



ANNUAL REPORT

2017-2018



MAHARASHTRA
DYSLEXIA
ASSOCIATION

CONTENTS

From the President's Desk	4
Committee Members	5
Membership Details	5
Staff Members	6
Centre-wise Breakup	7
At MDA Centres	8
Art at MDA	10
Organisational and Team Development Programmes	13
School Collaborations	15
Capacity Building	18
Workshops	20
Advocacy and Strategic Partnerships	22
National Conclave on Specific Learning Disability	24
Acknowledgements	26
About MDA	28



From the President's Desk

Another year has flown by, swept away by the winds of change. When MDA first started reaching out to the education and health communities two decades ago, Dyslexia was such an unfamiliar term that even professionals doubted its existence. Through 2017, with Dyslexia finally being acknowledged as a condition that can have a considerably negative impact on the affected students'

ability to navigate the education system, choose a vocation, and move on to a career in line with their potential through the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, the authorities have been moving slowly but surely to ensure Inclusion. Despite the numerous glitches, myth-making, lack of empathy and attendant frustrations, we have much to celebrate and look forward to. Significantly in the National debate on Specific Learning Disabilities, what has emerged and been acknowledged is how far ahead Mumbai and Maharashtra's Department of Education are in diagnosing and supporting such students by establishing widely publicised procedures and accommodations. However, there is no room for complacency. There is so much more that needs to be done to ensure that students at every level (especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds) are provided services they need, even in Mumbai and Pune, while the rest of the state lacks even the most basic screening, assessment and remedial facilities.

At MDA, we have been doing our bit to promote a better understanding of the many faces of SLD and its repercussions. The MDA's National Conclave on SLD: Policies and Practice in October 2017 provided a platform for professionals from all over the country to discuss their issues and outline an agenda for moving forward. Most importantly, it brought together many psychologists, special educators and doctors who have devoted considerable thought, time and expertise to the cause of students who struggle with conventional education and have been significant players in this emerging field. We hope their voices will be heard loud and clear by policy-makers across the country, as we continue advocating together for appropriate and scientifically validated procedures. In the turbulent days ahead, we must continue to keep the rights and needs of our children front and centre in the public eye so they bloom into productive, independent citizens.

Our children deserve no less.

Committee Members



The core team behind MDA has been the driving force constantly steering the organisation forward. The strategic support and guidance provided by each member of the Managing Committee have been significant to the growth of MDA.

- 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

Membership Details

MEMBERSHIP TYPE	TOTAL
Life Members	262
Individual Members	206
Institutional Members	122

Staff Members

We can't help but be amazed at the team of superwomen we have on our side. It's remarkable how our entire team of Psychologists, Special Educators, and admin staff come together to make every event, programme, and workshop a roaring success.



- Ms. Masarrat Khan, CEO
- Ms. Divya Balgi, Administrator
- Ms. Ashwini Nair, Consultant – Brand Communication
- Ms. Manek Chitalwala, Special Educator, Certified 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. Sai Gharpure, Trainee Psychologist
- Ms. Pervin Dudhmal, Volunteer - Administration, and Accounts
- Mr. Manjeet Valmiki, Office Assistant
- Mr. Balkrishna More, Office Assistant

Bidding Goodbye

Ms. Bhakti Shah left in September 2017 and Ms. Pooja Kale, Ms. Shruti Bansal, Ms. Reena Turner and Ms. Kajal Shah left in November 2017. We wish them all the best in their future endeavours!

Centre-Wise Breakup

TOPIC/ CENTRE	Deonar	Parel	Dombivali	Vile Parle	Tardeo/ IKA	Surat	Goa	TOTAL
Case Histories	38	36	15	29	10	7	11	146
Assessment Sessions	394	563	145	334	131	73	139	1779
Remedial Students	21	13	-	4	2	4	-	44
Remedial Sessions	1288	433	-	192	94	292	-	2299
Study Skills Students	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	4
Aptitude Test Students	7	9	-	3	-	-	-	19
Parent Consultations	30	25	7	7	3	-	-	72

10 in-house school assessments were conducted at Bai Avabai Framji Petit Girls' High School, Mumbai

MDA in Surat

MDA has been present in Surat, Gujarat, since 2014 where assessment and remedial services are offered. The centre is operated by Ms. Jumana Shipchandler. A Clinical Psychologist, Jumana has been a part of MDA since 2004. She has an M.A. in Clinical Psychology from SNDT University, Mumbai, and is also trained in the use of intervention programmes such as the FIE and MSL for students.

MDA in Goa

Since 2014 MDA has been providing a skeletal assessment service in Goa through a former staff member, Ms. Lucy Martins, Counselling Psychologist & Special Educator. She holds a Master's degree in Counselling Psychology from Bombay University and B. Ed. in Special Education from SNDT University, Mumbai. From 2002 to 2013, Ms. Martins worked at Maharashtra Dyslexia Association as a Special Educator and Psychologist, imparting remedial education and study skills training as well as assessing students for Specific Learning Disability. Her presence in Goa allows us to reach out to a number of students, especially in senior school, who were forced to travel out of the state for standardized assessments in order to qualify for exam accommodations.



New Centre Opening

In July 2017, we began operations at our new location at IKA Children's Centre, Nariman Point, on an experimental basis. The centre offered Testing, Remedial Services and Aptitude Testing till 31st March, 2018.



At MDA Centres

DEONAR | PAREL | DOMBIVALI | VILE PARLE | TARDEO/IKA | SURAT | GOA

Summer Workshop

Every year in May we conduct this workshop for students so as to add to their repertoire of learning skills. Held over eight days, two workshops were conducted, one each at our Dadar and Deonar centre. The focus of Summer Camp 2017 was Assistive Technology & Art. (TechArt). Our staff introduced the hardware and software that makes up a computer. The functionality of ClaroRead, a highly effective, multi-sensory software solution for supporting reading and writing, was also demonstrated. The highlight of the workshop was the two-day art session conducted by Viraj Joshi, an ex-student of MDA, who is currently pursuing his Fine Arts Course. The workshop also included the introduction of Drum Therapy by Ms. Shruti Gupta. The workshop was concluded with a field trip to the Bhau Daji Lad Museum, Byculla, where the students got the opportunity to make stick puppet, and using the Museum's collection of clay models, explored Mumbai's traditional communities - their lifestyles and occupations. Workshops such as these enable students to improve their social skills, learn to work as a team and expose them to various professions, while providing them with the opportunity to explore their artistic abilities.

Tata Mumbai Marathon 2018

Year after year, two of our sponsors Mr. Vijay Rajpurohit and Mr. Paritosh Joshi come out in support for us at the Mumbai Marathon. This year too they ran for MDA and helped raise awareness as well Rs. 63150 that goes into subsidising the services at our centres for children from the economically weaker section.

One Day One Story



As part of the 'One Day One Story Campaign' in collaboration with Pratham Books' Champions, the story 'Kottavi Raja and his Sleepy Kingdom' was read to students at MDA in both English as well as Marathi. A discussion at the end of the session helped students to better understand the message of the story, analyse the personality traits of the characters and evaluate the qualities they would like to imbibe in their life. This special reading programme in association with Pratham Books' Champions was conducted at MDA to celebrate International Literacy Day. 12 students actively participated in this event held in September 2017 where the staff brought the story to life by using puppets of characters to pique interest.

Christmas Party and Workshop

This year's Christmas celebration was made special with ex-student Vishwaraj attending the event along with his friend. It added to the Christmas cheer already heightened by the decorations and the students' art on display. In keeping with the Christmas spirit, students were encouraged to write the things they were thankful for and exchanged gifts while playing Secret Santa. A Christmas movie, fun games, and yummy snacks at the end were just icing on the cake.

Felicitation Ceremony



Over 80 current students, ex-students, Professionals, Committee Members, Parents and staff of MDA gathered at Mysore Association Hall, Matunga, to celebrate the achievements of students over the last year. This significant event provides an opportunity for all participants to share their experiences and keep motivating one another. Students also recreated their award-winning CREATE skit performance on the theme 'Incredible India'.

Chief Guest, Mr. Jai Row Kavi and Committee Member Mrs. Jyoti Row Kavi handed out prizes and gifts to the students. We are especially thankful to them for inspiring our students by sharing Jai's personal journey in dealing with Dyslexia to becoming a world-renowned drummer.

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

STUDENT	GRADE	SCORE
Daisy Mhatre	XII	61%
Hridayraj Parab	XII	84%
Rumana Lasanwala	XII	67%
Shahana Lasanwala	XII	78%
Ameesh Lodha	X	73% (ICSE Board)
Nimisha Tilekar	X	89% (CBSE Board)
Kairavi Dedhia	X	73.5 % (ICSE Board)
Alhad Kamat	X	78% (SSC Board)
Izan Khan	X	61% (SSC Board)
Shounith Shetty	X	88% (SSC Board)
Sivaansh Banothu	X	76%
Rahul Mav	X	93%
Yash Thakur	X	67%
Ajit Kumar Chourasia	X	62%



- Ashay Gandhi was felicitated for graduation in Hospitality from Don Bosco College Of Hospitality
- Sargam Merchant was felicitated for her practice in Law. She graduated from Government Law College, Mumbai
- Rishabh Birla was felicitated for graduation

Prathamesh Gagh, Pratyush Hire, Ashwini Gunjalkar, Nimisha Tilekar, Manav Jain, Sahil Gawand, Daisy Mhatre, Uddhav Borse, Melon Gonsalves and Shirley Hatle were felicitated for their participation in the VSAI competition.

Art at MDA

For students with Dyslexia, the creative arts have always proven to be a medium that has provided an enjoyable platform to explore their skills and push boundaries. MDA, therefore, places great importance on the creative arts and constantly provides avenues for students to explore their creativity. This consistent focus has led many of our existing students to show a great inclination towards the medium as well as past students exploring it as a profession.

CREATE Foundation Annual Inter NGO Skit Competition



The Children's Research in Education, Theatre and Art Environment founded by theatre personality Ms. Raell Padamsee, offered its 7th Trophy for Artistic Excellence in August 2017 on the theme 'Incredible India' at the Sophia Bhabha Auditorium. Out of the NGOs screened at the auditions, 7 NGOs from the Aabled and Disabled category including team MDA were selected. The judging panel included eminent personalities like Dr. Joy Deshmukh, Ms. Salome Roy Kapur, Mr. Danesh Bharucha and Ms. Amrita Raichand. The skit by students of MDA won the second runner's up trophy and was awarded the Trophy For Artistic Excellence in the Differently Aabled Category. The chief guests Animesh-IDFC, Mr. Ashish Gumashta, Mr. Cyrus Brocha and Mr. Kunal Vijaykar handed out prizes to the winners.

Platforms such as these provide a great opportunity for students to showcase their talent and build their confidence while learning the values of teamwork, patience and practice.

VERY SPECIAL ARTS INDIA

Very Special Arts India (VSAI) is a non-profit organisation that works with disabled and underprivileged youth through the arts. As part of their ongoing effort, they announced the Twenty Fourth Annual Art Competition in January 2017 on topics ranging from Nature/ Flowers, Landscapes/ Scenery, Still Life and Folk Dances of India/ World.



Nine students from MDA participated in the competition to showcase their creativity, of which three students won prizes. We are especially thrilled that the first and second prizes were awarded to Prathamesh Ghag and Sahil Gawand respectively.



Diwali Workshop



A three-day workshop was held in October 2017 at our Deonar centre with the focus being Green Diwali. The intent was to sensitise students on the harmful effect crackers have on the environment, on animals and the elderly. The workshop also highlighted the use of child labour in the cracker making industry and the negative impact this has on their health and general wellbeing. Thanks to this exposure, students were receptive to the idea of having a cracker free Diwali and celebrating the festival in an eco- friendly manner. The students also enjoyed many craft activities and were excited to take home the diyas that they had designed.



All India Sketching / Painting Competition

Bhavani Child Development Center (Bhavani CDC) is a non-profit organization registered as a Charitable Trust under Indian Trust Act. The Center is a pioneer in providing academic and vocational skills to children with developmental delay, specific learning disabilities and other learning challenges with a focus on inclusive education. Their main aim is to understand how the students learn and how well they

should be learning to achieve academic goals.

As part of their initiative to provide an opportunity to young artists with learning disabilities to express their artistic and creative skills, they recently held the Bhavani CDC 2017 National Artwork Competition. In the latest edition of the competition, five of our students - Bhoomika Gunjalkar, Vedant Kuradia, Nameeshka Rajesh, Vidhi Jain and Melon Gonsalves - created and entered their artworks on the theme black and white 'Still Life'.



We are thrilled that all five of our entries have been recognised and awarded prizes! A platform such as this helps build confidence in their abilities and encourages students with a learning disability to find their forte and keep improving their skills.

Science Fair

The Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) held a National Science Day event on 25th February 2018. Students of MDA participated in the event along with their parents. The full-day event consisted of interesting lectures, open-air science demos, lots of hands-on experiments, as well as a chance to visit TIFR laboratories. The event covered various branches of science including Physics, Chemistry, Biology, and Maths, and included activities like Science in the Kitchen, Liquid Nitrogen and Glass blowing demonstrations. The students found the live demonstrations very informative and enjoyed participating in all the activities.

Photo Exhibition



In January 2018, 16-year-old Karmaditya Baldota held his first solo exhibition that captured the magical beauty of Antarctica aptly titled Antarclicka, to raise funds for charity. Since he chose MDA to lend his support to, the entire staff of MDA turned out in force at the inauguration by Adrian Hayes. Karma's photographs capture the pristine beauty and diversity of Antarctica.



An initiative like this from someone so young is truly encouraging. To see that the youth of today care about the world at large and are keen to lend their talent to support causes that need to be highlighted, demonstrate a culture of much-needed compassion.

To celebrate the success of his exhibition, Karmaditya, along with his parents, personally handed over the entire proceeds of the exhibition to Maharashtra Dyslexia Association.

Growing up, Dyslexia has been among the many challenges that Karmaditya has overcome. He was assessed twice at MDA. Instead of viewing it as a shortcoming, he chose to use it as a secret gift that helped him express himself in a language which is visual and not audible.



We are so proud of his achievement and wish Karmaditya all the best in his future endeavours.

Organisational & Team Development Programmes



Provisions for Mainstream and Special Needs Schools

This programme organised by Childreach in June 2017 was focused on raising awareness regarding provisions provided to children with special needs at SSC/HSC/Pratham/NIOS board levels. Ms. Shruti Gupta attended this programme facilitated by Mr. Ajay Kakade (Sarva Shikshan Abhiyan), Ms. Ranjana Chaskar (Assistant Secretary to SSC/HSC Board) and Ms. Deepali Kapoor (Pratham Institute). Together the experts shared in-depth information on inclusive education as well as provisions available at various boards for students with special needs. It is critical for those affected to know their rights as the government has implemented numerous provisions that provide support in terms of flexibility of subjects as well as opportunity to make special requests like asking for a reader as well as getting extra time during exams, to name a few. As always, our representative shared the wealth of information with the rest of the faculty subsequently.

Session on NIOS

Ms. Masarrat Khan attended this session held at Bombay Exhibition Hall, Goregaon, on

19th September 2017. The highlight of the session was the introduction of vocational subjects and accommodations for students with special needs.

Workshop on Sensory Processing Issues

Occupational Therapist, Dr. Franzina Coutinho conducted this workshop for the entire MDA team at the Dadar centre in June 2017. Using case studies, Dr. Coutinho provided insights into differentiating between ADHD and Learning Disorders, Sensory Processing Issues and introduced concepts like Hyper and Hypo sensitivity. An overview of the Vestibular and Proprioceptive Senses and their impact on a child's motor coordination, planning, attention and academic issues was also provided. The workshop was beneficial for the team to gain a better understanding of the challenges faced by children with sensory processing issues, and an opportunity to discuss their observations with an expert in the field.

GATI Teacher Training Programme

In continuation with its aim to disseminate best practices and address mutual challenges in the education sector for persons with disabilities, Atma organised a teacher training programme in June 2017. Our very own Ms. Diya Basu, Ms. Sai Gharpure, and Ms. Kajal Rambhia participated in this training attended by psychologists, school teachers, and special educators. Experts like Dr. Franzina Coutinho and Ms. Vasundhara Kaul Dhristi covered a range of topics such as Impact of Behavioural Problems on Occupational Performance, Identifying Typical and Atypical Behaviour of children, Recognizing Potential Causes for behavioural problems along with Behaviour Management techniques and interventions. The sessions were very interactive and the role play provided insight into how to interact with parents of students with special needs to better understand the possible solutions to overcome the barriers to inclusion.

Teachers' Day Celebrations



In celebration of the work our team does day in and out to help students with Dyslexia learn better, the entire team including Ms. Machhi, Ms. Pervin, and Ms. Ashwini met for a wonderful lunch at Hotel Oasis in Deonar. Gatherings such as this help us realise the strength of the bond we all share thanks to our common vision. Ms. Currawalla made the lunch even more memorable by giving out Amazon gift vouchers worth Rs.1000 to everyone as a token of appreciation.

New Year Celebrations



The team at MDA organised a New Year's party for our students in January 2018. The celebrations included fun ice-breaker activities along with innovative games. The Dadar centre was beautifully decorated and the students thoroughly enjoyed making a "snowman" as part of the craft activity planned for them. Moreover, any party with two cakes is bound to be a roaring success.



School Collaborations

J. N. Petit Technical High School, Pune

In its third year of partnership, MDA continues to work with J. N. Petit Technical High School to improve their Language Arts Curriculum for the primary classes by holding regular training sessions for their teachers throughout the year. The project entails devising an appropriate curriculum for learners of English as a Second Language from the Pre-Primary years upwards and training all the teachers in its implementation. The multisensory methodology has been adapted for classroom usage, and the MDA team provides close support and monitoring of progress throughout the year. In a parallel project to track the effectiveness of the programme, 112 students from Standards 1-3 are evaluated in reading, writing and spelling skills.

In addition, Ms. Masarrat Khan and Ms. Rameeza Khan held a workshop on “Teaching Maths the Multisensory Way” for all the Pre-primary and Maths teachers from Classes 1 to 7. A Workshop on ‘Awareness of Specific Learning Disability and DALI Tool’ for Pre-Primary to Class V Teachers was conducted, thus launching the project to screen for Learning Disabilities in line with the directives of the Bombay High Court and the State Education Department.

The collaboration with the J. N. Petit Technical High School has provided the MDA team with a valuable opportunity to apply the principles of evidence-based instruction in the teaching of literacy skills, which we hope to apply in developing our curriculum to teach first generation English learners in low-income schools across the board. MDA is deeply appreciative of the support it continues to receive from the Trustees of the school as well as the management.

St. Joseph's High School, Mumbai

In June 2017, Ms. Masarrat Khan conducted a six-hour training on Phonological Awareness that included 50 Pre-Primary and Primary Teachers, and Remedial Educators, Speech Therapists and Occupational Therapist of Prafulta. We hope this will lead to a long-term relationship with the school, as often discussed with the authorities.

Rishi Valmiki School, Mumbai

The school caters to first generation English learners and aims to provide quality education to children from a weaker financial background with educational aids and a well-trained faculty. Launching what we hope will be a long-term project, MDA conducted a workshop on LD Awareness and the DALI Screening Tool for 16 of their teachers in April 2017. Having identified a large number of children with challenges, we hope to devise processes to train their teachers and community workers to support these children. MDA also held a talk for about 50 parents of students screened at risk for SLD in November 2017.

Arya Global School, Mumbai

Arya Global, an initiative of Education Today Foundation, is an organisation working towards providing quality education that is holistic and meaningful to the children in the age group of 2-16 years. Ms. Masarrat Khan led a workshop on 'Learning Disabilities: Teacher's Role in Early Identification' for 80 teachers of the pre-primary and primary sections of Little Aryans and Arya Global Schools.

Ajmera Global, Mumbai



Early in the academic year, MDA signed an MoU with Ajmera Global in the Western suburbs of Mumbai to train their teachers in providing reading instruction to all their students up to Class 5. Ms. Masarrat Khan and Ms. Manek Chitalwala have been conducting the Teacher Training Programme in multisensory structured language on an ongoing basis starting October 2017. The project, which runs for two years, envisages the multisensory structured language methodology being used in the classrooms from the Pre-Primary years to Grade 5, apart from training some teachers to work with students with Learning Disabilities.

The training has enhanced our language skills, enabling us to help our students better.

Thank you for the training and the valuable inputs.

I have started taking dictation according to the sounds taught in the programme.

This kind of training will help both teachers and students to overcome their difficulties.

Bai Avabai Framji Petit Girls' High School, Mumbai

Ms. Priyanka Pandit, Ms. Kajal Shah Rambhia and Ms. Sai Gharpure of MDA conducted onsite testing for 10 students in June - July 2017.

St. Mary's School, Pune

MDA launched an interesting project at this school to set up an in-house remedial programme run entirely by teachers of the school, with MDA providing training and support services over a period of two years. Ms. Masarrat Khan and Ms. Manek Chitalwala conducted a 6-day Teacher Training Programme in multisensory structured language in August 2017 for 6 trainees including the Principal, the Vice-Principal, Primary Head, Counsellor and junior school teachers. Overall training was imparted in the use of the programme including assessment, followed by strategies and games to develop phonemic awareness as well as steps involved in handwriting and spelling. In October 2017, Ms. Masarrat Khan was back in Pune to conduct Classroom Management Workshops and continue with the Teacher Training. The number of trainees increased to 11.

Ms. Manek Chitalwala continued with the training modules in December 2017 and March 2018. Once the programme is well underway, progress will be monitored through the mastery checks built into the programme as well as through supervisory visits by MDA.

Dear Masarrat,

We have come a very long way from where we started in terms of our knowledge and understanding of Dyslexia. It is so much clearer now as to why some children find it difficult to read and spell.

With early identification and intervention they can be put on the right track which will help them overcome their shortcomings, probably even before they are aware that they are different from other children. Acceptance from parents and support from the school is absolutely imperative.

The Sondax System is so simple and logical that we have been able to incorporate it into our school curriculum. My knowledge of the technical aspect of the English language has really expanded. Initially terms like phonemes, diphthongs, blends were so alien to me.

Both you and Manek have been very patient and encouraging with novices like me, but I must add that we have enjoyed every workshop because, like good teachers, you are not judgmental and have enabled us to work at our own pace.

Thank you so much!

*Veena Thadani
Vice Principal, St. Mary's School, Pune*

Udayachal Schools

In our ongoing role as a consultant to the Special Needs Department at the Udayachal (Primary and Secondary) schools, MDA continued to provide guidance and advice on the identification, design, and monitoring of support services for students facing a range of language and academic difficulties. Additionally, in November 2017, MDA donated all the Sensory Integration equipment to Udayachal School for their Occupational Therapy department.

Further, Ms. Kate Currawalla helped the school to interview candidates for their resource room.

Anjuman-i-Islam D.Ed. College, Mumbai

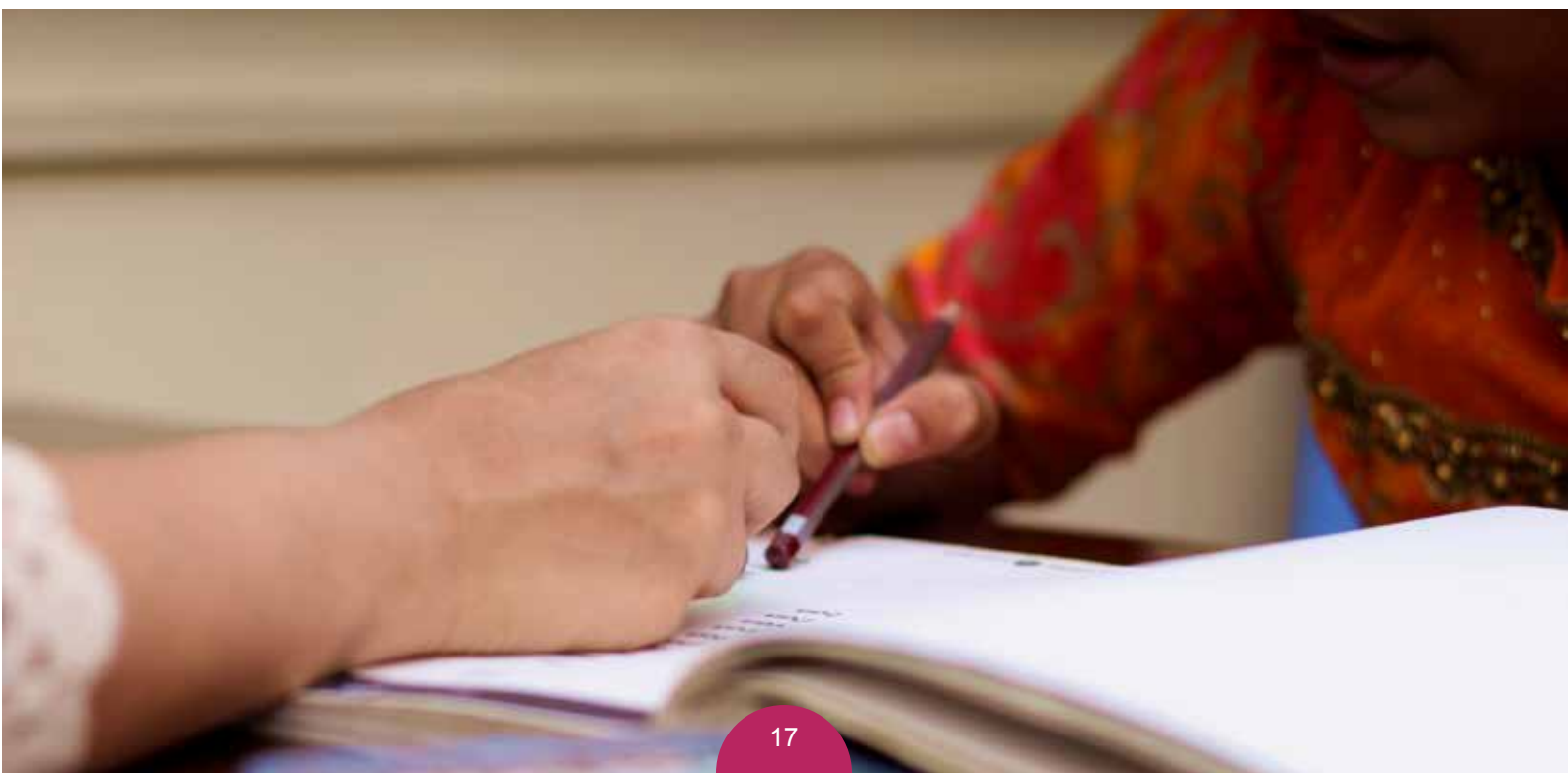
On 29th November 2017, an LD Awareness workshop was conducted by Ms. Masarrat Khan, which was attended by the Principal, lecturers, and 39 teacher trainees.

Riverside School, Ahmedabad

In February 2018, Ms. Masarrat Khan and Ms. Kate Currawalla met the school team to discuss a possible collaboration to provide necessary support to students with Learning Disability. It was estimated that on an average 4 of the 40 students in each class could be at risk. It was encouraging to note that the school already had a full-time Special Educator as well as a Resource Room. However, additional resources need to be deployed to fully cater to the students' needs. The two-day visit was a pleasure as the layout and ambience of the school were very impressive and conducive to learning. Further, recommendations were made to introduce structured Phonological Awareness and Phonics Skills programmes rather than a purely 'whole language' approach. Since English wasn't the first language for the students, all children, irrespective of whether or not they are at risk for dyslexia, will benefit from such a curriculum.

J.D. Birla Institute, Kolkata

Ms. Masarrat Khan was invited on 21st March 2018 to deliver a 30-minutes special lecture on "Learning Disabilities" during the Plenary Session at the National Seminar on "Disability, Accessibility & Equality". The seminar aimed to bring together leading academicians and experts to exchange and share their experiences and knowledge on issues concerning persons with disabilities..



Capacity Building

Dyslexia Therapist Training Programme (DTTP)



The 11th batch of MDA's flagship programme has begun its journey into this unique programme leading to certification by the Academic Language Therapy Association (ALTA), USA, and the International Dyslexia Association, and endorsed by Dyslexia Specialists - The Professional's Resource.

This two-year part-time certificate course in Dyslexia Therapy, organised in collaboration with the Multisensory Language Training Institute of New Mexico (MLTI-NM), is the only one of its kind in India. Course completion certificates are awarded by MLTI-NM and MDA jointly, and require participants to complete 700 hours of supervised, hands-on teaching to qualify. Each year, more and more students from across India have been enrolling in the programme with participants joining from Delhi, Indore, Nashik, Pune, Surat, Chennai, Bangalore, Coonoor and even Dubai.



Teaching Maths the Multisensory Way Modules 1 & 2



This is a course specially designed for Special Educators and teachers of Mathematics for Standards 1 to 7. Conducted by Ms. Masarrat Khan, this programme provides hands-on application while including theory as well as research. 17 participants including a primary school head, a curriculum designer, an ex-math teacher, special educators and remedial teachers attended

Module 1 held at our Dadar centre in April 2017. The programme enables participants to identify the critical stages in mathematics learning of young children and their implications for remediation when mastery is not achieved. A repeat of the workshop was held in July 2017. The Module 2 of this workshop was conducted in September 2017 and January 2018.

Feuerstein Instrumental Enrichment (FIE) Programme

A five-day intensive workshop covering the first 5 instruments of the Feuerstein Instrumental Enrichment Program (FIE) was conducted by Ms. Lalitha Ramanujan, Certified ICELP Trainer, at our Dadar centre in February 2018. Based on the concepts developed by the internationally renowned Israeli Psychologist Prof. Reuven Feuerstein, the FIE Program is an intervention programme designed to enhance the cognitive skills necessary for independent thinking. Among one of our most popular programmes, this workshop focuses on providing training to professionals and parents on correcting deficient cognitive functions and enhancing the individual's capacity to learn more effectively from direct exposure in formal as well as informal learning situations. As a result, the FIE Programme, which is used extensively at the MDA Centres, proves beneficial to students and individuals ranging from low-functioning performers to gifted underachievers.

Strategies For Learning

This programme has been developed at the University of Kansas Centre for Research on Learning to enable students to learn study skills and content material effectively. Each strategy under the system is task-specific and is designed to meet specific curriculum demands, developing the student's ability to gather, organize, store and retrieve information, and finally express it effectively in writing. The workshop held in February 2018 covered the Sentence Writing Strategy and Word Mapping Strategy. The Sentence Writing Strategy is a valuable tool in teaching students the basic principles of sentence construction and written expression. The Word Mapping Strategy provides teachers with tools to help students improve skills which are critical when reading a text in school or when taking a standardised reading comprehension test. Conducted by Ms. Lalitha Ramanujan, Certified Trainer, Alpha to Omega, at our Dadar centre, this workshop was attended by around 16 parents and teachers who found the training insightful and valuable in teaching students with Learning Disability.

Vidya Vikasini School, Coimbatore

Over the past two years, MDA has been building an enriching partnership with Vidya Vikasini School, Coimbatore, to replicate some of its training programmes at the school. As an extension of this partnership, Ms. Masarrat Khan held a training programme for its 20 teachers at the school on 'Teaching Maths the Multisensory Way Module - 1' in September 2017.



Workshops

Assistive Technology

At a special workshop for parents and teachers, Mr. Malcolm Litten, previously Head of English at Mark College, UK, in association with Unique Ability Consulting, introduced participants to the use of text-to-speech software. The programme provided an introduction to an effective solution provided by text-to-speech software to the problem of acquiring reading and vocabulary skills as well as tackling large tracts of text in the senior years. Unfortunately, there continues to be a great deal of resistance to the use of tech tools within the Indian education system that prevents our students from making effective use of Assistive Tech.

Hashu Advani College of Special Education



HACSE organised a Continuing Rehabilitation Education (CRE) Programme on study skills from 25th to 27th July 2017.

Ms. Masarrat Khan was invited as one of the resource persons for the programme that was attended by 30 Special Educators. She did an activity-based session for an hour and a half on the Correct, Connect, Collect and the KWL Strategies.

Parent-Child Relationship

In April 2017, our team comprising of Ms. Diya Basu, Ms. Kajal Rambhia and Ms. Bhakti Shah conducted a workshop on 'Parent-Child Relationships' to provide strategies to be used by parents at home. Held at our Dadar centre the workshop used skits to address topics such as Family conflicts v/s parent-child relation, technology v/s parent-child relation as well as strategies to strengthen parent-child relationship. The interactive format of the workshop along with the use of bilingual instruction made it easier for participating parents to connect to each topic and understand it better.

Bridging Communication Gap

Ms. Priyanka Pandit and Ms. Sonal Barve addressed this basic yet pertinent issue that most parents face. Conducted in June 2017 at our Dadar centre, the workshop on Bridging Communication Gap efficiently discussed difficult situations while providing insights to parents on how to cope with those issues. Structured in a simple and easy to understand format, our team used relevant examples to encourage interactions and discussions on various topics like Effective Communication and Coping with the Generation Gap while sharing practical tips.

Arts-Based Therapy

Increasingly, research has supported the use of Art Therapy for people with learning disabilities. It comprises providing constructive learning tools that help people understand their feelings and develop their interactive skills or address their personal issues in a controlled environment. A hands-on experience of this form of therapy was offered by Ms. Shruti Gupta, Arts-Based Therapist at MDA in August 2017.



Aimed at parents, the workshop provided an introduction to Arts-Based Therapy, activities included in the therapy as well as its effectiveness. The case studies shared helped parents understand the use of this therapy with regard to self-expression, attention span, and emotional understanding. Many parents requested for the therapy to be conducted for their child, especially after the hands-on activity that facilitated them to explore their own emotions.

Encouraging Hobbies

At our centres we are constantly trying to explore different activities that might help provide new experiences to our students. Introducing them to such experiences helps expand their horizon and build their confidence. With the objective laid down, a talk on Trekking as a hobby was organised in September 2017 for parents and students. Detailed instructions on how to prepare for a trek was provided by expert trekker Mr. Fulton, who also introduced participants to interesting places to trek as well as the useful knots that come in handy during a trek. The students were very excited to go on a trek after the session.

“
If I can't learn
the way you teach,
will you teach me
the way I can learn?
”

Work Experience Subjects

In order to create a better understanding about the Work Experience subjects offered to Class 10 SSC students, MDA conducted a workshop for parents at the Dadar centre in association with Ms. Yashodhara Waghmare, In Charge Principal (Retired) at Vikas Vidyalaya for Hearing Handicapped. Ms. Waghmare conducted the workshop in a very interactive format and patiently answered queries.

She systematically introduced the options available for Work Experience Subjects while discussing the process of selecting and applying for them and the availability of study materials. She also provided crucial details of the marks distribution as well as challenges within the Education Board and highlighted the benefits of Gardening as a therapeutic option. The workshop helped parents better understand the selection process along with maneuvering challenges faced at school.



Advocacy & Strategic Partnerships

Poster Presentation at the Comparative and International Education Society |
62nd Annual Conference: Re-mapping Global Education, Mexico City,
Mexico – March 25-29, 2018

“Determination of marginalized youth to overcome and achieve in mathematics:
A case study from India.” Authors – Ms. Deepa Srikanthia, Ms. Masarrat Khan,
Ms. Mindy Eichhorn

This qualitative exploratory study, conducted from October 2015 to February 2016, sought to understand the characteristics of adolescents from marginalized communities in Mumbai and Bengaluru, India, and their determination to overcome challenges in mathematics and complete their secondary education. In particular, the study followed students who had dropped out of mainstream school and enrolled in India’s National Institute of Open Schooling Programme to complete their high school education and attempt the 10th standard board exams.

Results from data collected in the academic year show that there are multiple factors, such as lack of learning foundational skills at the primary school level to the type of interventions provided to them to complete high school which influences the students’ achievement in mathematics. Findings from the study will inform policy and programmatic decisions for students enrolled in India’s National Institute of Open Schooling Programme.

Atma

MDA had signed on for the Atma Accelerator Programme in 2016. In its third year, we have made significant progress in creating a more efficient and professionally run organisation with a clear management structure. The team at Atma has been constantly working with MDA to put in place structured policies and processes across all functions like HR as well as Monitoring and Evaluation for all our in-house programmes and activities. In the works is an Employee Handbook, a new appraisal form for the staff and online forms for parents to provide feedback on our services. Additionally, the design volunteers at Atma have been working under the guidance of Ms. Ashwini Nair to develop MDA’s brand guidelines and communication templates.

RPWD Act

The National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People in partnership with Trinayani, an NGO, organised a Seminar on Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016. Ms. Manek Chitalwala participated in this event held in March 2018 which aimed to integrate the voice of the disability community to be able to come together in unison and demand rights not only for themselves or their community but for all groups. The event, supported by ONGC and held at Prabhodhan Thackarey Krida Sankul & Swimming Complex, Vile Parle, saw participation from over 250 people representing various disabilities. The focus of the event was to understand the Rights of Persons with Disability Act, its legal implications and changes needed along with discussions on the various challenges faced in acquiring employment.

Antarchakshu

The Xavier's Resource Centre for Visually Challenged has been conducting this event annually to support and promote the holistic development of people with disabilities, especially those with visual impairment. While past editions of this mega event have focused on visual impairment, the scope was expanded this year to include diverse conditions like autism and learning disabilities. In keeping with this, the theme for this year's Antarchakshu was 'To Inclusion and Beyond'. At this unique sensitization and awareness platform, Ms. Manek Chitalwala and Ms. Kaschit Mishra represented MDA as experts from the field of SLD to spread awareness and answer student and parent queries. Through this initiative, we were able to reach out to over 1220 visitors to create awareness and promote inclusion of people with disabilities into the mainstream. The event was very well organized and provided an excellent insight into the world of those who are differently abled.

Maharshi Dayanand College of Arts, Science and Commerce

At the Mega Inclusion Camp 2.0 held on 16th June 2017, Ms. Fatima Martins and Ms. Diya Basu, represented MDA to spread awareness about Learning Disabilities. At this camp we were able to reach over 1000 students, parents and professionals who were keen to know more about SLD, short-term Remedial Programmes in LD and Careers in Psychology.

The camp also provided the opportunity to promote books on Learning Disability and Attention Deficit Disorder with Hyperactivity ("Breaking Through" by Farida Raj and "All You Need is Love" by Dr. Shelja Sen).

2nd Annual Conference Developmental Neurosciences

New Horizons Child Development Centre hosted the 2nd Annual Conference on Developmental Neurosciences on 20th January 2018 at Sion Hospital. The 400 plus participants included child health experts and students from the

field of medicine and psychology.

Ms. Masarrat Khan and Paediatric Neurologist Dr. Mona Gajre were panelists for the session on LD, the format of which was Clinical Case Review (Q&A). Ms. Kate Currawalla was co-panelist for the session on Inclusion.

Research Paper Published

MDA participated in a research study with the National Brain Research Centre to identify the possibility of a gene causing Dyslexia.

The research culminated in the paper titled "Ancestral Variations of the PCDHG Gene Cluster Predispose to Dyslexia in a Multiplex Family" that has been published at EBioMedicine in December 2017.

Ms. Masarrat Khan is one of the co-authors.

Pratham

MDA has been collaborating with Pratham over the years to provide expertise on LD as well as to promote inclusion in learning. Recently, the Maharashtra State Board launched an initiative to establish the State Open Board along the lines of the National Institute of Open School (NIOS). Pratham has been charged with developing the curriculum for language and mathematics. The first curriculum development meeting to develop the content for Maharashtra State Open Board - Language and Mathematics for standards fifth and eighth was held on 17th January 2018. As a member of the Maths Committee, Ms. Masarrat Khan has been contributing to the development of the curriculum and assessment procedures. Earlier, a roundtable discussion on Inclusive Education framed a 'Charter of Entitlements' to be given to the State Government and the Municipal Corporation of Mumbai. Ms. Kate Currawalla and Ms. Masarrat Khan were part of the deliberations held on 7 December 2017 at the Y.B. Chavan Centre. Detailed inclusions covered critical areas like Accessible Infrastructure, Classroom Environment and Education Services, Parent Involvement. The 'Charter of Entitlements' was presented to the Education Minister on 28 December 2017.



National Conclave on Specific Learning Disability (Dyslexia)

As a perfect way to commemorate Dyslexia month, we thought it apt to create a platform that would bring together the medical fraternity, educators, policymakers, and parents to table necessary issues and facilitate the much-needed debate among various stakeholders working in the field of Dyslexia.



The conclave, held across three days, saw participation from experts in their respective fields. Eminent speakers like Dr. Mona Gajre, Ms. Lalitha Ramanujan, Dr. Samir Dalwai, Ms. Masarrat Khan and Dr. Geet Oberoi discussed the Challenges of Dyslexia, Challenges in Screening and Assessment, Curricular/ Examination Accommodations and Best Practices in Intervention.

A key objective of the Conclave was to analyse the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, and arrive at recommendations as standardisation of procedures at the National level is the need of the hour. Taking cognisance of the fact that it is a long road from framing legislation to implementing a law, recommendations from the various necessary perspectives were included with the aim of building an effective and comprehensive system to offer support for all children who struggle to learn. Debate and discussion were facilitated by experts so that every participant had the opportunity to table challenges and offer recommendations.





The highlight of the event was the unveiling of DALI: Dyslexia Assessment for Languages of India (Screening Tool) by its developer, Dr. Nandini Singh, National Brain Research Centre (NBRC). These indigenous screening and assessment tools, developed by the NBRC, Manesar, with funding from the Ministry of Science and Technology, enable screening and assessment for neurologically-based language disorders in four languages: Kannada, English, Hindi and Marathi. As a free, downloadable screening tool, DALI is a valuable resource for

educators all over the country, especially in remote areas where awareness and resources in this emergent field are scarce, facilitating early detection and necessary intervention for school-going children irrespective of their socio-economic background. Efforts are ongoing in order to make the tool available in other Indian languages.

Additionally, a Post-Conclave workshop on the DALI Assessment Battery was conducted by Dr. Nandini Singh to train participants in the use of the DALI Assessment Battery.

As an annexure to the conclave, Training Workshops on Assistive Technology for Specific Learning Disability were held by Mr. Malcolm Litten from Unique Ability Consulting to provide an introduction to the wonderful world of text-to-speech software that enables users to engage in a multisensory reading experience. This initiative was made possible thanks to the support extended by Mr. Kabir Bhogilal.



We are truly overwhelmed by the enthusiastic response to the event and the passion displayed by the professionals who contributed and participated. It was especially encouraging to have the Learning Disability Clinics of Nair, Sion and KEM Hospitals (Mumbai) contribute extensively to the programme. Such a display of solidarity for children who face learning difficulties validates all our efforts and motivates us to keep propelling ourselves forward with renewed vigour and enthusiasm.



Acknowledgements

There are people who remain behind the scenes but are in fact our pillars of strength. We, at MDA, are able to carry on our work without looking back thanks to the generous and ongoing support provided by our patrons and donors. We thank them for believing in us and constantly motivating us to propel forward to touch as many lives affected by Dyslexia as we can.



- The Pirojsha Godrej Foundation, Ms. Pheroza Godrej, and Ms. Smita Crishna
- Mr. Homi Bhabha, Brandon & Company Pvt. Ltd. and the Bhabha Trust
- Mr. Gopal Vazirani, Dynamic Designs & Systems Pvt. Ltd. And the Hemibai Charitable Trust.
- Mr. Kabir Bhogilal, Leherchand Uttamchand Trust Fund
- The Nesserwanjee Manockjee Petit Charity Fund and Sir Dinshaw and Lady Petit
- The Bai Alamai and Seth Ardeshir Talati and Seth Sarosh B. Mody Charity Trust
- Ratanbai and Hormusji Kharshedji Bhabha Charity Trust Fund.
- CREATE Foundation
- Mr. Ashish Gumashta through CREATE Foundation
- Mrs. Nergish S. Balsara
- Master Karmaditya Baldota
- Dr. Zenobia Nadirshaw
- Mr. Sudhakar Reddy
- Mr. Vijay Rajpurohit – Chemical Processing Piping Pvt. Ltd.
- Mr. Vijay Dodeja
- Mr. Paritosh Joshi
- United Way of Mumbai
- Ms. Tehmi Morris

We would also like to sincerely thank the team at Thomson Reuters Foundation for their support in vetting our professional agreements and HR policies as well as providing legal guidance.

About MDA

Maharashtra Dyslexia Association (MDA) is 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.

Services

Assessment | Counselling | Vocational Guidance
Remediation and Intervention Programmes

Workshops and Training Programmes

Apprenticeship Programme | Workshops for Parents
Awareness programmes for Teachers and Parents
Dyslexia Therapist Training Programme

Contact Us

003, Amit Park, Lala Jamnadas Gupta Marg, Deonar Farm Road, Mumbai - 400088
+91-22-25565754 | mda@dyslexiaindia.com

www.mdamumbai.com



mdadyslexia