



ASEAN AUTISM NETWORK

Celebrating 10 Great Years







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1. FOREWORD


1.1 Foreword by Mr. Lee Yoong Yoong



ASEAN has been unwavering in its long-standing commitment towards persons with disabilities in the region, including persons with autism. In the past few years, ASEAN Member States have subscribed to the principles of several international frameworks, notably the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Bali Declaration on the Enhancement of the Role and Participation of Persons with Disabilities in ASEAN Community, when it comes to outlining concrete actions for public agencies to collaborate with grassroots' organisations on disabilities.

As recent as the 33rd ASEAN Summit in Singapore in November 2018, ASEAN Leaders adopted the "ASEAN Enabling Master Plan 2025: Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in ASEAN". This master plan enumerates strategic action points to be implemented across all three ASEAN Community pillars to ensure a comprehensive and integrated approach to protecting the rights and promoting the welfare of PWDs in ASEAN.

All these are part of ASEAN's ongoing efforts to ensure that the well-being and needs of PWDs are met, and that PWDs are given the necessary support to achieve their optimal development to lead dignified, meaningful and independent lives.



Likewise, ASEAN Member States have been proactive in furthering the understanding of the prevalence of autism in the region and taking stock of developments in addressing its unique needs at the national level. In 2017, the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Social Welfare and Development (SOMSWD) and the Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability (APCD) initiated the “ASEAN Autism Mapping Project (AAMP)” to, among others, build a structured repository of data critical for evidence-based psychosocial interventions to lessen the challenges faced by both the caregivers and persons with autism on a daily basis, and thereby improve their overall well-being and quality of life. The end-in-mind is to broadly address the life-long learning and coping skills that would empower persons with autism to live in an inclusive, people-oriented, people-centred ASEAN Community.

In this vein, and in line with ASEAN’s motto of One Vision, One Identity, One Community, I am extremely honoured to be contributing this short message to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of the ASEAN Autism Network (AAN). May I take this opportunity to commend the good work that the AAN has done to contribute to the ASEAN regional integration and community building process. I look forward to working with the AAN in pursuing efforts to better the lives of the marginalised and vulnerable communities. Happy Anniversary, AAN!

Lee Yoong Yoong

Director, Community and Corporate Affairs Department
ASEAN Secretariat




1.2 Foreword by Dr. Adriana Ginanjar



Year 2020 is an important time for the ASEAN Autism Network (AAN). We, the 10 countries in ASEAN, are celebrating 10 years of working together with the same vision: “to support, assist, facilitate and enhance autism-related family support groups in collaboration with other stakeholders in the ASEAN region and globally”.

Since its ratification in Bangkok in December 2010, AAN has carried out various important activities such as: the AAN Congress held every two years, ASEAN Autism Games, Training of Trainer on Inclusive Development through Disability-Inclusive Sports, and the Autism Mapping Project. We are grateful for getting full support from the Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability (APCD), the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF), the Japan Foundation, the ASEAN Secretariat, and also from government agencies in each country. Without continued support from these institutions, AAN would not be able to carry out various activities that provide many benefits for persons with autism and their families. On this special occasion, as Chairperson of AAN, allow me to convey my deepest appreciation and gratitude for the support that has been given to us.

Since I first joined the AAN activities during the 2nd AAN Congress in Brunei Darussalam, I have felt a family bond between the AAN members. We established closeness easily because we had one special experience in common, namely having children with autism spectrum. After becoming a representative of the Autism Foundation of Indonesia (YAI) for AAN and becoming more involved in various AAN activities, I increasingly felt the strength and enthusiasm of parents to



provide the best interventions for their special children. I see AAN as a big family with uniqueness and strength complementing each other. At each meeting we are not only discussing important issues and future plans, but also providing support and sharing happiness about the story of persons with autism. Countries that are more experienced in dealing with the issue of autism genuinely offer assistance to countries that have just started establishing a foundation and therapy centres.

We realise that AAN still has a lot of homework to do. Collaboration between members of the AAN, persistence and hard work of parents with persons with autism, as well as support from various government agencies and NGOs are our main assets. I hope that the AAN will continue to grow into a strong and independent institution as persons with autism continue to strive to become more independent and confident of their achievements. Our simple, yet utmost happiness as an organisation is when persons with autism get the opportunity to optimally develop their potentials, are fully accepted in the community, and can contribute in building their society and their country.

Dr. Adriana Ginanjar

Chairperson, AAN, 2018 - Present



1.3 Foreword by Mr. Piroon Laismit




The ASEAN Autism Network (AAN) has been established since 2010 and this year will be its 10th Anniversary. APCD plays an active role as the AAN Secretariat and one of the founders among leaders who are family members of children and youths with autism in ASEAN. We would like to express our sincere congratulations on this important historic initiative.

AAN is gradually playing a key strategic role to promote a better life for persons with autism and has made significant changes to attitudes of people in ASEAN Member Countries. With the spirit of family group support in ASEAN, we share the support to each other through various programmes and activities such as 1st ASEAN Autism Congress 2010, AAN Poster: Understanding Autism, Celebration of World Autism Awareness Day, Support for Typhoon Victims in the Philippines 2014 and ASEAN Autism Games since 2016 etc.

AAN has recently become an active partner with the ASEAN Secretariat, SOMSWD, JAIF, and APCD to launch the ASEAN Autism Mapping Project which aims to study and document the situation of persons with autism in each member state and promote awareness as well as collect national and regional recommendations for further concrete actions in the future. The project will be completed in April 2020.

As evidence of ASEAN's recognition of AAN's work, ASEAN has awarded the Inaugural ASEAN Prize 2018 to Ms. Erlinda Uy Koe, Honorary Chairperson of AAN. Furthermore, AAN is in the process of obtaining official accreditation



from the ASEAN Secretariat, with the support of the London School of Public Relations (LSPR). APCD highly appreciates and considers AAN as one of the most proactive networks in ASEAN. We do believe that AAN will become a self-reliant, self-sustaining and autonomous network in the future with the ASEAN official accreditation.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Piroon Laismit

Secretary General, AAN, 2017 - Present

Executive Director, APCD



2. MESSAGES

2.1 Message from Mr. Akiie Ninomiya




Our son, Tim with autism has taught us how difficult it is for him to participate in education, work, sports and cultural activities in the community.

When I found that 1% - 2 % of primary students in developed countries are diagnosed with autism (a high percentage compared to other types of disability), I felt it was important for APCD to establish an ASEAN network on autism, since most ASEAN countries did not recognise autism as a disability and that there were very few policies and programmes for persons with autism in the areas of medical, educational, vocational, sports and culture.

In 2010, APCD organised an ASEAN Autism Workshop with the Association of Parents for Thai Persons With Autism. As a result, the ASEAN Autism Network (AAN) was established.

APCD dispatched several missions to ASEAN countries to support national associations on autism and encourage their governments to recognise autism as a disability. Initially, the AAN Conference focused on medical, educational and vocational aspects. However, the AAN soon recognised the United Nations motto, “Nothing about Us without Us”, and shifted to empower persons with autism.



APCD organised workshops on art, cultural activities and sports by persons with autism. AAN sports events have become a powerful movement to promote not only empowerment of persons with autism, but also awareness of persons with autism.

I deeply appreciate the parents' love and enthusiastic participation for AAN activities. We would like to continue to develop AAN connectivity and caring on autism in the ASEAN region. May God continue to strengthen the AAN.

Akiie Ninomiya

Former Secretary General, AAN, 2010 – 2017

Former Executive Director, APCD



2.2 Message from Mr. Chusak Janthayanond



As Representative of Parents of Persons With Autism in Thailand, I was honoured to be one of the ASEAN Autism Network (AAN) founders and had a good chance to organise the first Congress in Bangkok, Thailand. This memorable event was presided over by “Princess Ubonrat Rajkanya Siriwatanapanwadee”. Autism Thai’s First Vice President (Dr. Samrerng Virachanang) and I have been working closely with parents of AAN members network since its inception.

I am grateful and thankful for the cooperation and support of our friendly AAN members, in making visits, sharing information, exchanging ideas, and adopting good practices to be used in AAN member countries. I hope that this continued cooperation will result in the sustainable development for all persons with autism in the ASEAN Region.

Chusak Janthayanond

First AAN Chairperson, 2010 – 2013

2.3 Message from the late Padma Shri Malai Hj Abdullah Othman

From his speech 3 Dec 2018, at the opening of the SMARTER Bistro and Cafe and launching of SMARTER Brunei's Employment Programme



On behalf of all the executive committee and members of SMARTER Brunei consisting of parents and family members of individuals with autism, I, the President and CEO, would like to first convey my upmost gratitude and appreciation to everyone's support towards SMARTER for all these years. The support, care and diligence given towards us all these years will never be forgotten and will forever be remembered and appreciated. I and all of our parents and families will continuously strive and fight for all our children with autism for their rights, their right to lead this journey we call life, a life where they are full of confidence, patience, strength and of course to be a Contributing, Holistic, Interdependent, Productive member of Society (C.H.I.P.S) for their family, for their community and for their country in a seamless journey. (INSHAALLAH) This endless fight for their rights is mine and all parents and family member's "Fardu Ain" Our responsibility, Our purpose and Our biggest sacrifice.

We commemorate International Day of Persons With Diffability by launching our employment programme, that started long ago in 2008, to ensure that No One Is Left Behind. We at SMARTER Brunei ensure that all of our Individuals with autism will have employment.



SMARTER Brunei's employment programme aims to tackle the issues of unemployment in the country. With the increasingly competitive job market, the challenges for our differently abled children have become greater and it is near impossible for them to find a job. For our IWAs, we do not use the terms High Functioning or Low Functioning, as a means to ensure everyone has employment, we use the terms, High Support and Low Support, addressing the negative connotations and assumptions, by focusing on Ability and highlighting the amount of support needed. Our Social Enterprise aims to support everyone regardless of the level of support needed. Providing them with Appropriate, Optimum and relevant Support in the form of environmental, procedural, structural, emotional and with assistive technology, again, SMARTER Brunei ensures ALL CAN BE EMPLOYED.

Our Bistro and Cafe also hopes to be OPEN and a BRIDGE for all Individuals with Autism, not just in Brunei but across ASEAN. SMARTER Brunei has always been an advocate that pushes for an ASEAN Friendly Community, We hope with the launching of our employment programme and Bistro and Cafe, its message and social impact reaches out to a larger community to push for ACCEPTANCE. Our Bistro sells, coffee, made from coffee beans from across ASEAN. We push for the ASEAN Community to be OPEN - Optimistic, Positive, Encouraging and Nurturing and we hope to be a BRIDGE - Believe in them, Recognize their Diffability, Integrate and Include them, Develop, Grow and Encourage them.

The late Padma Shri Malai Hj Abdullah Othman

Second AAN Chairperson, 2013 – 2015

2.4 Message from Ms. Dang Uy Koe



In November 2018, I had the honour of receiving the inaugural ASEAN Prize - a prestigious regional award which aims to acknowledge the inspiring and outstanding achievements of an individual or organisation in fostering the ASEAN identity, promoting the ASEAN spirit and championing the ASEAN way.

The recognition goes to all members of the family support organisations that comprise the ASEAN Autism Network. Every one of us works hard to engineer institutional mechanisms to improve the lives of individuals on the autism spectrum. Each member organisation has stepped beyond our own borders to bring our advocacy to the regional and global community.

May the work we do together inspire receptive minds and hearts among our policymakers to build a genuinely autism-inclusive global society!

To God be the glory!

Dang Uy Koe

Honorary Chairperson, AAN 2018 – present

Third AAN Chairperson, 2015 - 2018



10 GREAT YEARS JOURNEY
STARTS FROM HERE

3. AAN's 10 YEAR JOURNEY

3.1 Founding of ASEAN Autism Network

In January 2010, the 5th APCD Workshop for “the Capacity Development of Self-Help Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (CDSHOD)” was held in Bangkok. During this workshop, an idea to establish an autism network in the ASEAN region was proposed and informally agreed to by the family members of the autism community from Brunei Darussalam, Myanmar, Philippines, Vietnam, and Thailand. It was proposed that the Network be a platform to engage and empower parent support groups and self-help organisations to work for an autism-friendly ASEAN region. To support this movement, APCD was tasked to organise an Autism Workshop.

The ASEAN Autism Network (AAN) was formally inaugurated during the Autism Workshop organised by APCD in cooperation with JICA in Bangkok on 13-15 December 2010. This unique gathering brought together 27 representatives from 9 countries, including Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. Each participant had a person with autism in their family. A core concept of the workshop was “Family Comes First”.

The action plan gave priority to establish an ASEAN Autism Parents' Network. A draft Constitution of AAN was reviewed by all participants with the facilitation of Mr. Akiie Ninomiya, APCD Executive Director, before being adopted by the inaugural General Assembly of AAN.





The first AAN Executive Committee was composed of representatives from each country. The key leadership was:

- Mr. Noy Indavong of Lao PDR, Hon. Chairperson
- Mr. Chusak Janthayanond, of Thailand, Chairperson
- Mr. Malai Hj Abdullah Othman of Brunei Darussalam, Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Malai subsequently became the second AAN Chairperson)
- Mr. Haji Bistaman Siru Abd Rahman of Malaysia, Deputy Chairperson

It was agreed that AAN’s mission would be:

To support, assist, facilitate and enhance autism-related family support groups in collaboration with other stakeholders in the ASEAN region and globally.

Its objective would be:

To educate, develop, and provide opportunities for family support groups, helping them to grow towards achieving global standards with reference to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and other international and regional instruments relating to autism.

AAN was envisioned to be a platform for:

- Family support groups to collaborate, cooperate, coordinate, and unite in developing a holistic autism curriculum that would be local, affordable and accessible. Strategies and intervention programmes would be non-discriminatory in support of families, including those economically challenged. More importantly, the extended family structure on which the ASEAN community is based would remain the basis of any developmental programme and strategy.

- Autism advocacy in ASEAN. It would work at the national and sub-regional levels to promote the rights of persons with autism. Self-advocates could be supported to form their own groups at the community level.
- Discussion of autism-related issues to promote information sharing and facilitate common approaches.



AAN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2010-2013

Front Row (Left to Right)

1. Mr. Haji Bistaman Siru Abd Rahman, Deputy Chairperson, AAN EC, Chairman, Advisory Board, National Autism Society of Malaysia
2. Mr. Noy Indavong, Hon. Chairperson, AAN EC, Advisor, Lao Autism Association
3. Mr. Chusak Janthayanond, Chairperson, AAN EC, President, Association of Parents of Thai Persons with Autism

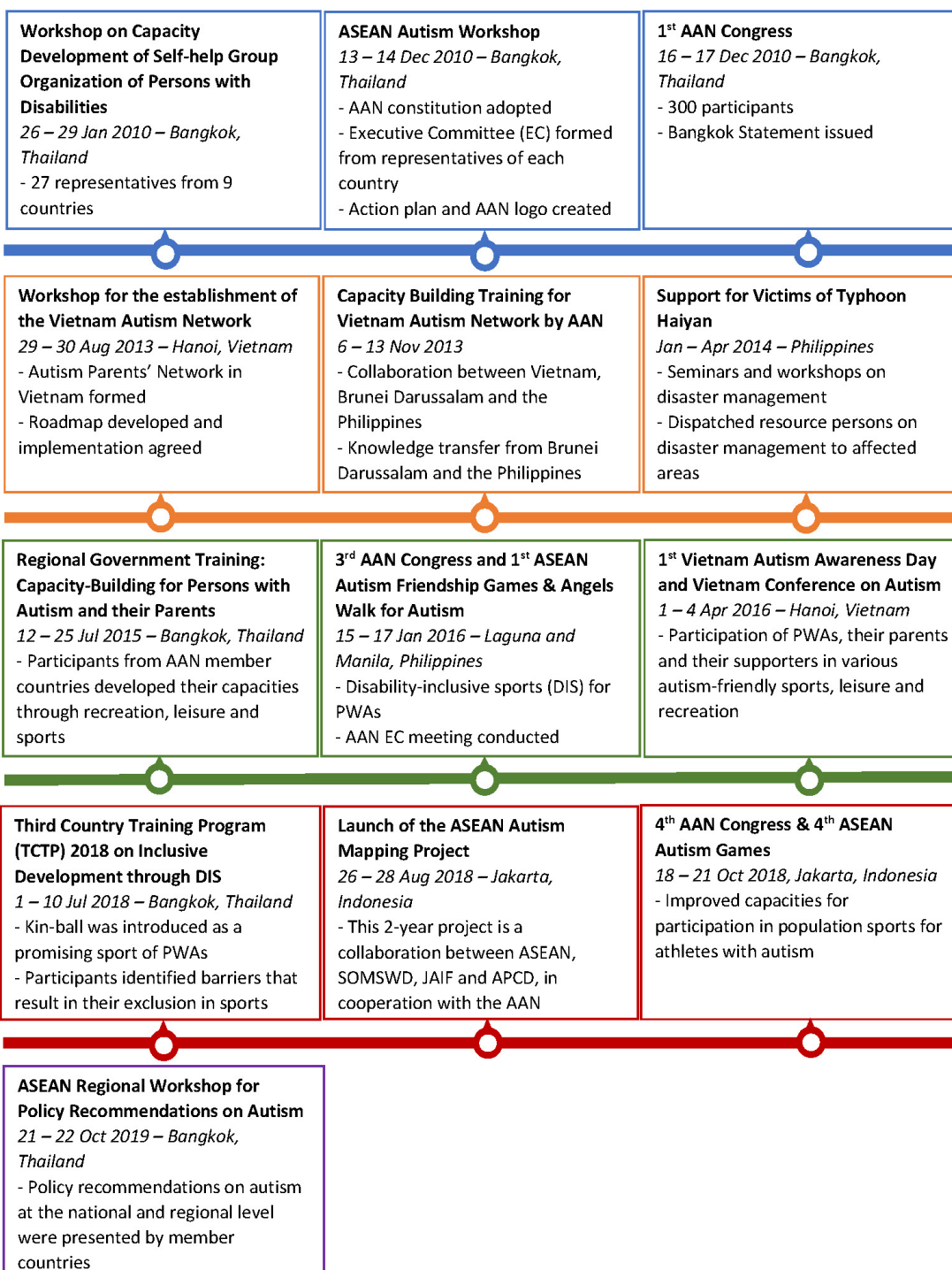


4. Mr. Malai Hj Abdullah Othman, Deputy Chairperson, AAN EC, President, SMARTER Brunei
5. Mr. U Kyaw Htut, President, Family Network for Intellectual Disabled Children, Myanmar

Back Row (Left to Right)

1. Ms. Dyah Puspita, Secretary, Yayasan Autisma Indonesia
2. Ms. Tran Le Na, Member, Self-help Group of Parents of Autistic Children, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
3. Mr. Akiie Ninomiya, Secretary General, AAN, Executive Director, APCD
4. Ms. Svay Simorn, Director, Parents Association for Children with Intellectual Disabilities, Cambodia
5. Ms. Mary Grace L. Adviento, National President, Autism Society Philippines

3.2 AAN Major Events and Achievements 2010 - 2019





<p>AAN Poster: Understanding Autism <i>Dec 2010 – Jan 2012</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Translated to local languages and disseminated to local communities - Displayed during World Autism Awareness Day (WAAD) 2012 in ASEAN countries 	<p>World Autism Awareness Day (WAAD) <i>2 Apr 2011 – ASEAN and Japan</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Autism Walk Statement in ASEAN Countries” announced 	<p>2nd AAN Congress <i>27 – 29 Apr 2013 – Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AAN EC meeting - Country reports - New innovations from Brunei
<p>Workshop for Establishment of Cambodian Intellectual Disability and Autism Network (CIDAN) <i>31 Mar – 1 Apr 2015 – Phnom Penh, Cambodia</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Autism Parents’ Network in Cambodia established 	<p>World Autism Awareness Day <i>2nd Apr 2015</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 8th WAAD and 2nd Cambodian AAD 	<p>Autism-Friendly Guidebook on Recreation, Leisure and Sport <i>Jan – Jun 2015</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Designed, printed and disseminated to member countries
<p>1st Myanmar Autism Games <i>7 – 8 Dec 2016 – Yangon, Myanmar</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The first autism-friendly sports, leisure and recreation event in Myanmar for PWAs and their parents/trainers 	<p>Regional Government Training: Inclusive Development Through Disability-Inclusive Sports (DIS) <i>1 – 10 Oct 2017 – Bangkok, Thailand</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participants from AAN member countries developed capacities through DIS coached by experts from Thailand and Japan 	<p>Disability Inclusive Sports for Tomorrow 2017 <i>7 – 8 Oct 2017 – Bangkok, Thailand</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The skills and talents of PWAs were positively promoted with activities such as track & field, swimming, petanque, Dodge bee and others - Dodge bee (flying disc) introduces
<p>AAN EC Meeting <i>19 Oct 2018 – Jakarta, Indonesia</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AAN accreditation process updated to EC committee. The accreditation process is being supported by the London School of Public Relations, in coordination with the ASEAN Secretariat 	<p>Training of Trainers (ToT) on DIS <i>7 – 13 Jul 2019 – Vientiane, Lao PDR</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A total of 50 people from the Mekong countries and Japan participated - The ‘Vientiane Recommendations’ were discussed and finalized through brainstorming sessions 	<p>TCTP 2019 on Inclusive Development Through DIS <i>21 – 31 July – Bangkok, Thailand</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Athletes with autism, their parents as trainers, and representatives from ASEAN countries improved their capacity for participation in national and international sports events



4. COUNTRY REPORTS



4.1 Brunei Darussalam



SMARTER Brunei (Society for the Management of Autism Related issues in Training, Education and Resources, Brunei Darussalam)

SMARTER Brunei was established on 9th September 2001 as a non-government and non-profit organisation run by parents and family members for Individuals with Autism (IWA). It was registered officially under Subsection (3) Chapter 6 from the Organisation Act (Term 66) on 29 Rabiulawal 1423 (11 June 2002).

Members of SMARTER Brunei are IWAs who are diagnosed and referred by the Child Development Center, Ministry of Health, Negara Brunei Darussalam. As of 2019, there were 102 members registered at three centres :

1. Early Development Growth and Enabling (EDGE) Centre, Perpindahan Mata, for IWAs aged 12 Years and below from the Brunei-Muara & Tutong Districts
2. EDGE Centre, Kuala Belait, for IWAs aged 12 Years and below from the Kuala Belait District.
3. Brunei Autism Centre for Adults (BACA) Kg. Sungai Hanching, for IWAs aged 13 and above from the Brunei-Muara, Tutong and Belait Districts

The ASD programme is geared towards developing Independent Living Skills. The core programme revolves around Sensory Processing Intervention Strategies in order to acquire the 7 essential skills: Personal Management, Home Management, Leisure and Spiritual Management, Academic Skills Management, Vocational Management, Employment Management, and Family Life management

SMARTER has developed a comprehensive Social, Training, Educational and Psychological (STEP) programme by drawing on the best aspects of available



programmes to ensure that SMARTER's programmes are based on the most current and relevant developmental, behavioural, educational, social and communication theory/research. Programmes are eclectic,

multi-sensorial, holistic and customised to individual needs, interests, and real life environments, and based on the Brunei extended family structure.

SMARTER has also developed a Competency Based Training (CBT) Programme for our adults with autism (AWA) at our BACA Centre. The CBT Programme provides training and certification of competency in job skills for employment. Our Employment Programme offers:

1. Apprenticeship for 12 to 18 years old IWAs
2. High Supported Employment for AWAs
3. Low Supported Employment for AWAs
4. Open Employment for AWAs

As of 2019, SMARTER Brunei, had successfully organized numerous conferences, workshops on Management of Autism and fundraising events. We have conducted in-house training and attended international seminars, conferences and workshops.

2001

SMARTER Brunei inception



2002

On the 14th of November 2002, SMARTER Brunei is officially a member of World Autism Organization



2005

In September 2005, SMARTER Brunei is accepted and acknowledged as an organization for having the best practices for Autism by UNESCO, where by SMARTER Brunei President is invited to attend a meeting regarding special needs education in Bangkok, Thailand.



2006

SMARTER Brunei has been acknowledged as being a Centre of Excellence by Mrs. Deanne Michael, a consultant and specialist in Autism from Australia.



2008

SMARTER Brunei reached another milestone when the Head of Disabilities Studies of Flinders, Associate Professor, Dr. Verity Vottruff, acknowledged that SMARTER Brunei provides World Class Quality Service.



SMARTER Brunei has also been acknowledge to be on par with the best autism centers in the United Kingdom by professional trainers from The National Autism Society, South Yorkshire, UK



SMARTER Brunei has also met and achieved high scores in all 19 areas in the Charter for Person with Autism (European Parliament, 9th May 1996.



SMARTER Brunei, as a means of being a self-sustainable organization and to continuously raise awareness, officially opened the SMARTER Autism Shop that sells pre-loved items that have been donated to us.



SMARTER Brunei officially launched its Brunei Autism Center for Adults (B.A.C.A.) for individuals aged 12 and above. The center focuses on vocational training and employment.



SMARTER Brunei has been acknowledged as having the best practices by the UNESCO Foundation and has invited its President to present a paper in Bangalore, India.



2010

SMARTER Brunei is officially the founding member of ASEAN Autism Network, AAN. Where our President was elected to be the first Deputy Chairman.



2011

SMARTER Brunei successfully conducted its first ever Gala Night Charity Musical Oddy's Quest. The Charity Musical Gala Night was aimed to raise funds as well as showcase our individuals with Autism's talent.



2012

SMARTER Brunei yet again broke the barrier by having a sequel to the success of the first Charity Musical Gala Night, Oddy's Quest II; A Journey in search of a Home.



2013

SMARTER Brunei successfully organized and conducted the 2nd Asean Autism Network Congress in Brunei Darussalam, with the theme "Towards Autism Friendly, ASEAN Community".



2014

SMARTER Brunei successfully launched the coffee table book with the title, "Acknowledge Autism: The E.N.I.G.M.A. of a Beautiful Mind".



SMARTER Brunei successfully organize another Charity Musical Gala Night, with the title "IWA, The Duckling".



SMARTER Brunei officially opened its first ever SMARTER Washington Bakery, with the help from the grant given from the United States Embassy. Which aims to continuously provide employment opportunities for our IWA.



SMARTER Washington Bakery also collaborated with The Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf Brunei Darussalam. In conjunction with their Caring Cup Corporate Social Responsibility Project, and is now SMARTER's distributor for our SMARTER Washington "Rasa Milo Cookies".



2016

SMARTER Brunei officially open its EDGE Centre in Kampong Mata-Mata and was officially opened by His Royal Highness Pengiran Muda Malik



Madame Saima Ansari, the Vice President's wife of Inda, came to visit SMARTER Brunei, through the collaboration of the Indian High Commission and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.



2017

The Countess of Wessex, Princess Sophie came for a visit at SMARTER Brunei. The Countess in the royal patron for National Autistic Society, UK.



2018

The President, Founder and CEO of SMARTER Brunei had been announced to receive a Padma Shri Award, in conjunction with the 25th Anniversary of INDIA-ASEAN Partnership for his tireless dedication and success for SMARTER Brunei and all individuals with Autism



The Vice Secretary 1 and Deputy Director of Administration, now Chief of Operations Office of SMARTER Brunei, joined the 21st Asia Europe Foundation's Summer University, which is a 2 week long programme, with the theme, Youth with Disabilities.



The Vice Secretary 1 through the 21st ASEF Summer University, was then selected to join ASEF to be a facilitator and navigator for the upcoming ASEF young leaders Summit, that takes place alongside the Asia Europe Meeting.



SMARTER Brunei after a 4 year hiatus, SMARTER Brunei successfully made a come back with its latest concert, titled "Through the Autism Wonderland".



SMARTER Brunei celebrated the International Day for Persons with A Diffability with the opening and official launching of the SMARTER Bistro and Café, Sponsored by BLNG.



During the 12th World Autism Awareness Day 2019, all around the world Advocate for Autism began to shift their focus from Awareness to Acceptance and the theme was "Assistive Technologies, Active Participation".





4.2 Cambodia

Cambodia Autism Network



Humble Beginnings

Before 2011 Autism was not a word commonly known in the public vocabulary in Cambodia. Children were at home with minimal support and parents had to seek their own solutions. Few special schools were available and only serving students with multiple disabilities

Cambodia's Autism Journey

The first special day care programme providing education to children on the autism spectrum was established by the Hands of Hope Community (HHC) in 2012. HOHC was founded by Mr. Chan Sarin who is Executive Director, in collaboration with the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Education Youth and Sport, the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veteran and Youth Rehabilitation, the Disability Action Council and other NGOs. From 2016 we have received support from the Prime Minister and the First Lady.

Cambodia Autism Network (CAN) is an Alliance which brings together representatives of NGOs and parents of persons with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), working together to support and advocate for persons with ASD to exercise their legal rights and responsibilities.

CAN was established on 2nd April 2015, at the first National Workshop which was presided over by H.E. Vong Sot the Minister of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation of the Kingdom of Cambodia and supported by APCD and NGO networks.



CAN aims to support persons with ASD to live confidently and equally and fully benefit from the legal, social, educational and health care services in a manner that is safe and appropriate for persons with ASD. CAN represents persons with ASD, protects their legal rights, facilitates their participation, living and working activities.

CAN Vision

Our vision is to promote and protect the rights of individuals and groups of people with ASD, empower families and communities, engage with government to be more responsive.





Our Big Goals

1. Every person with ASD has the right to access inclusive education to reach their individual potential and achieve their best interests.
2. We wish Cambodia to move forward along with ASEAN on ASD development and our dream is a Fully Supportive Environment for Autism by 2030.





4.3 Indonesia

Yayasan Autisma Indonesia



The establishment of Yayasan Autisma Indonesia (YAI) was inspired by a discussion between Dr. Melly Budhiman, and Mr. Bernard Rimland (initiator of the biomedical approach in treating autism spectrum disorder). This discussion took place at a time when the number of cases of autism spectrum disorder started to increase in Indonesia, and information regarding diagnosis and treatment was still difficult to obtain. Therapy centres and inclusive education were also very limited. Finally, in 1997 YAI was founded in Jakarta by five doctors and eight parents of individuals with autism. While it started with 30 members, at present YAI has more than 1000 members, consisting of parents, doctors, psychologists, teachers, therapists, and university students.



In reference to the mission of raising public awareness by disseminating valid information about autism, assisting the government in addressing autism related issues, and advocating the rights of individuals with autism to proper treatment and education, YAI is active in carrying out various activities as organisers and as part of the support system. Some of the activities that have been successfully carried out regularly by YAI are initiating autism awareness events, such as Walk for Autism (2010 to 2018) and Light It Up Blue for Indonesia (2015 to 2019), and increasing the competencies of parents, professionals and caregivers through seminars and workshops. A breakthrough in raising awareness of autism issues



within the government was made when YAI received a commitment of support from the association of cabinet ministers' wives during the era of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (2009-2014).



In order to increase the participation of persons with autism in the field of sports, YAI also successfully organised the Indonesia Autism Games in 2017 and the ASEAN Autism Games at the regional level in 2018. In the area of arts, YAI has been facilitating activities to develop the potential of individuals

with autism through art exhibitions and workshops. This year (2019), YAI was appointed to be a partner of the Ministry of Social Affairs in composing Indonesia's country profile on autism, as part of the ASEAN Enabling 2025 plan. YAI also became one of the information and technical sources of reference in the application of autism-friendly airports' concept.



For the future, YAI has set short-term and long-term goals; they are aimed at empowering parents of persons with autism, providing better intervention, increasing participation in international sports competitions, supporting persons with autism to contribute more to society, and participating in national policy-making related to rights of persons with autism. YAI will also participate in policy-making for persons with disabilities at regional and international levels.

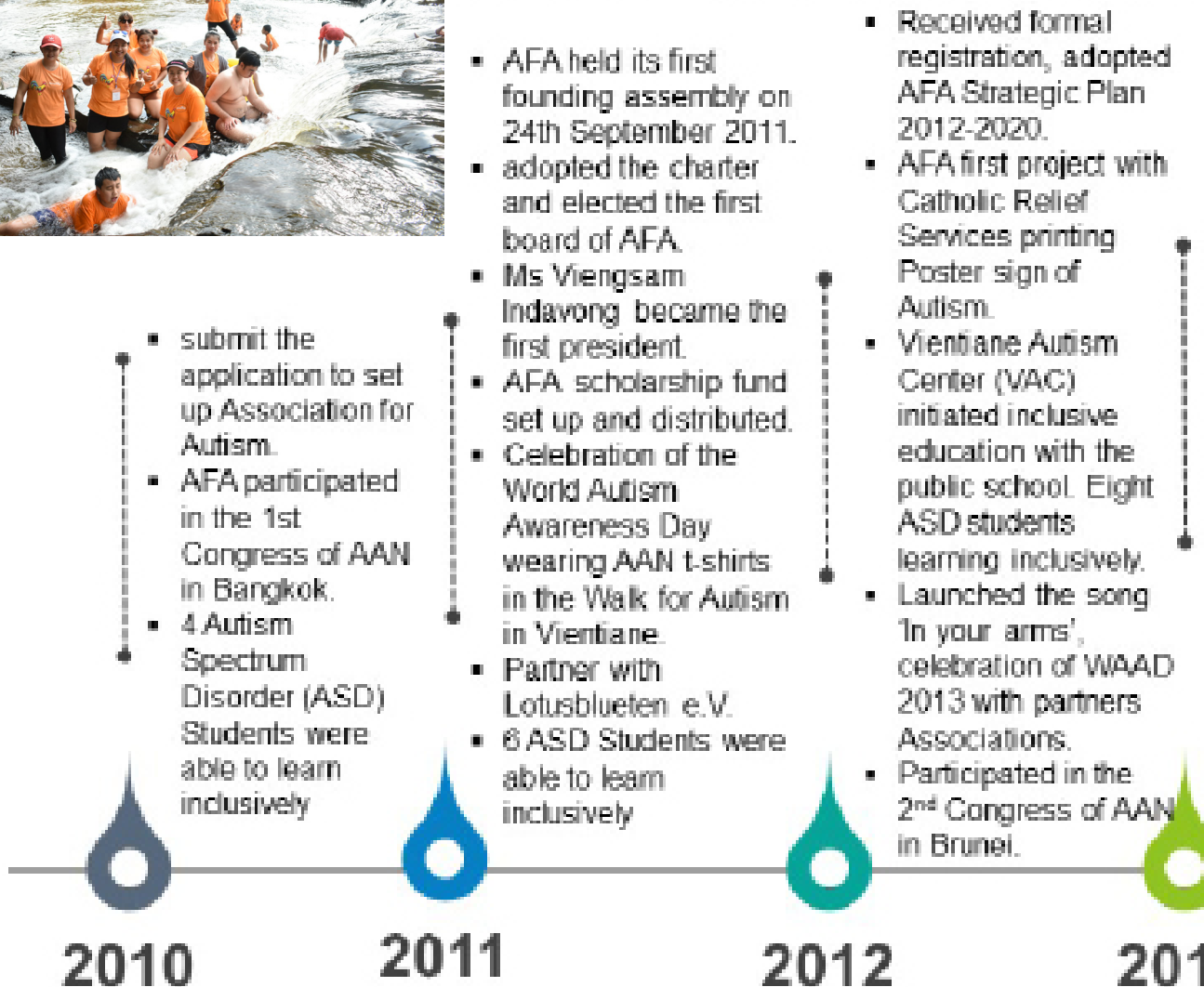


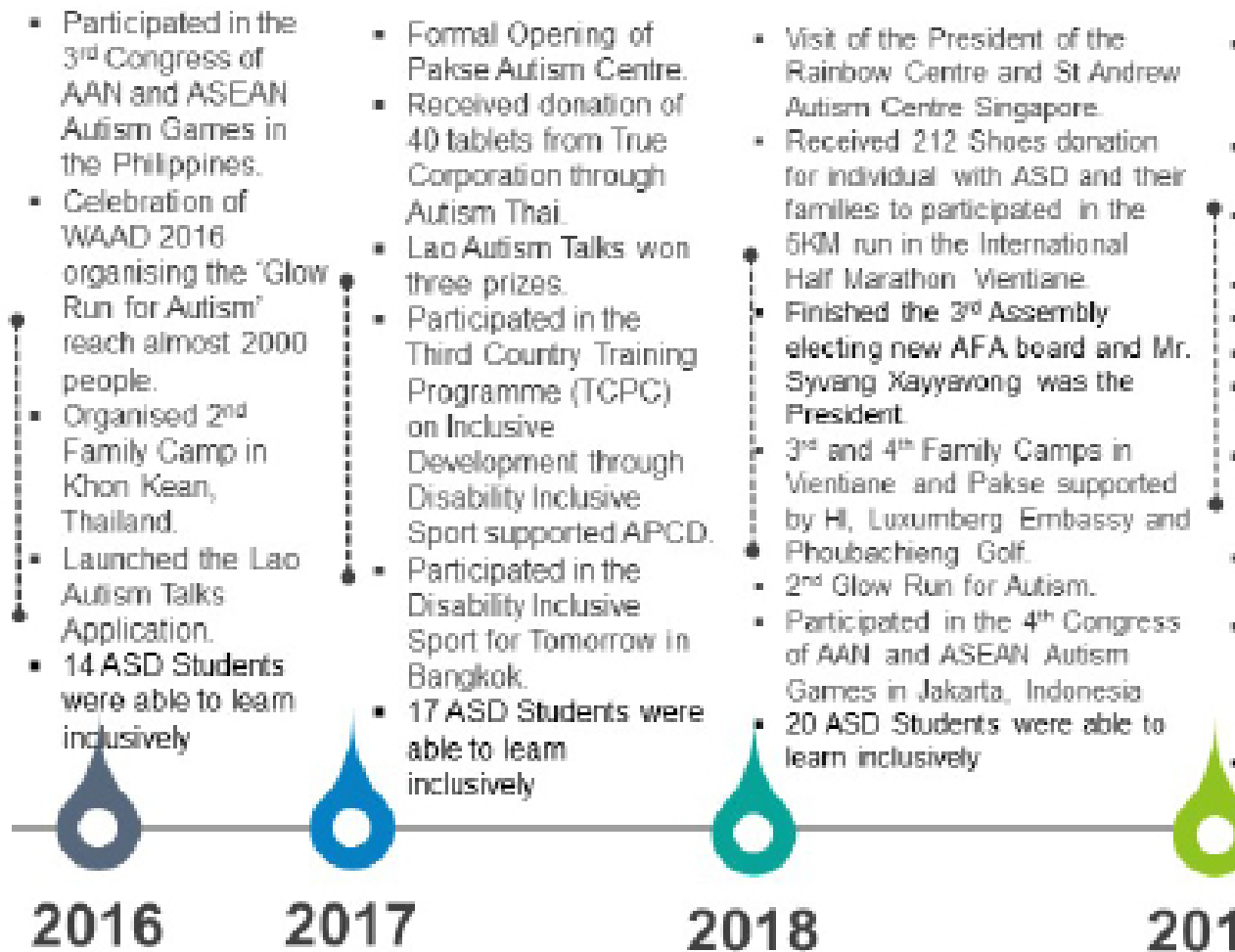


4.4 Lao PDR

Association for Autism









- Training supported by Twin Pine Group and the Rainbow foundation, Thailand in January and November 2019.
 - Granted VOICE Project to organise WAAD 2019 in three provinces.
 - Exchanged visit of parents in Savannakhet to Mukdahane, Thailand.
 - Walk for Autism in Pakse Champasak.
 - 10th Year Anniversary of VAC Celebration.
 - Participated in Autism Mapping Project.
 - Participated in Asia Pacific Autism Conference in Singapore.
 - Hosted the Training of Trainers on Inclusive Development through Disability Inclusive Sport for 5 Mekong Countries.
 - Side event for AAN Executive Board Meeting in July 2019.
 - Initiate private sector partnership with Crowe Plaza Hotel, Phoubacheng Golf & Resort, AIF Group, Austcham in Lao PDR.
 - 22 ASD Students were able to learn inclusively
- Expand VAC to accommodate 120 students (100% expansion).
 - Expand AFA branches in Savannakhet, Luangprabang, Xiengkhouang and Huaphanh Provinces.
 - Add new business line of AFA providing technical support to private schools in Vientiane.
 - Implement inclusive education project with HI and CEGGA.
 - Develop AFA Strategic Plan 2021-2030.

2019

2020



4.5 Malaysia

The National Autism Society of Malaysia



The National Autism Society of Malaysia (NASOM) is a society formed in 1987 by a group of parents and professionals with the aim of delivering lifespan services to the community of persons with autism. It was registered on 3rd March 1987 as a national charitable organization and it strives to provide a range support services to assist people with autism, especially children and their immediate family members.

Vision

An inclusive society where people with autism can reach their potential, participate in their communities and lead a meaningful life with dignity.

Mission

Working together with members, stakeholders and beneficiaries to improve the quality of life for people with autism and their families through programmes, services, resources, knowledge and social innovation, and promoting the rights and opportunities for people with autism.

NASOM Accomplishments

World Autism Awareness Day /
National Autism Week & Autism
Champion Awards

NASOM collaborated with the first
Autism Friendly Mall in Malaysia,
Sunway Putra Mall in order to
create awareness about autism
in conjunction with World Autism

Awareness Day. More than 200 children with autism showed off their capabilities in song, dance and music. There were 12 awards given for contribution to the





autism community. The launch was graced by YB Hannah Yeoh, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development.

National Autism Resource Centre (NARC)

Established on 2nd April 2019 in conjunction with World Autism Awareness Day 2019, NARC marks the partnership between NASOM and Universiti Teknologi MARA the public university in Malaysia. NARC functions as a one-stop knowledge repository and reference.



myITCrew@ILKBS

As part of the initiative to help people with autism, NASOM collaborated with the Ministry of Youth and Sports, Institut Kemahiran Belia Negara Malaysia and other parties in providing inclusive practical training. The training exposed people with autism to the working environment and IT skills. The Minister of Ministry of Youth and Sports, YB Syed Saddiq bin Syed Abdul Rahman launched this training.



Run for NASOM

NASOM actively collaborated with companies in order to develop autism awareness. The latest was with Mary Kay (Malaysia) at the Run for NASOM. NASOM provided the organisation while Mary Kay provided funding for the event.

Autism Games 2019 (Super Autism)

The Malaysian Autism Games also known as Super Autism was organised as preparatory for hosting the ASEAN Autism Games 2020. The Games consisted of Running, Swimming and Bowling. Sponsorship was provided by OCBC Al Amin, the main sponsor, and by other companies such as Gadang Holding, Texas Chicken, Champ and Evolve Concept Mall. Two hundred persons with autism from all over Malaysia participated.



Presentation of National Autism Society Strategy Plan

NASOM Chairman's quest for new opportunities to collaborate involved a meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia YAB Dato' Seri Dr. Wan Azizah binti Wan Ismail who has agreed to consider the National plan for people with autism.



Appointed as the Member of National Council for Persons with Disabilities

Madam Feilina S. Y Muhammad Feisol the Chairman of NASOM has been appointed as a member of the National Council for Persons with Disabilities stipulated under Section 3 (1) (j), the Persons with Disabilities Act 2008. This is yet another milestone to discuss issues pertaining to persons with autism at a high level. The goal of the National Council for Persons with Disabilities is also in-line with the Persons with Disabilities National Policy and the National Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities. Among the functions and role of the Council is to oversee the implementation of national policies and plans of action relating to OKU (persons with disabilities), to make recommendations to the Government on matters relating to OKU such as support, care, protection, rehabilitation,



development and well-being of OKU, to monitor the activities of all ministries, agencies, bodies or organizations, governments and the private sector involved in implementation, national policies and plans of action relating to OKU, and recommend to the government changes to existing laws and also propose new legislation to ensure the full participation of OKU in society.



4.6 Myanmar

Myanmar Autism Association



Myanmar Autism Association (MAA) was founded in June 2011 by parents of children with ASD. The State officially recognised MAA in 2014. The Association was founded to serve the next generation of individuals with ASD and their parents. It provides advocacy to the general public, the institutions and the State. It also serves as a collective voice for all persons related to autism. MAA is a charitable, apolitical association and serves as a think tank. The Association is the one and only organisation representing ASD in Myanmar.

Vision

People with autism are well integrated into the community like anyone else.

Mission

The Association is composed of people with autism, parents or caregivers and interested individuals in Myanmar, and intended for people with autism to...

- reduce social burden to the minimum
- figure out opportunities and fully integrate into the community.

Goal

To help individuals with autism achieve independence through proper intervention, special education and awareness promotion.

Activities

- Annual celebration of World Autism Awareness Day



- Sharing knowledge through seminars and talks by inviting experts from local and abroad
- Producing IEC materials and bi-monthly newsletter
- Day care centre (intervention centre)
- School advocacy programme
- Awareness talks among the general public
- Youth Club

Achievements

- MAA members actively participated in developing the Law for the Rights of PWD (June 2015) and its By Law (September 2017)
- MAA successfully organised the First Autism Games in December 2016 in collaboration with AAN & APCD
- Policy recommendations for ASD were developed and submitted to the Ministry of Social Welfare Relief and Resettlement in November 2019.
- The Minimum Standards for special need schools were developed by MAA in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Welfare Relief and Resettlement, and special need schools in November 2019.

Future programmes

- Youth Centre for out of school ASD youths
- Special needs trust fund
- Promote research, survey or study on ASD
- Work with the Ministry to form a Quality Control Team to monitor special need schools
- Autism Home





4.7 Philippines

Autism Society Philippines



The Autism Society Philippines (ASP) is a national, non-profit, family-driven, grassroots organisation working towards an environment that empowers persons on the autism spectrum to become, to the best of their potentials, self-reliant, productive, independent and socially-accepted members of an Autism-OK Philippines.

Building communities nationwide.

From the 11 mothers who bonded for their children in 1989, ASP has grown to 13,000 members - composed of institutions, parents, professionals, students and individuals on the autism spectrum. ASP's nationwide network of 99 chapters (and growing) provides grassroots support to families living with autism.



Driving impactful campaigns, policies and programmes.

ASP works with government agencies, at the national and local level, and private enterprises to develop campaigns, policies and programmes that allow protection of, participation by, and provision for Filipinos on the autism spectrum. It is among the architects behind the National Autism Care Plan Bill, the Philippine Autism Policy Framework, and the ASEAN Autism Mapping Project.

Amplifying acceptance, accommodation and appreciation.

ASP's Angels Walk for Autism is the highlight of the National Autism Consciousness Week every year. It is the largest autism advocacy event in the region and has attracted as much as 24,000 participants from the Philippines, ASEAN countries and Japan. The event has been echoed in 23 cities across the country. The ASP



is among the movers behind the Philippines' commemoration of the World Autism Awareness Day, the National Disability Prevention and Rehabilitation Week, and the International PWD Day.

Sharing knowledge and inspiration.

ASP conducts regular family support group meetings, sibling support workshops, seminars and trainings, early detection and intervention consultancy, employability training, free community-based therapy services and sharing of scientific updates.

Advocating family empowerment.

The ASP HOME empowerment Programme offers accessible therapy to children on the spectrum from economically vulnerable families. Most importantly, parents are trained in a classroom and in the context of their homes, and are given knowledge and confidence to address the unique needs of their children on the spectrum.



Nurturing dedicated servant leaders.

The ASP Self-Advocates Circle is composed of adults on the autism spectrum, which creates opportunities for socialisation, self-expression, and leadership development. The ASP recognises outstanding Filipinos on the spectrum through the annual ASP Autism Angel Achievement Awards (A5). ASP continuously trains and develops its chapter leaders and maintains an online leadership community. Ms Mona Magno-Veluz, ASP National President was an Asia CEO Awards recipient in 2019. Ms Dang Koe, ASP Chair Emeritus was an ASEAN Prize laureate in 2018. The ASP received the coveted Gawad Apolinario Mabini in 2013 for its noteworthy contribution to the disability community.



Inspiring genuine economic participation.

The ASP Autism Work economic empowerment initiative guides adults on the spectrum and their families towards suitable productive opportunities, and leads enterprises towards the development of inclusive workplaces. Since 2016, the programme has created 217 positions in 53 enterprises in 10 provinces. The ASP initiated Project ChocolatA, a sheltered workshop where adults on the spectrum are trained in making chocolate truffles. The ASP also manages the AutisMALL Pilipinas, a virtual marketplace for products and services by and for Filipinos on the spectrum.

Stimulating personal growth.

The ASP PueDays (“puede” is a Filipino adjective for “possible”) are weekly activities that provide enrichment for children and adults on the spectrum through happy, inclusive sessions.



The ASP Employability

Training sessions bridges skills of job seekers on the spectrum to a level required by industry through coaching and hard skills training. The ASP Project GourmA showcases the abilities of jobseekers on the spectrum in the food and restaurant industry, through inclusive dining experiences.



4.8 Singapore

Autism Network Singapore



Autism Network Singapore (ANS) was established in 2015 as a platform for Social Service Organisations serving the autism community to create public awareness and mobilise support for the autism cause.

Humble Beginnings

Before the 1990's, 'Autism' was not a word commonly known in the public vocabulary in Singapore. Children were in mainstream school settings with minimal support and parents were seeking their own solutions. Few special schools were available and only serving students with multiple disabilities.

Singapore's Autism Journey

The first special programme catering to children on the autism spectrum in Singapore was established by the Margaret Drive Special School in 1989, and which eventually came under the umbrella of the Rainbow Centre (RC) in 1992.

In the 30 years since 1989, the autism landscape in Singapore has seen a far-reaching and dramatic transformation thanks to the efforts of parent support groups, the Singapore Government, private non-profit organisations, social service arms of religious and non-religious organisations and donors. Major milestones in Singapore's Autism Journey were:

- 1989 STEP (Structured Teaching for Exceptional Pupils) Programme began with 12 students in the Margaret Drive Special School catering to children with autism from 6-12 years.



- 1998 Autism Resource Centre (Singapore) or ARC(S) started Diagnostic and Assessment Services

Autism Association (Singapore) or AA(S) started its first Early Intervention Centre for young children with autism

- 1999 Learning Support Coordinators for mainstream school students with autism were deployed by Singapore's Ministry of Education (MOE)

AA(S) started the first Day Activity Centre (DAC) for adults with autism

- 2000 ARC(S) started a consultancy service and organised its first Autism Conference
- 2002 ARC(S) started WeCAN Early Intervention Programme for young children with autism
- 2004 ARC(S) started Pathlight School offering mainstream curriculum to students with autism
- 2005/2006 Satellite Partnership between mainstream Secondary schools and Pathlight began

St Andrew's Autism Centre (SAAC) started a DAC for adults with autism and St Andrew's Autism School for children aged 7 to 18 plus.

- 2009 ARC(S)'s WeCAN Early Intervention Programme received international accreditation from the National Autism Society, UK.
- 2011 World Autism Awareness Day was marked in Singapore for the first time.



- 2012 ARC(S) established the Employability and Employment Centre (E2C) for adults with autism
- 2015 Autism Network Singapore (ANS) comprising AA(S), ARC(S), RC and SAAC was formed (AWWA joined in 2017). ANS would be a platform for Social Service Organisations serving the autism community and other stakeholders to create public awareness and mobilise support for the autism cause. World Autism Awareness (Singapore) is one of its main events.



- 2018 ARC(S) started a Social Enterprise providing inclusive employment for adults with autism.
- 2019 The Singapore Government implemented compulsory education for all children with special needs.

The first purpose-built Adult Residential Home for autism with co-located DAC was opened by SAAC



Today

The current landscape consists of:

- 20 Special Schools of which 3 are autism-focused Special Schools
- 4 autism-focused Day Activity Centres
- 1 autism-specific Residential Home
- At least one Allied Educator in all Mainstream Schools
- Special Needs Services in all Institutes of Higher Learning

Looking Ahead

The challenge to provide more and better services remains pressing. Over the next few years there will be

- 4 more autism-focused Special Schools to be opened from 2021 onwards
- Greater inclusion of preschool-aged children on the autism spectrum in mainstream preschools





4.9 Thailand

Association of Parents for Thai Persons with Autism



Autism Thai's Journey since Inception 1995

The Association of Parents for Thai Persons with Autism (Autism Thai) was formed in 1995 by less than 10 families whose children were faced with similar problems of unknown cause. Monthly get-togethers, eventually developed into more frequent meetings. Presently, only 3 founding members still remain (the President and Vice Presidents). They are first-tier leaders of Autism Thai and Autistic Thai Foundation which have about 60 network club leaders and approximately 13,000 members throughout Thailand now.

Challenges in the first 10 years

- Limited experts, knowledge and understanding of autism.
- The available laws then were mercy-based, not rights-based.
- Lack of understanding by government officials of special-needs groups.

Turning Challenges into Opportunities

- Established friendly alliances with other PWD organisations to jointly achieve common goals.
- Active participation in drafting and pushing the new rights-based law on PWD.
- Autism Thai recognised as one of the seven National PWD Associations by law.
- Worked actively with the support of the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEP), Ministry of Social Development and Human Security.



Strategic Moves to Strengthen Autism Thai

- Trained and empowered potential members to be leaders to strengthen network country-wide.
- Encouraged network clubs to become organisations of high standards as stipulated by DEP.
- Recommended/trained network clubs to obtain local sources of financial support.
- Art Story by Autistic Thai : more and more public recognition of the unlimited imaginative talents of Autistic Persons by media and TV programmes. Permanent counters with wide range of products for sale were made available



at reputable department stores such as ICON SIAM, SIAM DISCOVERY etc. Quantity orders were fulfilled at Autistic Thai Vocational Training Center with satisfactory feedback from buyers.

- Autistic Thai Foundation has set up a Social Enterprise comprised of Art Story members and their parents. This will be their real source of sustainable income, improving quality of life and achieving independent living.





4.10 Vietnam

Vietnam Autism Network



In August 2013, with the support from the Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability (APCD), Vietnam Autism Network (VAN) was established under the recognition of the Ministry of Labour Invalids and Social Affairs Vietnam (MOLISA) and Vietnam Federation on Disability (VFD). VAN is an organisation of people with autism, their families and professionals who are now working in the field to support the autism community in Vietnam. We are a non-profit organisation operating on the basis of mutual values: voluntary and respectful.



As a national network, we connect parents with parents, parents with professionals and even between professionals themselves with the belief that by connecting and sharing, we contribute to help professionals and care-givers empower their own intervention capability and eventually bring a better future for people with autism in Vietnam.

In addition, we act as ambassadors to conduct communication campaigns to enhance community awareness of autism and as advocates for policy & welfare implementation for people with autism.

What We Do

- **Connecting**

We have created and maintained an active Facebook page and a Facebook group for autism community with thousands of members and followers who connect



and interact with each other every day. We expand and strengthen our network by encouraging families of people with autism in different cities and provinces of Vietnam to form their own parents club and to join our network.



- **Sharing information**

We cooperate with the Center for Creative Initiatives in Health and Population (CCIHP) in A365 project. The A365 website (www.a365.vn) provides (1) early developmental screening tools for children from the age of 9-months and useful information about autism spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities as well as useful information on child development; (2) videos of intervention guidance and suggestion for teacher and caregivers. We encourage parents, teachers and professionals, sharing their children's stories in our Facebook group, discussing freely, based on the principles of respect and non-offense to others. We collaborate with local parents clubs to conduct regular trainings and workshops for parents and teachers.

- **Enhancing community awareness**

We organise the annual Vietnam Autism Awareness Day (VAAD) on April 2nd .We support individuals, groups in non-profit activities, or corporates in corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities that cater for the needs of people with autism and bring benefits to this community.

Milestones

- August 2013

VAN was established. VAN joined the ASEAN Autism Network.

- 2014

VAN started a long-term partnership with Center for Creative Initiatives in Health and Population (CCIHP) in A365 project.

- 2016

VAN held the First VAAD in Hanoi.

VAN founded the Facebook Group of Parents of people with autism and professionals.



- 2017

VAN held the Second VAAD in Ho Chi Minh City.

- 2018

VAN held the Third VAAD in Bac Ninh City

- 2019

VAN held the Fourth VAAD in Nam Dinh City

Our Statistics

- Number of provinces/cities in our network: 35
- Number of followers on the Vietnam Autism Network Official Facebook Page: 16,975
- Number of members in the Parents of people with autism and professionals Facebook Group: 25,095



5. SELF ADVOCATES – Their STORIES and VOICES

5.1 Cambodia : Eang Serey Udam



Eang Serey Udam is 11 years old with ASD. He has shown potential to develop an unusually good memory. When he was a little boy, Udam's behaviour was aggressive and difficult to understand. Even his neighbours noticed and talked about him which made his parents very sad. He was unable to attend the local school. When Udam was nine years old he came to Hands of Hope Community (HHC) and was diagnosed with autism by a doctor. At HHC the teachers assessed him in a class room for three months and learned about his behaviour and communication problems and

also his potential to learn. HHC teachers developed an IEP focused initially on improving behaviour then focused on his communication with signs and pictures and eventually introduced some spoken language. Today at thirteen years of age Udam's family are happy with his progress as his behaviour is less aggressive and he can communicate with his family and school teachers what he needs as well as what he is asked to do although he may need to be asked twice. Udam is particularly proud of his drawings. He can draw flags of many different nations and also make architectural style pictures. Udam is developing the behaviour and language to be able to self-advocate for his needs with the education he is receiving through HHC and we hope he will be able to use his drawing skills in the wider community.

5.2 Indonesia: Adikki Noersatryo

Autistic Person Who Yearns for Relationships



As an autistic person, I used to not have much interest in interacting with others because I usually prefer to spend my time alone at my comfort zone enjoying my hobbies. Furthermore, I also have trouble in socialising because of my inability to stay longer whenever people talk about something outside of the topic I like or if they do not share the similar hobbies as me. Moreover, I tend to lose awareness of the environment and people around me whenever I get bored. Due to those reasons mentioned above, my parents have to constantly remind me of it.

Things changed when I entered my college years in Sampoerna University, taking internship in IFLIX, and recently joined the English First course for six months. These experiences have helped to expand my knowledge and views as well as have helped to discipline me to be more independent. They have also served as a catalyst for me to drastically hone my social skills. I am able to get out of my comfort zone more often, willing to socialise with others, and develop relationships as well as join many social activities. Additionally, I have learned not to panic easily when there's a sudden change of situation and/or when I make mistakes.

Based on the experiences I have been through until now, I don't deny that there are other autistic people out there and they don't look like they want to form any relationships with others preferring to be alone. However, you must never forget that we must not judge a book by its cover but what is inside because somewhere deep down they truly yearn for relationships but are unable to, due to their limited social abilities. Therefore, as an autistic person, I write this article as a way to share my experiences, knowledge and feelings to autistic people and



those who are non-autistic. I hope this can help autistic individuals who yearn for relationships to develop their social skills. I also wish that it can encourage people out there to have more understanding and willingness to accept their existence regardless of what and who they are.

5.3 Lao PDR : Thidathip Phenglawong (Nadia)

Nadia is 12 years old and has many talents. She loves music, singing, dancing and performing on the stage. She is a confident and responsible young woman. She looks after herself as well as helps her mother with the household chores. In the past she was non-verbal and had no fear of danger. She could not read and write and had limited interaction with others. Her family had to relocate from a northern province to live in Vientiane for her education. Nadia has been a student at Vientiane Autism Centre for eight years since she was four years old. She is currently at Secondary School year 1 learning inclusively with typically developing peers of her age.



She received support from the inclusive education scheme of VAC as well as the financial assistance from AfA Scholarship fund.

We asked Nadia about ‘what does your day look like?’

Nadia replied: I like to wake up at 5.30 am every morning. I cook rice for mum and my younger brother before getting ready for school. I like folding clothes very much. I also iron clothes for my mother. I like to see all clothes put in nice order in the wardrobe.

We asked Nadia about ‘what do you want to do in the future?’

Nadia replied: I want to learn beauty salon and dry cleaning. I want to help my mum earn money.

5.4 Malaysia : Dr. Daniel Leong Han Ming



Dr. Daniel Leong Han Ming started in the field of special education working as an early intervention teacher through the encouragement of his mother. He completed his PhD in Special Education with Macquarie University (Australia). Daniel has lectured in a number of educational institutions including Taylor's University, Universiti Malaya, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, and Dika College. As per his mother's suspicions, Daniel was himself diagnosed with autism in 2011, specifically high-functioning autism, also known as Asperger's Syndrome. Daniel is currently deciding his next steps in life. The process of seeking further education as an adult with high-functioning autism has not always been a smooth one for Daniel. A lot of difficulties he faced could have been reduced had he been diagnosed with autism sooner and gotten more supports he needed. Through his sharing, Daniel would like to increase awareness of the existence of high-functioning autism and recognition of the symptoms. He will also speak on some of the difficulties faced during further education by adults with autism, and would like to encourage adults with and without autism to seek out the supports that are available to work through the issues they face.



5.5 Myanmar: Ye Phone Aung - A Story of an ASD Self Advocate

The following article was written by Ms. Ohn Mar Soe, mother of Ye Phone Aung (20yrs).

My son was diagnosed with autism at the age of 4 yrs. He was non-verbal, low functioning with many sensory issues.



As Myanmar has very poor resources and rehabilitation services, I trained him with the supervision of therapists in Singapore, put him in a local special needs school and took him to different places to give him exposure to the outer world. With the help of Speech and Language, Occupation and Behaviour Therapists, I have done all the training myself up till now. Now, he can engage and communicate his needs and wants, requests for help using spoken language as well as writing. He can even write a short essay of one to two pages about his experiences. These include his feelings, ideas, and descriptions about the community (e.g. travelling, shopping, hospital life, pagoda, restaurant, festival, etc). A structure was established for his daily routine using picture schedules. He is able to follow written as well as verbal instructions.

Now that he has reached adolescence, he is able to do self-advocacy in the family. The family respect and consider his views important so that he would know his strength and feel confident and be assertive. I draw an IEP depending upon his strengths and weaknesses and make him understand to accept and follow it to work together. I think it is very important because it is a form of self-advocacy. Nowadays he can speak up for himself in words and written text, but is still weak in social communication. Although he is less functioning than his peers, he can communicate his basic needs. (e.g. with doctors, cashiers, waiters etc).

I urge him go out of his comfort zone to do challenging work in the household (e.g. laundry, watering plants, mopping floor, preparing and cooking food) but his sensory issue prevents him from touching raw meat. As a Vice Chairman of Myanmar Autism Association (MAA), I use his journey in learning and development as a way to advocate to others as he cannot do it by himself.

These days during his leisure time, he goes shopping, listens to music, plays internet games and has become a responsible, respectful member in our family. I hope his achievements can motivate other families who have low functioning children to try their best for their children and not give up on them.

5.6 Philippines : Ian Lopez

My sincerest greetings and congratulations to the ASEAN Autism Network on its tenth anniversary!

As the President of the Autism Society Philippines Self-Advocates Circle, I believe that it is important for self-advocates to support and collaborate towards finding resolutions to pressing issues faced by individuals on the autism spectrum, across their lifetime. Despite challenges that we face, we must work as a community: self-advocates, parents, professionals and fortify local and regional institutions to uplift and empower neuro-diverse citizens, while amplifying their voices in their respective nations and Southeast Asia as a whole.



We must also continue to motivate ourselves for the common good of the region, the individuals on the spectrum and those who love, cherish and support them.



5.7 Singapore : Wesley Loh Hsien-Wei

I am 26 years old and was diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome at 18 years old. I graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Accountancy from Nanyang Technological University (NTU). I currently specialise in Corporate Tax at a multinational company.



As part of my efforts to empower the autism community, I co-founded the "Autism WhatsApp Community Singapore" Chat Network, the very first initiative in Singapore run by a team of adults with autism with over 20 topic-focused chat groups (<http://w.iautistic.com>).

I was a Delegate cum Report writer at the Asia Pacific Autism Conference (APAC) 2019. I was a keynote speaker at the ground-breaking, first ever autistic-led forum ("Life After Death Autism Forum 2019") organised by Singapore's first autism self-advocate, Eric Chen.

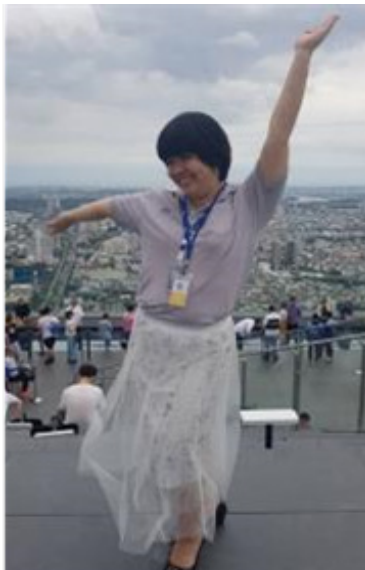
I also organised a few social activities/events for the autism community in 2019, including individuals with autism and their families.

I am happy that Singapore hosted the APAC 2019 and with the autistic representation (from speakers to volunteers) showcased at this international forum. APAC and the Life After Death Forum makes 2019 a huge leap forward for inclusion and the beginning of a new age for the Singapore autistic community.

I hope more autistics step up to lead the autism community through autistic-led initiatives, transform our culture to make Ableism and Discrimination a thing

of the past, and embracing differences and celebrating Neurodiversity as the new normal. I have a vision of being a co-leader in Autism advocacy, Autistic-led initiatives/projects, and in grooming the younger generation of autistic leaders who can stand alongside us, for it is when we travel with like-minded people that we can travel the furthest. Together we can build our future, and build bridges and bring goodwill to all Humanity.

5.8 Thailand: Supaanong Panyasirimongkol (NuNu)



For persons with autism, the real world is more complicated than you would think. We have to struggle and overcome in our own ways. But what it is more important than just living with autism is speaking for what we want and believe in. Persons with autism in Thailand still don't have freedom to stand up and speak out to their parents about where they want to go and what they want to do in their future.

For myself, my life still has only APCD and home, without cellphone and social media access. This problem stems from parents and guardians who think that persons with autism cannot decide what is best for them and will decide on their behalf without asking them what they want and what they believe in. Even though they are grown-up, have jobs and have friends and peers.

For myself, I hope I can decide and do whatever I want to do with my life. My interests right now, are quite simple, like dating, hanging out with friends, travelling, reading books, watching movies and everything like any other persons in society.



5.9 Vietnam: Trinh Ba Cong Minh

I am 26 years old and graduated from the University of Science and Social, Ho Chi Minh City. I studied International History. I try to work in a library as a librarian but it is not easy for me at all. I have friends in university but it is not easy to make friends with my colleagues and communicate with customers.

When I work in Tuoi Ngoc Special School, I feel better. I like to work with children with autism as mentor. I would like to earn money to study Japanese, buy books, meals and pay for bus fare.



I hope Vietnamese government can make good conditions for all children with autism so that they can go to school, and Vietnamese community understand and support people with autism to get jobs and live independently.

6. OUTLOOK AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

When AAN was established in 2010, it was proposed that the Network be a platform to engage and empower parent support groups and self-help organisations to work for an autism-friendly ASEAN community. During the 10 years of journey, AAN has been transformed into a proactive and strong regional organisation which supports self-advocacy for persons with autism. AAN's main goal is an autism-inclusive global society where persons with autism enjoy the same rights, opportunities and access as other people in the community. This is also in line with "ASEAN Enabling Master Plan 2025: Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in ASEAN" which ensures a comprehensive and integrated approach to protecting the rights and promoting the welfare of persons with disabilities in ASEAN, including persons with autism.

At present, AAN is in the process of getting accreditation from the ASEAN Secretariat, with help from London School of Public Relations. The success of AAN in obtaining this accreditation will certainly open up greater opportunities for AAN to be involved in policy making for persons with autism. As an organisation led by parents of persons with autism, AAN believes that success is a journey, not a destination. As persons with autism strive every moment developing their potentials and expressing their voices, AAN continues to support persons with autism through various activities which involve their active participation and which develop their talents.

AAN members have the same important goals for the future:

- Continue to increase collaboration among AAN members to develop the best interventions for persons with autism.
- Provide emotional and social support to persons with autism and their families.
- Develop AAN towards a more self-reliant, self-sustaining and autonomous organisation at the ASEAN level.



- In cooperation with governments, develop a comprehensive and valid screening tool for autism to determine an accurate profile of autism in each AAN member country. This information will lead to a better treatment and intervention for persons with autism.
- Continue working towards an autism-inclusive global society by actively participating in policy-making for persons with disabilities through regional and international conventions. AAN will also promote and support self-advocacy groups of persons with autism to develop international networks.

Dr. Adriana Ginanjar
Chairperson AAN, 2018 – Present

Accessible for Persons with **disAbilities**



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