

Abu Dhabi University Boosts Awareness Through Two Educational Events Focused on Autism Spectrum Disorder

As part of its commitment to the provision of inclusive education, [Abu Dhabi University \(ADU\)](#) hosted two impactful events in collaboration with the Emirates Autism Society (EAS), aimed at raising awareness about Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). These events included the eighth 'ADU Art for Autism Competition' and the fourth 'Autism Spectrum Disorders Symposium,' designed to educate the wider community on the often-overlooked talents of people with autism while dispelling prevalent myths. These events were held in April, coinciding with Autism Awareness Month.

In partnership with the Abu Dhabi Music and Arts Foundation (ADMAF), the eighth ADU Art for Autism Competition received more than 80 artworks from 18 special needs centers and schools across the UAE. The competition provided students with the opportunity to showcase their talent and creativity by selecting their own themes for their artworks. Students displayed their exceptional art pieces at ADU's main campus, with a jury committee later announcing the winners. In the six to 11 years category, first place was awarded to Muhammad Muneeb Baig from Al Noor Training Centre for Persons with Disabilities, second place went to Ariana Amelia Baksh from Dubai Autism Center, and Tanmay Mahajan from Mayoora Private School, Abu Dhabi secured third place. Additionally, students in the 12 to 25 years category exhibited remarkable skills and dedication, with Asmaa Ishaq Mohammed Naseeb Al Balushi from Al Ain Autism Center winning first place and Saif Ahmed Jalal from Al-Iman Special School securing second place. While Mubarak Ali Mubarak Ali Saeed Al Owlaqi from Al Ain Autism Center came third.

Under the theme 'Empowering Diversity: Navigating the Spectrum with Innovation,' the fourth Autism Spectrum Disorders Symposium, held in partnership with EAS and Emirates Speech and Language Pathology Society, in the presence of H.E. Majid Sultan AlMuhairi, Chairman of the Board of Directors at EAS. The event featured key speakers in the fields of autism, special education, inclusive education, and speech and language therapy.

Professor Ghassan Aouad, Chancellor of Abu Dhabi University, said: "At ADU, we take pride in providing a platform for people of determination to showcase and express their talents within the community. These events are a testament to our commitment to fostering an inclusive ecosystem for these young talents, equipping them with the necessary tools to further enhance their skillsets and capabilities, enriching their quality of life. ADU continues to work hand-in-hand with our strategic partners such as Abu Dhabi Music and Arts Foundation and Emirates Autism Society to offer all-encompassing experiences for the youth."

Prof. Aouad added: "We would like to extend our gratitude to all students who participated in the eighth ADU Art for Autism Competition and the autism symposium speakers. We look forward to welcoming you all back next year."

Her Excellency Huda Alkhamis-Kanoo, Founder of Abu Dhabi Music and Arts

Foundation said: "We are delighted to partner with Abu Dhabi University and Emirates Autism Society and support the Abu Dhabi University's eighth Art for Autism Competition. We are committed to empowering people with autism, enhancing their community participation, and establishing a supportive environment. This initiative is part of our ongoing sustainable program that falls under the theme 'Culture of Determination:'

Together for Integration,' which includes a wide range of artistic and community educational activities. Among these initiatives is the documentary series titled 'Stories of Determination' featuring in the 'Ri waq Al-Fikr' initiative. This series showcases a group of creative and talented people of determination as inspirational leaders for their community." Throughout the symposium, participants engaged in panel discussions and sessions that covered several topics, including the customization of environments for individuals on the autism spectrum, implementing innovative strategies to accommodate diverse needs and fostering inclusion. Moreover, the event addressed methods to enhance social communication within inclusive settings for individuals with autism spectrum disorder.

