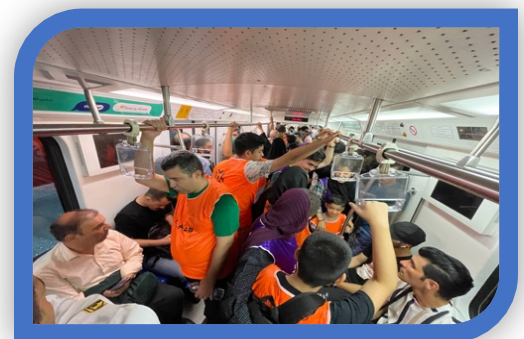
This workshop organized by the Iran Autism Association, was held successfully. The aim of the workshop was to improve teachers' awareness and skills in dealing with issues of maturity and sexual behavior of students with special needs. Participants learned effective and evidence-based methods to create a safe and supportive environment and received practical tools to better support their students in dealing with these sensitive issues.



### **Summer School for Children and Adolescents with Autism in the Subway**

This program was organized in partnership with the Tehran Urban subway Operating Company and the Tehran Municipality.

Over 30 participants aged 7 to 12 and those 12 and older practiced using public transportation, including purchasing tickets and learning about safety measures. Throughout the program, they engaged in hands-on activities that enhanced their independence and social skills. The initiative aimed to promote confidence in navigating public spaces, ultimately fostering greater inclusion and awareness within the community.



### Meeting with Dr Chiara Servili, Technical lead for developmental disabilities, World Health Organization (WHO)

In our recent meeting with World Health Organization, we discussed key challenges in autism care, focusing on young adults transitioning into adulthood. We explored potential projects, including the development of AI-based entrepreneurship programs for autistic individuals in Iran. These initiatives aim to enhance support and opportunities for individuals on the spectrum, particularly in fostering independence and career development.



### Meeting with the SR on the Negative Impact of Unilateral Coercive Measures

In a recent meeting with Ms. Alena Douhan, the UN Special Rapporteur, the Iran Autism Association (IAA) discussed key challenges, including the need for improved diagnostic tools and the impact of sanctions on access to essential medications for children with autism in Iran. The IAA emphasized the importance of addressing these gaps in care and highlighted the insufficiency of current government support to meet the needs of autistic children.



### Meeting with the SR on the Negative Impact of Unilateral Coercive Measures

The IAA recently had the pleasure of visiting Fondazione ARES in Switzerland. It was an incredible experience, where we learned a great deal about their best practices in supporting individuals with autism. The innovative approaches and dedication of Fondazione ARES have truly inspired us, and we look forward to incorporating some of these valuable insights into our own programs back in Iran. We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Fondazione ARES for their warm welcome and the opportunity to exchange knowledge and experiences.



### Visiting Som – Fundació in Spain

The Association recently visited Som – Fundació in Barcelona, hosted by Josep Tresserras, where we exchanged knowledge with Fundació Junts Autisme and Aprenem Autisme. This visit allowed us to explore their valuable work in the autism field and apply best practices to improve services in Iran. We are grateful to Thomas Bignal from the European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD) for facilitating the visit and connecting us with international NGOs. These collaborations will strengthen our efforts to enhance autism support in Iran.



### Statement for the Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development at the 57 Session of the Human Rights Council

In this statement, which presented in person, IAA highlights how development should integrate human rights, social justice, and ensure the participation of all, particularly vulnerable groups. Aligning development with these principles creates a path for marginalized communities to access the resources, opportunities, and freedoms necessary to lead dignified lives and contribute to society.



### Holding an Exhibition "Ham Ghessel (Image and Imagination)

With the generous efforts of Iran Autism Association and the excellent leadership of Mr. SeifAllah Samadian and collaboration with Mohammad Amin Barzegar(photographer), a photography and painting exhibition on autism was held from October 24 to 31: "Ham Ghessh" (Image and Imagination). This exhibition was a journey into the hearts and lives of families affected by autism. Through the lens of a talented young photographer and the vibrant brushstrokes of autistic youth, this exhibition brought together more than 30 black and white portraits and 80 powerful works of art that tell stories of resilience, love and individuality. This exhibition was welcomed by individuals, artists and ASD families and it was a big step towards raising the society's awareness about this disorder.



### Meeting with Dr Aref; The First Vice-President Iran

In this meeting, Dr. Mohammad Reza Aref, discuss the development of a strategic document aimed at addressing the challenges faced by individuals with autism. This initiative will involve key ministries and aims to be completed within two months. The Vice President emphasized the importance of legal and insurance reforms to support autistic individuals and their families, while also highlighting the need for greater public awareness to foster a more inclusive society.



### Holding a Training Workshop for Export Development Bank of Iran Staff

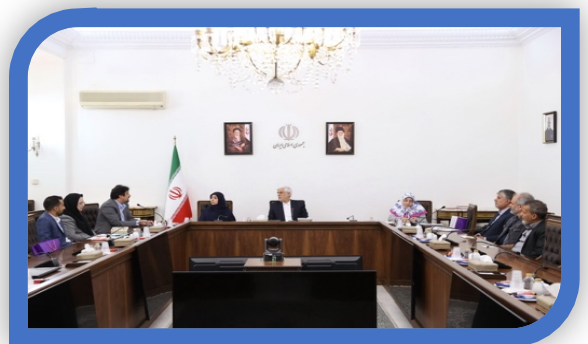
This specialized workshop aimed at enhancing awareness and understanding of autism. This workshop offered bank employees valuable insights into the unique characteristics, challenges, and needs of individuals on the autism spectrum, equipping them with practical skills for effective and respectful interactions in both social and professional contexts.



Such initiatives underscore the Association's commitment to fostering awareness, acceptance, and inclusion for individuals with autism and to cultivating a supportive culture for people with diverse needs across society.

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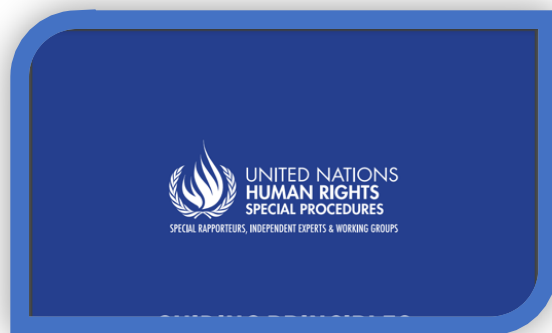
### **Contribution in OHCHR Comprehensive Report on Mental Health and Human Rights**

This report has been prepared at the request of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) as a contribution to a comprehensive study on mental health and human rights. It focuses on the challenges and best practices in implementing legal and policy measures to uphold the human rights of persons with psychosocial disabilities, including persons with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). The report is in line with UN Human Rights Council Resolution 52/12, which was adopted in April 2023. It emphasizes the importance of bringing a human rights perspective to mental health care, eliminating discrimination and providing community-based support.



### **Statement for the "International Conference on Sanctions, Business, and Human Rights"**

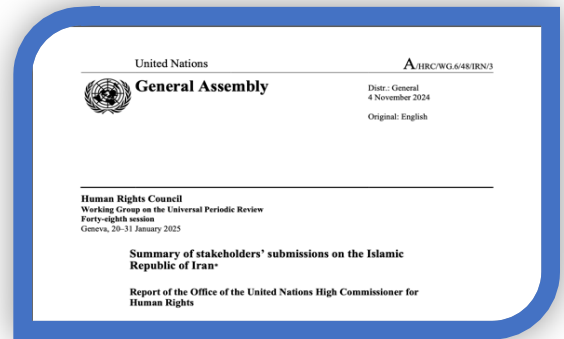
The Iran Autism Association has issued an official statement for the International Conference on Sanctions, Business, and Human Rights, emphasizing the critical need to address the unintended impacts of sanctions on individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The IAA highlighted that, while sanctions are typically imposed for political and economic purposes, they often have detrimental effects on access to essential healthcare and education, thereby hindering early diagnosis and intervention for those with ASD. The association called on conference participants to uphold and implement the Guiding Principles on Sanctions, Business, and Human Rights, ensuring that these measures protect human rights and safeguard access to vital services for vulnerable communities.





## Highlighting the Iranian Autism Association's Contributions

The report on the Islamic Republic of Iran includes contributions from various stakeholders, including the Iran Autism Association. The Association's input focuses on autism-specific challenges in the country, particularly in relation to access to services and the impact of systemic barriers such as sanctions on individuals with autism and their families. By shedding light on these issues, the Iran Autism Association underscores the importance of ensuring inclusive policies and international cooperation to enhance support for people on the autism spectrum. Their statements provide a critical perspective on the intersection of human rights, healthcare, and disability in the context of the Universal Periodic Review process.



## Social-Civic Autumn School

The Iran Autism Association has organized visits to Iran Mall for children with autism, where they engage in practical activities to learn and practice a new social topic each week. This initiative aims to help children with autism develop essential social skills in real-world settings, enhancing their confidence and independence.

