



# World Autism Organisation

[www.worldautismorganisation.com](http://www.worldautismorganisation.com)

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## World Autism Awareness Day 2016

### **“It takes a village to raise a child”**

“It takes a village to raise a child” is an old Igbo and Yoruba (Nigerian) proverb that carries great significance for the world community of Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC).

With the emergence of the internet, for a significant number of people with an ASC or their families, unlike 30 years ago, there is a wealth of knowledge readily available on our doorsteps, as the world has literally become a “Global Cyber Village”. This global community that embraces and supports us is having a significant impact on the raising of our children with an ASC and for many people with an ASC.

What must not be forgotten, as most of us dip in and out of the Internet a couple of times a day, is that there are thousands of people living on or near the poverty line, who have no access to these resources and thus remain isolated and desperate within their physical villages.

The World Autism Organisation, a purely voluntary, parent-driven body, has the primary focus of facilitating the spread of knowledge and resources from those with strong means to those who are under-resourced. Every four years the WAO hosts an International Congress in or close to lower-resourced population groups, with the main goal being to leave behind a legacy of improved resources and knowledge, as well as facilitate new ongoing relationships of support and empowerment. Voluntary contributions and corporate sponsorship are sought in an endeavour to make the congress accessible to those whom the event is aimed to assist.

On September 25<sup>th</sup> 2015 the member states of the United Nations adopted a set of goals as part of a new global sustainability development agenda. Under Goal 17: “Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development” (<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/globalpartnerships/>) it is noted that more than four billion people do not use the Internet, and 90 per cent of them are from the developing world. If one takes the apparent statistic that 1 in 65 children born, will develop an ASC, this means over 61 million families are excluded from the opportunity of the Global Cyber Village helping them to raise their child.

The United Nations has set specific targets under this development agenda for the next 15 years and therefore we pray that this will have significant impact for isolated parents and people with an ASC. As individuals and autism-specific organisations, we also need to consider how we collectively or individually, we can further foster our goals and methods of reaching out to our less fortunate neighbours, by finding ways to share and provide our knowledge and offer our expertise to those in the poorer isolated areas around the world.

**Jill Stacey, President. 02.04.2016**

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