

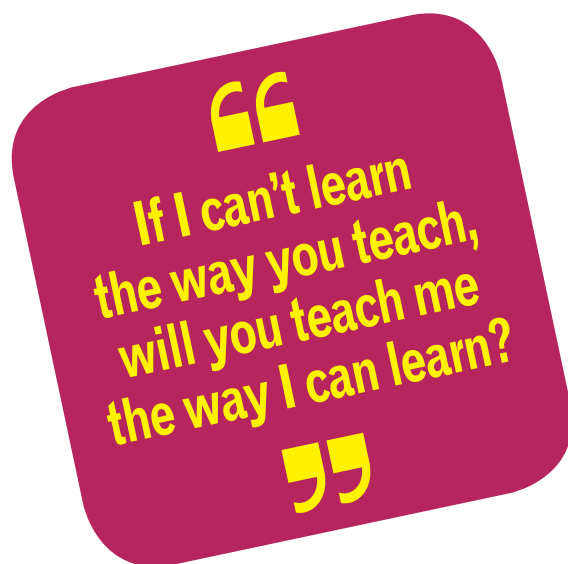


MAHARASHTRA
DYSLEXIA
ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL REPORT

2018-19





COVER ART : Recipients of **Certificate of Excellence** at the National Artwork Competition 2018

Front Cover Art : Official submission by Bhoomika Gunjalkar, 11yrs.

Back Cover Art : Official submission by Vidhi Jain, 13yrs.

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We are a not-for-profit organisation committed to building an integrated support system for individuals with Specific Learning Disability (Dyslexia) in order to equip them with the necessary skills and opportunities required to lead successful and fulfilling lives.

OUR MISSION

To enable individuals with Specific Learning Disability (Dyslexia) to reach their full potential by providing them with necessary support services, advocacy, research, and capacity building.

OUR VISION

To see every individual with Specific Learning Disability (Dyslexia) achieving and thriving.

OUR SERVICES

Our Centres offer a wide range of services that form the core of our contribution to the Learning Disability community.



Assessment



Counselling



Remediation & Intervention



Vocational Guidance



Family Services



Advocacy



Training

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 brought so much hope for those involved with Specific Learning Disabilities like Dyslexia, bringing as it did a first time recognition of the impact the condition has on a child's ability to meet the demands of mainstream education.

Sadly, as we move from legislation to implementation, it would seem that the spirit of the Act, which attempts to bring more beneficiaries under its purview, is being negated by excluding as many potential beneficiaries from accommodations and services as possible. Nowhere has this been more apparent than in the sad saga of medical admissions last year and this, which ended in the Supreme Court with no clear cut resolution. With the Medical Council of India first outright excluding students diagnosed with Dyslexia from being admitted to medical courses to its demanding they meet a vague 40% disability criteria, it is clear that we are still very far from having an insight into the challenges of this complex condition.

On the home front, the news has been more encouraging, with more schools and educational institutions gearing up to cater more effectively to diverse learners. MDA's enthusiastic participation in the **WORLD DYSLLEXIA AWARENESS WEEK** invited institutions all over the country to join hands in creating a better understanding of SLD and its range of challenges. It was especially gratifying to receive nearly 400 entries from all over the country for our poster competition for school children. The art activities were preceded by sensitisation sessions for the students and the resulting entries displayed a keener awareness of the exclusion experienced by their affected peers and an empathy for their situation. World Dyslexia Awareness Week has definitely established itself as an integral part of our annual calendar.

As always, we have a debt of gratitude to all of you who have put in resources, time and skills to ensure that our constituency of children and families continue to receive scientifically validated information and services. Donor, sponsors, team members, volunteers - without your active contributions, nothing would be possible.



Thank you all!

Kate

Kate Currawalla
President - Maharashtra Dyslexia Association

MEET THE TEAM



The fuel to our fire, this talented and committed group of professionals is responsible for keeping our vision alive by contributing tirelessly to our journey day-after-day.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Ms. Kate Currawalla – President
- Ms. Jyoti Row Kavi - Hon. Secretary
- Mr. Cyrus Shroff – Hon. Treasurer
- Ms. Santhosh Rajan
- Ms. Meena Mody
- Dr. Indula Panchal
- Ms. Tehmi Morris
- Ms. Priyamvada Merchant

STAFF MEMBERS

- Ms. Masarrat Khan, CEO
- Ms. Divya Balgi, Administrator
- Ms. Ashwini Nair, Consultant – Brand Communication
- Ms. Manek Chitalwala, Special Educator, Dyslexia Therapist, Certified Academic Language Therapist
- Ms. Fatima Martins, Special Educator
- Ms. Susan George, Special Educator
- Ms. Deesha Pandya, Psychologist
- Ms. Diya Basu, Psychologist
- Ms. Kaschit Mishra, Psychologist
- Ms. Sushma More, Accounts and Admin
- Ms. Priyanka Pandit, Psychologist
- Ms. Sonal Ashok Barve, Psychologist
- Ms. Deepti Makhija, Remedial Teacher and FIE Facilitator
- Ms. Jumana Shipchandler, Psychologist
- Ms. Lucy Martins, Psychologist and Special Educator
- Ms. Sai Gharpure, Trainee Psychologist
- Ms. Pervin Dudhmal, Volunteer - Administration and Accounts
- Mr. Manjeet Valmiki, Office Assistant
- Mr. Balkrishna More, Office Assistant

MEMBERSHIP DETAILS



INSTITUTIONAL
MEMBERS

90



OUTSTATION
MEMBERS

34



INDIVIDUAL
MEMBERS

213

CENTRE-WISE BREAK-UP

TOPIC/ CENTRE	Deonar	Dadar	Vile Parle	Dombivli	Surat	Goa	Others	TOTAL
Case Histories	25	30	32	21	15	13	11	147
Assessment Sessions	261	523	473	240	110	-	12	1619
Remediation Students	16	11	2	-	3	-	-	32
Remedial Sessions	993	517	129	-	295	-	24	1958
Study Skills Students	4	4	-	-	1	-	3	12
Aptitude Test	4	2	-	-	-	-	2	8
Parent Workshops	5	4	-	-	-	-	1	9
Parent Consultations	56	34	9	6	11	-	-	116

PROGRAMMES FOR STUDENTS

Apart from our core activities of assessment, remediation and counselling at our centres, we have been facilitating various other activities for our students to enable them to learn and gain confidence.

Summer Camp 2018

The theme for 2018's Summer Camp explored 'Emotional Development' with the emphasis on helping students develop skills that are essential to emotional wellbeing. During these 9 days, based on the principle of 'RULER' - Recognizing, Understanding, Labelling, Expressing, and Regulating emotion - an evidence-based approach for integrating social and emotional learning into schools, developed at the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, a range of emotions were introduced to participating students by way of craft, role play, scenarios, skits and drama. This allowed them to clearly identify their emotions while providing guidance on how they could use these insights and tools to respond to everyday situations and challenges.



The customary Summer Camp field trip had students visiting the National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA) where the head of the dance department, Ms Swapnokalpa Das, introduced the concept of 'Navrasas' (nine emotions) through gestures and basic principles of classical dance. The students were excited to get an opportunity to perform what they had been taught.

The entire camp was conceptualised and conducted by our team along with committee member and visiting faculty, Ms Meena Mody.

One Day, One Story



Every year, in September, we celebrate International Literacy Day by collaborating with Pratham Books' Champions on the 'One Day, One Story Campaign'.

This year, the story 'A CLOUD OF TRASH' was read to students at our Centres in Dadar and Deonar. The focus was on introducing themes like waste management, littering, reusing and recycling, and social responsibility.

Conducted by Ms Susan George, Ms Deepti Makhija, Ms Fatima Martins, Ms Priyanka Pandit and Ms Manek Chittalwala, the creative delivery of the story using narration and drama had the students fully engaged. They could easily comprehend the message of the story, and discussed how they would contribute to keeping their surroundings clean. The 'Best out of Waste' craft activity, at the end of the session, provided hands-on experience in recycling, and students were fascinated by the idea of turning a t-shirt into a bag.



Fitness Camp

With the aim of introducing students to subjects beyond academics, we conducted a Fitness Camp at our Deonar Centre on 24th December. Participating students got an opportunity to try their hand at kickboxing and karate under the guidance of renowned karate expert Mr. Azim Sheikh, who introduced Self Defence Techniques, and guided students through basic martial arts forms.



Workshops like these give students an opportunity to explore their interests and skills outside of academics, and facilitate learning in other areas. They also help boost their confidence.

Habits : A Positive Change

Our team members Ms Susan George and Ms Deepti Makhija held a student workshop from 13th to 15th November at our Deonar Centre over the Diwali holidays. This workshop, attended by students ranging from 7 to 17 years, emphasized the importance of building better life habits which help improve efficiency and well-being. Assistive Technology was used throughout the workshop to demonstrate to students how they can use digital tools to overcome literary challenges. Stories on the workshop theme were read on

ClaroRead Plus, making the concepts more accessible to the students with reading challenges. Interactive activities like Brain Breaks-Crossover (Brain Gym) helped students to work off excess energy, focus on the tasks at hand, and improve coordination.



At the end of the workshop, students demonstrated a better understanding of the small changes they could make in their daily routine that would positively impact the habits they form.

Relaxation During Exams

This new workshop was conceptualised to provide practical tips to students to help them stay calm and alert during exams so as to improve their performance. Conducted at Navbharat Vidyalaya, Bhoiwada, by our Psychologists Ms Priyanka Pandit and Ms Sai Gharpure, this workshop introduced fun activities as well as meditation and breathing techniques to enable students to effectively overcome exam stress.



MDA plans to offer this training for students at institutions catering to low income families and first generation learners.

Felicitations Ceremony

Our Annual Felicitation celebrated the perseverance, hard work, grit and determination of our students with great pride. Honourable Chief Guest Mr. Yashwantrao More, Deputy Commissioner, Caste Scrutiny Committee, Konkan Bhavan, was kind enough to take time out of his busy schedule to grace this occasion. Throughout his career, Mr. More has always been an ardent supporter of non-profits like ours to ensure that government facilities and provisions are made available so that we may continue working for our chosen causes.

Every staff member shared the spotlight as they called upon their respective students to felicitate them. Their bonds and camaraderie were evident in the stories shared by students as well as parents. For many parents, the felicitation was an emotional event which proved that their children can achieve anything they set out for, as long as they work diligently. For parents of current students, this event is inspirational, motivating them to keep faith and look beyond test scores to recognise the hidden potential in their child.



Mrs. Rao, Neha Rao's mother, rightly captured the essence of the programme when she said, "Our children can achieve anything. Don't hold them back."

We would like to extend our congratulations to the students who graduated in their chosen field and are on their way to pursuing successful careers.

- **Sahil Gawand** graduated from the Institute of Hotel Management, Catering Technology and Applied Nutrition, Mumbai.
- **Tanushree Shetty** completed her graduation in B.Com. and is now a Flight Attendant with Air India
- **Neha Rao** has won accolades in the field of design after graduating from the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad. She is currently working with Boheco and is noted for developing textile dyes from industrial waste.

Following are the students felicitated for X, XII & Graduation:

STUDENT	GRADE	SCORE
Yusha Khan	X	86.2%
Nay Gala	X	93%
Manav Jain	X	77.2%
Melon Gonsalves	X	71%
Samuel Abraham Jacob	X	80%
Anish Deshpande	X	83%
Sudhanshu Sharma	X	86%
Sreenithi Jaganathan	X	66%
Yashraj Kanitkar	X	98.17%
Salman Dorabjiwala	X	88.83%
Ronak Koshy	XII	61%
Sarthak Tulaskar	XII	67%
Rachita Desai	Graduation - BA	B



Students awarded for VSAI and Bhavani CDC competition:

- Bhoomika Gunjalkar
- Vedant Kuradia
- Nameeshka Rajesh
- Vidhi Jain
- Melon Gonsalves
- Sahil Gawand
- Daisy Mhatre
- Pratyush Hire
- Nimisha Tilekar
- Askand Mishra
- Nidhi Dalvi
- Uddhav Borse

The creative arts have been credited as an excellent medium for students with Dyslexia to express themselves, explore their ideas, and push boundaries. Hence, our constant endeavour at MDA is to significantly use this medium to provide avenues for students to explore their creativity. This focus has benefitted many of our students to explore their creative side, with many even embracing the arts as a profession.



All India Sketching / Painting Competition

As part of their initiative to provide an opportunity for young artists with learning disabilities to express their artistic and creative skill, Bhavani Child Development Center, Jaipur, held their annual event - National Artwork Competition 2018.

In the latest edition of the competition, seven of our students participated by creating artworks on the theme 'Mosaic Art'.

We beam with pride as we share that six of the seven students who participated won prizes for their incredible creations. The level of talent and skill displayed by our students keeps improving year on year.

Being recognised and rewarded on a National platform such as this is very encouraging for students with learning disability, motivating them to improve their creative ability while adding to their confidence.

PROGRAMMES FOR PARENTS

For parents, providing constant support and encouragement to children with learning difficulties can prove to be an arduous task. Balancing the pressures of academics while maintaining a positive environment at home poses multiple challenges. More often than not, parents themselves require support and guidance in dealing with the challenges of having a child with a learning disability.

In order to ensure that parents also receive ongoing support to help their children succeed, we regularly conduct free workshops that provide tools and strategies to enable learning. These workshops are usually held at the Deonar Centre, with Hindi and Marathi as the preferred medium of communication. The interactive format of the workshop helped participants to gain a better understanding of each concept, while the handouts equipped them with tools to continue practice at home.

Vocabulary Building

In April 2018, Ms. Manek Chitalwala and Ms. Deepti Makhija guided the parents through activities dealing with Vocabulary Building by introducing topics like Understanding of Word Parts, Prefix and Suffix, Antonym and Synonym, and enhanced Dictionary Skills.

Developing Organizational Skills in Children

Through this workshop held in July 2018, our Special Educator Ms Susan George and Psychologist Ms Kaschit Mishra provided parents with a step by step guide on developing skills. Held at our Deonar Centre, this workshop gave parents insights into the difficulties that a child with learning disability struggles with as well as the strategies that can be used to help them. The workshop also covered the tactics parents could teach their children for a more effective learning. Above all, it offered parents a platform to share their experiences and find solutions to the specific challenges they were facing.

The shared case studies further gave them a sense of direction and confidence to deal with their children in an age-appropriate manner.

Sex Education

Initiating conversation around sex, and educating children about the topic can be challenging. But it is increasingly becoming a necessity. To address this concern, we held a free workshop for parents in February 2019 on introducing Sex Education to children to provide guidance on how to simplify the process.

Our Psychologists Ms Diya Basu and Ms Priyanka Pandit highlighted myths and misconceptions surrounding sex, and addressed topics like menstruation, contraception, consent and body safety rules. The workshop enabled parents to discuss their concerns, and offered practical tips on introducing the topic to their children in a safe environment.

Teaching Maths the Multisensory Way Module 3

An ongoing series which commenced early in 2018, Module 3 of this workshop was conducted by Ms Masarrat Khan at our Dadar Centre on 21st and 22nd April.

Attended by professionals from the field of Special Education, this module focussed on aiding the teaching of Multiplication and Division, Fractions, Decimals and Percent.

It also provided practical input into generating materials for the teaching of basic operations through three levels of instruction, namely, Concrete, Representational and Abstract.

Classroom Management Techniques

Organised by our team on 16th February 2019, this workshop was attended by 30 teachers of special schools from Mumbai and Pune. Held at the Society for the Education of the Crippled, Mumbai, it provided teachers with an opportunity to share their challenges while offering training in various effective teaching strategies to build confidence in learners.

Psychometric Testing and Assessment

On 6th August 2018, this workshop was conducted for 30 MSW II students of Nirmala Niketan College of Social Work where Assessment Tools and their uses were discussed.

Strategies for Learning and Study Skills

These strategies developed by the University of Kansas Centre for Research on Learning continue to be among our most popular programmes. Being task-specific, each strategy is designed to meet precise curriculum demands, and helps develop the student's ability to understand and retrieve information, and finally express it in a written format.

Between April and October 2018, workshops on specific strategies were conducted by Mrs Lalitha Ramanujan at our Dadar Centre. They saw participation from 49 professionals and parents.



The topics included Fundamentals of Paraphrasing and Summarizing, Fundamentals in the Sentence Writing Strategy, Question Exploration Routine, Framing Routine and Inference Strategy.

These strategies aid participants with effective tools they can use to teach students to identify core concepts and enable problem solving.

Through the years, the use of these strategies has proven highly effective, and numerous parents and teachers have been encouraged by the positive impact it has on

enabling students to learn more effectively.

Dyslexia Therapist Training Programme (DTTP)

In its twelfth year, our flagship programme is open to professionals in the fields of Psychology, Human Development, Child Development, Language and Education, or related fields. Preference is given to mainstream teachers with the opportunity to specialise in Dyslexia Therapy. Conducted in association with the Multisensory Language Training Institute of New Mexico, this programme has seen increasing participation from professionals around the country.



Beginning their journey in our rigorous 2-year part time course were students from Ajmer, Indore, Kharghar as well as Mumbai. Therapists-in-training receive instruction in multisensory methodology using a structured language programme to teach literacy skills to students with compromised language skills. On completing 700 hours of supervised hands-on teaching, they are qualified to sit for the certification examinations held by the Academic Language Therapy Association (ALTA), USA, and the International Dyslexia Association.

- 21 Certified Dyslexia Therapists
- 22 Trainees
- 5 Certified Academic Language Therapists
- 2 Dyslexia Teachers

PROFESSIONALS TRAINED TILL DATE

Training in Orton-Gillingham based Multisensory Structured Language Programme

This year marked a new project in conjunction with the Department of Psychiatry, BYL Nair Hospital, to offer a Multisensory Language Remedial programme for students from municipal and government-aided institutions diagnosed with SLD. Special Educators from the Vivekanand Remedial Learning Centre at Nair Hospital were inducted into the use of the multi-sensory structured language programme, which they are now using to teach students. Training sessions were conducted by Ms Masarrat Khan and Ms Manek Chitalwala that included programme delivery, pre-test administration, scoring and interpretation. With 22 students enrolled in the programme, advanced training is scheduled for the coming year.

Teaching with Emotional Intelligence

On 8th December 2018, we conducted a one-day interactive workshop on 'Teaching with Emotional Intelligence' at our Dadar Centre. In this workshop, Dr. Sudha Srikanth, Director Innovations and Master Trainer at EQUIPKids, shared the approach to teaching effectively based on awareness about self, labelling our feelings, knowing the emotion leading to that feeling, validating the existence of it, and using strategies to manage those emotions. These were explained as the key factors to developing Emotional Intelligence. Highly informative and practical, this workshop was attended by Psychologists, Special Educators, Remedial Teachers, Mainstream School Teachers, Resource Room Teachers, Graphics Designers, Counsellors and Parents from across the country. Due to popular demand, a repeat of this workshop was conducted on 15th December.

READ

4th - 5th March 2019

The 6th Edition of MDA's International Conference on literacy, READ, held in Mumbai on 4th-5th March, saw an eminent panel of International Speakers sharing a wealth of knowledge on Literacy Instruction. Attended by over 170 professionals, the conference attracted active participation from all over the country, as well as the USA, UK, Portugal and Hong Kong.

Teachers, Special Educators, Researchers and Professionals working in the field of Special Education and Learning Disability travelled from Pune, Nashik, Delhi, Baroda, Bengaluru, Kerala, Kharagpur, Jaipur, Noida, Surat, and Ahmedabad. An additional incentive to the participating professionals was the RCI accreditation and ALTA recognition that READ 2019 received.



Our speakers, Dr. R. Malatesha Joshi, Dr. Catherine McBride, Dr. Rui A. Alves, Dr. Teresa Limpo, Dr. Cynthia Puranik, Dr. Julie Ann Washington, Dr. Sushama Nagarkar, Ms. Medha Pathak, Mr. Kabir Bhogilal, Mr. Toby Sutton and Ms. Masarrat Khan shared practical strategies and valuable insights in the field of Reading and Writing. Their individual presentations were an amalgamation of the latest International Research in their respective fields as well as their experience working in countries like the USA, Hong Kong, Portugal and India.

Dr. Joshi set the tone of the conference by providing an Introduction and Overview of Literacy in the context of India, and also shared insights on 'The Real Magic of Spelling: Improving Reading and Writing'. Dr. McBride highlighted writing difficulties, and offered tips to work around it. Dr. Washington and Dr. Limpo spoke about the importance of 'Impact of Cultural Dialects on Learning to Read and Write' and 'Strategies to Develop Capable and Motivated Writers' respectively.

Dr. Puranik shared her insights on facilitating 'Writing Development in Children' and Ms. Masarrat Khan focused on creating an effective Curriculum to Facilitate Learning while sharing the methodology used by MDA in its school literacy project at the J. N. Petit Technical School, Pune. Dr. Alves' presentation talked about the journey from research to practical implementation as essential to reviewing the impact of teaching methods, and providing a holistic view of teaching in the context of learning.



READ 2019 also gave the participants an opportunity to interact with the speakers and gain further insight into the best practices in their specific field. They all were eager to go back and implement these strategies in their day-to-day work and shared some wonderful feedback about their experience.

Ms. Mansi Parekh, Homeroom Teacher at JBCN International School, defined the impact of READ 2019 to her as “A conference that gave me a global overview to different kinds of researches and different perspectives of literacy”.

Ms. Nadia Ansari from the Akanksha Foundation found it an enriching experience she could take back and implement in her organisation.

Travelling from Noida to attend READ 2019, Ms Chandrima Mazumdar and Ms Neeru Wadehra from Step By Step School, were very vociferous with their comments: “Now, while in some areas of teaching we are keen to incorporate all the new learnings, in other areas, we are happy to be on the right path. The individual interactions were extremely valuable for us.”



Such enthusiastic participation and feedback encourage us to innovate new and better ways to share knowledge and information with professionals working in the field of Dyslexia and Special Education. MDA especially appreciates the support of Unique Ability Consulting and Scanning Pens Ltd., which was invaluable in making READ such a grand success.

Challenges in Assessing for Learning Disabilities



On August 7, 2018, MDA hosted an interactive session led by Dr. Maya Kalyanpur, entitled "Challenges in Assessing for Learning Disabilities". Dr. Kalyanpur is a Professor in the School of Leadership and Education Sciences, at the University of San Diego. She has also worked as an international consultant in inclusive education with the National Ministry of Education in Cambodia, the World Bank, and UNICEF Cambodia. Over the years, she has researched about indigenous epistemologies of disability in India. With several books to her credit, she is currently co-editing a book on an alternative analysis of disability appropriate to South Asia.

This session conducted at the Nair Hospital, Mumbai Central, was attended by 54 professionals who gained insights from Dr. Kalyanpur regarding the challenges regularly encountered in diagnosing Learning Disability (LD) across the globe. She also discussed the added complexity of the issue in a country like India, owing to the diverse socio-economic backgrounds and use of multiple languages that are spoken and used as a medium of instruction. She also highlighted the role of indigenous tools like DALI (Dyslexia Assessment for Languages of India) to alleviate this problem.



RAISING AWARENESS



A week where the entire team at MDA along with partner organizations, schools, and volunteers came together to reach out to over 50000 people across the country to spread awareness about Dyslexia and other Learning Disabilities.

The World Dyslexia Awareness Week organised by MDA from 1st to 7th October, aligned with this year's international theme of 'Embracing Diversity'. During this week, we focused on awareness drives at our Centres, at schools and corporates, and encouraged partner organizations to implement similar activities at their premises as well.

We also held several introductory workshops on Dyslexia for teachers, college students, parents as well as other non-profits. Special screening of the movie *Taare Zameen Par* was held in various schools to help sensitise students about Dyslexia and the challenges faced by their peers affected by it. The impact of this was evident in the submissions received for the poster competition on the theme "Embracing Dyslexia". The empathy and calibre of skill demonstrated by over 380 participating students was extremely encouraging for us to the point that selecting a few winners became quite a challenge for our guest judges.



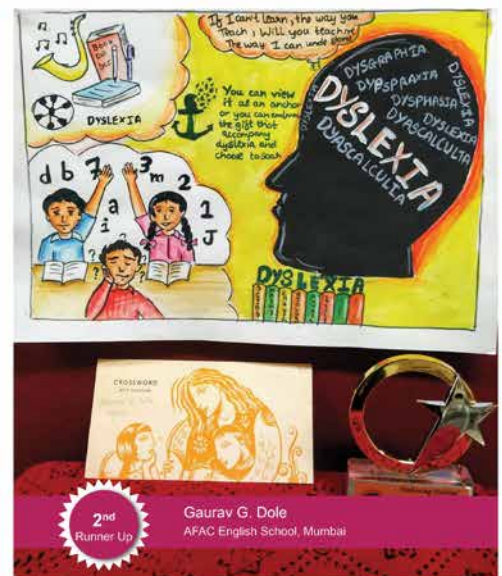
1st
Prize

Nupoor Santosh Jawkar
Udayachal High School, Mumbai



2nd
Runner Up

Sarah Elisa Jogty
Udayachal High School, Mumbai



2nd
Runner Up

Gaurav G. Dole
AFAC English School, Mumbai

Institutions such as The Cathedral and John Connon School and Bai Avabai Framji Petit Girls' High School took it a step further by planning activities throughout the week for their students.

The Cathedral and John Connon School assigned a student with specific learning difficulty to each teacher and encouraged them to conduct one-on-one learning sessions. To commemorate International Dyslexia Awareness Day on 4th October, all the students and teachers came dressed in green and a 'No Pens Day' was observed. Activities like yoga, brain gym, play dough etc. were conducted, and no writing instruments were used, to highlight alternate forms of learning. In addition, a guest speaker was invited to share the personal experience about living with associated difficulties.

Bai Avabai Framji Petit Girls' High School, on the other hand, initiated activities a week prior where Counsellors conducted a one-hour workshop for the students of Classes VII and VIII on 'Dyslexia Awareness'. The students participated enthusiastically in the simulation activities and discussed how the school helps all the students with learning differences. They also discussed the accommodations given to their classmates and how they can help them, at the same time accepting each one as unique.

During the week, posters were put up in the staffrooms, and banners and placards in the Skill Enhancement Department of the school. In the Life Skills classes, the Counsellors discussed the strengths of all the students as well as helped them to understand the learning differences. They highlighted the talents of people with Dyslexia and spoke about famous people with Dyslexia. It was no surprise that the maximum entries for the poster competition came from Bai Avabai Framji Petit Girls' High School.



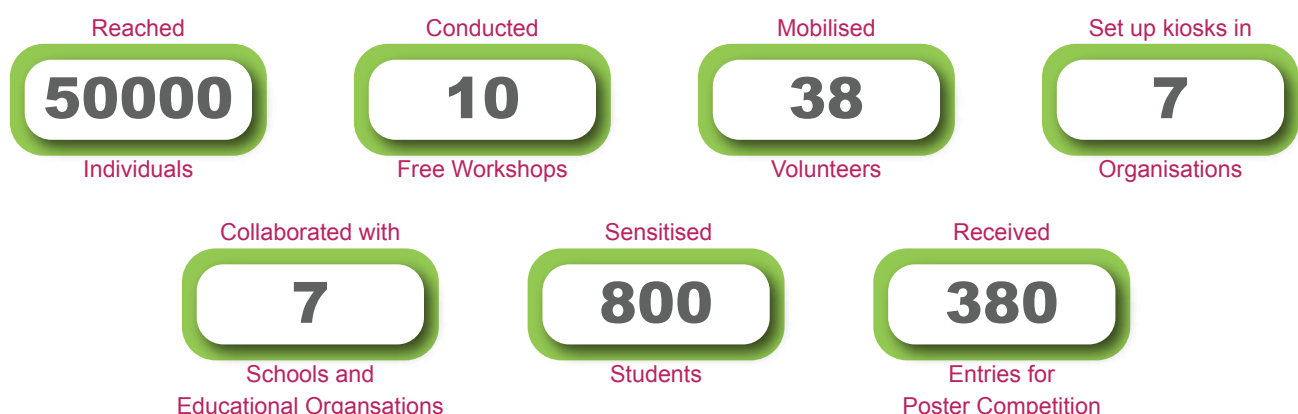
The collaboration with the JOY OF GIVING WEEK enabled us to further increase our reach through the DAAN UTSAV platform. This helped our campaign gain visibility in IOCL petrol pumps in Deonar, Chembur, and Vashi throughout the week, where we set up information kiosks and handed out leaflets on basic information about Dyslexia to their customers.



We are so thankful for the support extended by banks like IDBI, SBI, CBI and Vijaya Bank who offered us their premises to set up information kiosks to disseminate information to their customers and raise awareness about Learning Disabilities.

None of this would have been possible without the enthusiastic and whole-hearted participation of our entire team as well as individual volunteers and student volunteers from Hashu Advani College of Special Education and the Tata Institute of Social Sciences: Disability Studies and Action, who devised innovative ways of generating interest through street plays, slogans, door-to-door campaigning as well as by collaborating with chemists, diagnostic labs and doctors to spread the word.

While the drive started in Mumbai, the week saw participation from Pune, Nashik, Indore, Kanpur, spreading right up to Delhi and Chandigarh.



Awareness Workshops

Over the last few months, we have been able to significantly amplify our outreach for raising awareness about Dyslexia and other Specific Learning Disabilities. Psychologists and Special Educators from our team have been visiting various schools to endow teachers with an understanding of Dyslexia and Specific Learning Disabilities. They also shared practical information on conducting screening for students at risk.

Awareness Workshops have been organised in various schools across Mumbai at Bharda New High School, Gold Crest High School, Chattrapati Shivaji Vidyalaya, Kamarajar Memorial English High School and Junior College, the Municipal School-Society for the Education of the Crippled, to name a few.

These interactive workshops enable teachers to share the challenges they face while working with students with Learning Disability and offer solutions to improve teaching methods that facilitate learning. Additionally, information shared on the latest accommodations and provisions available for students who have Dyslexia or Specific Learning Disabilities equip teachers to be better prepared when guiding such students and their parents.

Our Psychologist Diya Basu also travelled to Pune on 27th October to conduct a workshop on Dyslexia Awareness. This was attended by 157 participants at Kaveri Counselling Centre, Smt. Shakuntala Jagannath Shetty Auditorium, Dr. Shamrao Kalmadi High School.

Last year alone, through these workshops, we were able to reach over 350 professionals.



Abhyuday's Social Festival

This year we participated in Abhyuday's Social Festival based on the theme "Engage, Encourage, Empower". In its 6th edition, this festival was held in IIT Bombay on 12th and 13th January 2019, with the aim of sensitizing people towards adopting a socially conscious outlook.

The festival attracted over 15000 students and proved to be a great platform for us to reach out to the youth to share information about Dyslexia and dispel the myths surrounding it.

ORGANISATIONAL AND TEAM DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Story Weaver Workshop

Facilitated by Pratham Books, this workshop was attended by Special Educators Ms Susan George and Ms Fatima Martins at the Save the Children Foundation in BKC, Mumbai. Held on 22nd June 2018, the workshop provided a detailed demonstration to effectively use the Story Weaver in classrooms, based on Levels, Languages or a particular theme. The event was a great platform to meet educators from different fields and cities as it had representation from organisations like Mukhtangan, The Akanksha Foundation, Cipla and Star India to name a few. Our team also got the opportunity to publish their first story “Happy Day” on Story Weaver and received very positive feedback.

Data Driven Decision Making and Monitoring & Evaluation

Ms Masarrat Khan and Ms Divya Balgi attended this two-day workshop conducted by Social Lens (Toolbox) and Colored Cow Consulting in July 2018. The speakers, Ms Vijaya Balaji, Managing Director of Toolbox and Mr Prateek Narang, Founder of tech firm Colored Cow provided valuable insights on how to leverage technology and use data for decision making.

Teachers’ Day Celebrations



Every year the team looks forward to celebrating each other's contribution to these special kids over a delicious lunch on Teachers' Day. This year was especially memorable with the team bonding over the movie 'Stree' and Mrs Currawalla making everyone feel special by gifting Amazon gift vouchers.

Study Skills Training

The study skills programme has been developed at MDA to help secondary level school students cope with the demands of the curriculum. Students are taught to use strategies to cope with the large volume of text demanded by the standard school programme including strategies for reading comprehension, memory and problem solving. These strategies are evidence based and many of them are from the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning.

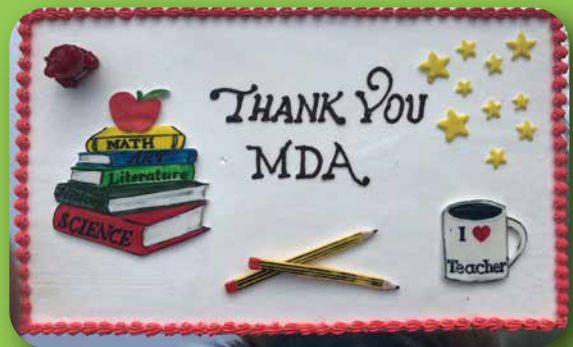
From 10th July 2018 to 22nd February 2019, this training was conducted every Tuesday for new team members. The training included use of questionnaires to evaluate Personality, Learning Style, Coping Strategies and Brain Dominance, and design effective strategies to aid learning, concentration, and retention of information.

Training in Educational Assessment

In December 2018, this training was initiated to provide a detailed view of Assessment. Conducted by Ms Kaschit Mishra at our Deonar Centre, this ongoing training was attended by Ms. Deepti Makhija and Ms. Susan George to gain hands on experience in administering the Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing and the Ann Arbor Learning Inventory -Levels A,B,C.

Staff Picnic

On 14th January 2019, our team got the opportunity to experience the warm hospitality of Mrs Gawand, our student Sahil's mother. Mrs Gawand invited the entire team to spend the day at Gawand Lawns in Thane. The Gawand family took great care to organise games, food and a wonderful stay. We took the opportunity to cut a cake for Sahil to celebrate his achievements and exchange gifts. We had an exceptionally wonderful time and are touched by Mrs. Gawand's gesture.



SCHOOL COLLABORATIONS AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Over the last few years MDA has been providing consultancy support to various educational organisations and schools in order to help develop their resources to better help students who require special support to learn better.

J. N. Petit Technical High School, Pune

Four years ago we began a collaboration with J. N. Petit Technical High School to improve their Language Arts Curriculum for the primary classes. This included creating an appropriate curriculum for learners of English as a Second Language from the Pre-Primary years upwards. For an effective implementation of this project, we have been conducting regular training for all the concerned teachers. This multisensory methodology has been formatted for classroom usage, and the MDA team regularly monitors its progress.

The collaboration with the J. N. Petit Technical School has enabled the MDA team an excellent opportunity to apply the principles of evidence-based instruction in the teaching of literacy skills. Further, we hope this will be a great incentive in developing our curriculum to teach first-generation English learners in municipal and government schools across the board. We are highly indebted to the Trustees of the school as well as the management for their valuable support.

Ajmera Global, Mumbai

MDA has also signed an MoU with Ajmera Global in the Western suburbs of Mumbai to train their teachers in enhancing their reading instruction and support for students with Learning Challenges. For this, starting October 2017, Ms. Masarrat Khan and Ms. Manek Chitalwala have been conducting a Teacher Training Programme in multisensory structured language. The project, which runs for two years, is aimed to embrace the multisensory structured language methodology to be used in classrooms from the Pre-Primary years to Grade 6 for all students.

St. Mary's School, Pune

In its second year of consultancy, MDA launched an in-house remedial programme, to be run exclusively by teachers of the school, and for two years, MDA has ensured to give training and support services to boost the project. According to the feedback received from the teachers trained by us, introduction of the multisensory way of teaching the letter sounds had raised the reading and spelling level of students when compared to the previous years. The teachers could better identify students who needed special attention enabling them to intervene earlier to work one on one with these students.

Hashu Advani College of Special Education (HACSE)

Ms Masarrat Khan conducted a workshop on Maths Remediation Strategies as part of the Continuing Rehabilitation Education (CRE) Programme for 50 special educators. The session held on 26th September 2018 provided insights into strategies relevant for concept building for early intervention in the pre-primary years, emphasizing on the importance of a multisensory approach.



Udayachal Schools

As a long-term consultant to the Special Needs Department at the Udayachal (Primary and Secondary) Schools, MDA has been offering guidance and advice to identify, design and monitor support services for students inundated with language and academic difficulties.

To ensure consistent impact of this programme, Mrs. Kate Currawalla interviewed potential candidates on 26th April 2018 for the position of Counsellor for the secondary school.

Further in June 2018, Mrs. Currawalla reviewed the special education programme at the secondary and the primary school with the counsellors and special educators to plan for the coming academic year.

National Conference on Inclusive Education and Technologies, Patiala

Ms Masarrat Khan and Ms Rameeza Khan jointly presented a paper on PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS AND PHONICS: INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE THAT BENEFITS ALL KINDS OF LEARNERS. Attended by 50 academicians including school principals, teachers, researchers, special educators and counsellors, the conference was organised from 16th to 18th August.

Bai Avabai Framji Petit Girls' High School, Mumbai

A two-hour workshop on 'Specific Learning Disability In Mainstream Schools' was organized for all the teachers on 25th April 2018. The workshop was conducted by Mrs. Kate Currawalla, where she emphasised the importance of screening students early, and the benefits of providing appropriate intervention and accommodations. 65 teachers actively participated in discussing case studies in groups where they identified the specific learning needs of students, and came up with very good techniques and strategies to help them.

Additionally, on 30th June 2018, our team of psychologists conducted Psycho-Educational Assessment for 5 students.

Citi Academy Special Education (CASE) Independence Day

For the celebration of Independence Day at CASE, Mahalaxmi, Ms. Masarrat Khan was invited as a Judge for the Drawing Competition on 14th August 2018. Apart from 80 students with different disabilities from CASE, around 100 students from 2 NGOs catering to students from the tribal belt and the underprivileged also participated in the drawing competition.

ADVOCACY AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

IDA Conference, Connecticut



At the second International Journey Session on 25th October of the 69th Annual International Dyslexia Association (IDA) Conference 2018 at Connecticut, Ms Masarrat Khan was invited to present Maharashtra Dyslexia Association's work in the field of dyslexia and specific learning disability. AUSPELD, Kenya Dyslexia Organization, and Dyslexia Association of Singapore were the other IDA Global Partners who shared their work. The conference aims to connect experts from all over the world to introduce the latest in research, remediation and more.

A couple of videos were played during this year's International Journey - Kenya Dyslexia Organization's Music Video "I Can Fly" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JHmcLANkrxo>) which speaks about the ability of everyone being gifted differently, and the Dyslexia Association of Singapore's "I wish you knew" video (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7vtNnbh_L7I) which had some heartfelt messages from Singaporean students to all educators. "Taare Zameen Par" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DBg6HSMF9X8>), which the Maharashtra Dyslexia Association was involved with, was fondly remembered and highly recommended by Mr Siang Lee of Dyslexia Association of Singapore.

It was a great platform to explore potential collaborations with Dr Ken Pugh from Haskins Laboratories, USA, Dr Michael Hart, UK, Dr Gad Elbeheri - Managing Director of Global Educational Consultants, Egypt, and Dean Bragonier of NoticeAbility, USA. The team also took the opportunity to convey to the IDA Global Partners Committee about MDA's interest in developing Assessment Tools in Hindi, Urdu and Gujarati to aid assessment in vernacular languages. The aim is to reach a wider section of students in need of early identification.



National Disability Consultation

Almost two years since the enactment of the RPWD Act 2016, June month marks the first anniversary of the implementation of its rules. Yet very little has been done vis-à-vis its implementation.

NCPEDP organised a National Disability Consultation to bring together the sector leaders on a common platform to arrive at a cohesive action plan and way forward to ensure that people are made aware of the Act and to push for its implementation within their individual constituencies. Mrs Kate Currawalla was invited as a Panelist for the Session on “Understanding the New Disabilities” on 19th July 2018 at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi. This National Disability Consultation was organised as a lead up to the Global Disability Summit in London in July with support from the UK Government, Mphasis and Axis Bank. The aim of this Summit was to identify organisations who would actively work with their respective State Governments to push for implementation of the Act.

Tata Mumbai Marathon 2019



This Marathon was quite special for us as our very own Huafrid Billimoria represented our cause at the event. Along with Huafrid, we also had Mr Paritosh Joshi, Mr Sudhakar Reddy, Mr Aditya Rajpurohit of CPP Piping and Ms Devyani Srikanth supporting us to raise awareness about Dyslexia.

The amount of Rs. 80,202 raised during the Marathon goes towards subsidising remediation for students who cannot afford it.

Atma

MDA had signed on for the Atma Accelerator Programme in 2016. In its third year, we have

made significant progress in improving efficiency and professionalism in our organisation with a designated management structure. The Atma team has been a huge support to us to establish structured policies and processes across all functions like HR. They also helped by Monitoring and Evaluating all our in-house programmes and activities.

Next Genius Foundation



On 9th February 2019, Mrs. Kate Currawalla was invited to address Special Educators and Counsellors from Mumbai schools at the LD 2019 workshop organised by the Next Genius Foundation at Nahar International School in Powai, Mumbai. The workshop focused on options for students with SLD in higher and vocational education, and was attended by approximately 100 participants. This workshop facilitated information exchange between some of the world's leading LD experts and high school leaders from schools across India, providing a unique opportunity for educators working with students that have learning difficulties.

TISS

In March 2019, Ms Masarrat Khan submitted a paper on Phonological Awareness and Phonics Instruction: Inclusive Practice that Benefits All Kinds of Learners, an inclusive curriculum for Early Literacy Skills. This has helped The Centre for Education Innovation and Action Research, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, in preparing a report on the status of right to education among children with disabilities, with the support of UNESCO, New Delhi. A first of its kind, this report will be released in 2019.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Looking back on the past year under review, none of our activities would be possible without the active engagement of our many supporters. We gratefully acknowledge the invaluable contribution of those whose belief in our cause makes to continue our mission and reach out to more and more families in need of services.

Our heartfelt thanks to

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- Echjay Industries and Mr Vinod Doshi for their generous support of our outreach projects.
- Karmaditya Baldota and all the Baldota family
- The N M Petit Charity Fund and Sir Dinshaw and Lady Petit, who are always there for us.
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- Scanning Pens and Mr Toby Sutton for their sponsorship of our international conference.
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- Mr Sudhakar Reddy
- Mr Vijay Dodeja
- Dr Sulabha Biswas
- Mrs Jyoti Row Kavi

In addition to these donors, there are many who have contributed time and energy to ensure our numerous activities and events continue to run smoothly. Our grateful thanks to Ms Pervin Dudhmal, whose continuing presence brightens up our Parel Centre; Mr Jawwad Khan for designing the logo for 'Embracing Diversity'; the students of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences' Department of Disability Studies, the Hashu Advani College of Special Education, Ms Deepti Bansode and Ms Vaishnavi for their most enthusiastic and innovative efforts during World Dyslexia Awareness Week.

Kudos to our dedicated team who always go way beyond the call of duty to give their best for our students and their families. We are proud of their skills and professionalism.

A very special word of thanks to Ms Masarrat Khan and Ms Divya Balgi, our CEO and Administrative Head, who lead from the front to ensure the high standards they have set are maintained. It is they who have built the MDA into the institution it is today.



Contact Us

003, Amit Park, Lala Jamnadas Gupta Marg, Deonar Farm Road,
Mumbai - 400088

+91-22-25565754 | mda@dyslexiaindia.com

www.mdamumbai.com



mdadyslexia