

Saaya Association

**ANNUAL
REPORT
2023-2024**



863 Service Road I-10/2 Islamabad,
Web: www.saayaassociation.org
Email: saayaassociation@hotmail.com
Ph: 051-4444493
[Facebook.com/Saaya Association](https://www.facebook.com/SaayaAssociation)

Executive Summary:

Saaya Association is an organization dedicated to supporting people with disabilities. One of its key aims is to provide support to Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), enabling them to realize their full potential through novel opportunities, personal choices, and community involvement. The diverse activities undertaken by the association contribute to a holistic understanding of issues faced by PWDs and the improvement of their status in society. Prominent projects at Saaya include components on independent living, inclusive education, supportive society/community, and access to justice. Strong emphasis is placed on the well-being of women and girls with disabilities, as they are subjected to multiple layers of discrimination.

Main Objective:

The primary focus of Saaya Association is to facilitate the acceptance of Persons with Disabilities as a significant human resource in society, leading to a secure and progressive environment for them. Playing a constructive role in society often becomes challenging for PWDs, as they may struggle with accepting their own disabilities. Saaya's mission is to contribute to improving the socio-economic and cultural conditions of PWDs by raising awareness and advocating for their rights through mass media.

Acknowledgment:

Saaya Association has been working towards empowering individuals with disabilities to live moderately independent lives for several years. Many organizations have played a crucial role in helping Saaya achieve its goals, including HANDS Pakistan and Sightsavers Pakistan. HANDS has supported Saaya in assisting Persons with Disabilities by providing relevant and timely services and activities that promote greater independence. These activities not only impart essential life skills to Persons with Disabilities but also help sensitize the general public to disability-related issues.

For many Persons with Disabilities, accepting their own disability is challenging, and they often struggle to find platforms that offer opportunities to learn about independent living and becoming resourceful members of society. Saaya aims to bring Persons with Disabilities out of isolation and into mainstream life, enabling them to contribute to society's progress. Saaya is committed to building the confidence of Persons with Disabilities and their families.

The Saaya team would like to express special gratitude to HANDS Pakistan for its personal involvement and interest in including Persons with Disabilities as active members of society. In addition, the moral and financial support provided by HANDS Pakistan has helped alleviate the financial burden and create a friendly and progressive environment.

Saaya Association is grateful to Allah Almighty for providing the

Background

According to the World Disability Report issued by WHO and the World Bank, one billion people, or 15% of the world's population, experience some form of disability. Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) are more likely to experience adverse socioeconomic outcomes compared to those without disabilities. These outcomes may include reduced years of formal education, limited access to adequate healthcare, and fewer employment opportunities, all of which contribute to higher poverty rates among PWDs. Additionally, poverty itself can increase the risk of disability through factors such as malnutrition, lack of access to healthcare, unsafe working conditions, polluted environments, and inadequate access to safe water and sanitation. This means that as poverty increases, the risk of disability also rises.

In Pakistan, nearly 15% of the total population consists of individuals with physical and social limitations that hinder their ability to live healthy lives. Such children and adults often face lives of segregation and marginalization. Saaya Association aims to support PWDs by enabling them to realize their full potential through novel opportunities, personal choices, and community involvement. The association is committed to improving the status and dignity of PWDs through its focus on independent living, inclusive education, a supportive society or community, and access to justice. Saaya places special emphasis on the well-being of women and girls with disabilities, who are subjected to multiple layers of discrimination. For families and caregivers, this journey is transformative. Saaya provides coaching centers for psychosocial counseling, and the results have been promising. A needs-based course has been designed to address the psychosocial issues faced by PWDs and their families, with ongoing monitoring to ensure its effectiveness.

Saaya Centre for Independent Living

Saaya Association provides essential technical skills and training to help Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) lead independent lifestyles. The association also arranges lectures, symposiums, and internship programs, which include accepting and educating trainees. Independent living for PWDs ensures they have the same rights and opportunities as the rest of the population, allowing them to have control over their own lives by making their own choices.



Independent living for PWDs does not mean that individuals must do everything by themselves. Whether disabled or not, every human being is interdependent, and it would be difficult for anyone to function entirely on their own. We all rely on interactions with others, and when PWDs are denied basic rights such as education, housing, and support, they are placed at a disadvantage. This limits their ability to reach their full potential and reduces their chances of making independent choices or exercising their basic human rights. Saaya CIL aims to bring PWDs out of their homes and into active roles as members of society. It also seeks to create an environment in Pakistan, with a special focus on the Independent Living Centre, where PWDs can visit marketplaces and other public spaces without being sneered at or feeling ashamed of using a wheelchair or other assistive devices.

Saaya CIL is an exemplary and highly appreciated implementation of the emerging concept of Independent Living for persons with diverse and severe disabilities. It has been serving individuals with severe disabilities for more than five years with the support of HANDS Pakistan. The Saaya Centre for Independent Living is a new ray of hope in the lives of PWDs. Independent Living demands equal rights for individuals with any form of disability and emphasizes that they are equally entitled to enjoy all the benefits of life. Unfortunately, many PWDs remain confined to their homes, but they should not be punished for their disabilities. They are human beings deserving of an active role in the mainstream of society.

Services by Saaya Center for Independent Living

One of the primary goals of the Saaya Association is to ensure that Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) receive proper training and equipment to lead independent lives. Below is a list of various services provided by the Saaya Association for PWDs:

Personal Care Attendant: We train attendants to provide services for individuals with severe disabilities who are unable to perform certain tasks due to physical limitations.

Awareness Raising: At the Saaya Independent Living Center, we raise awareness about various disability issues using creative means. Saaya Association also publishes newsletters for information exchange regarding PWDs.

Natural Disaster Management Training: Since physical disabilities can result from multiple factors, we also focus on natural disaster management training for people who have become physically impaired due to an incident.

Counseling for Persons with Disabilities: Due to a lack of awareness and training programs, many PWDs depend on others for assistance with everyday tasks. Recognizing this need, Saaya provides counseling and takes measures to help PWDs become active members of society by accepting their disabilities.

Provision of Assistive Devices: There are various reasons for physical impairment, which means that the needs of PWDs can vary. At Saaya Association, we provide the necessary assistive devices that allow PWDs to lead successful lives.

Computer Training Courses: With technological advancement, computer skills have become essential. The trained staff at Saaya Association offers computer training courses to PWDs, including hands-on training in Microsoft Office and graphic design.

Psychosocial Support Training: Like any individual, PWDs also require psychosocial support. The mental health and productivity of a person are greatly affected by their psychology and surrounding environment. For this reason, Saaya Association provides psychosocial support training for the family members of PWDs.

Workshop for Manual & Electric Wheelchair Maintenance: Manual and electric wheelchairs require maintenance, repairs, or part replacements. Saaya Association has an expert team led by an engineer, which handles the replacement of battery chargers for electric wheelchairs, handle grips, wheel locks, hand rims, and more. Our capabilities also include programming manual and electric wheelchairs to adjust speed, sensitivity, reaction time, and other parameters, ensuring optimal performance according to the individual's disability.

Alternative Hand Control Systems for Vehicles: Automobiles can be adapted for ease of use by PWDs. For example, foot pedals can be raised or replaced with hand-controlled devices. Automotive adaptive hand controls also make it possible to adjust acceleration and braking. At Saaya, we offer these services, which continue to broaden opportunities for PWDs to drive vehicles with hand controls and adaptive automotive products and devices.

Referral Program between Centers for Persons with Disabilities across the Country: Saaya Association has strong linkages with other OPDs (Organizations of People with Disabilities) and SDGs across the country. We counsel and facilitate individuals to connect with nearby organizations, and in case of specific needs, Saaya makes appointments with relevant departments to ensure the most credible services and information.

Network of Women with Disabilities: Saaya Association places prime importance on the empowerment of women. Women with disabilities are among the most marginalized and disadvantaged people in the world. The intersection of gender inequality and disability presents multiple levels of discrimination. They are less likely to be educated, employed, or well-housed than any other population group. Our mission is to lead the way for women with disabilities at the grassroots level and improve their choices by being a voice, building partnerships, providing information, and educating the community.

Staff at Saaya Association:

The team at Saaya is highly motivated and dedicated to helping and supporting Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). Nearly all members of the Saaya team have some form of physical disability, and they are focused on empowering other PWDs to become confident, active, and independent members of society.

Major Accomplishments 2023-2024:

Accessibility Audit:

Saaya Association conducted accessibility audits in 2023-2024 to assess the accessibility of public infrastructure, including public places, government buildings, and restaurants. The primary goal is to raise awareness among the general public about the barriers faced by Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) and the importance of creating an accessible environment.



Outreach Activities:

Saaya Association organized various outdoor activities during 2023-2024. The purpose of these activities is to highlight the importance of outdoor engagement for individuals with disabilities and to provide an overview of the inclusive outdoor activities available to meet their unique needs. Engaging in outdoor activities not only promotes physical fitness but also enhances a sense of empowerment among PWDs. The development of accessible infrastructure includes the installation of ramps, elevators, and designated parking spaces for individuals with disabilities.



Seminars Organized by Saaya Association on “Sensitivity and Inclusivity of Persons with Disabilities in the Rights-based Development Process”.

Youth make up 60% of our population, making them a crucial group in promoting sensitivity and inclusivity towards Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). Consultative meetings, workshops, and seminars are essential tools to educate and engage young people about their roles and responsibilities in supporting PWDs. Saaya Association regularly conducts seminars and workshops in educational institutions to raise awareness about the various dimensions of disability and the importance of inclusion.



In 2023-2024, Saaya Association organized several seminars on “Sensitivity and Inclusivity of Persons with Disabilities in the Rights-based Development Process” in collaboration with various universities Like Arid, FJWU, IQRA and ISRA University in the twin cities. These seminars aimed to foster a deeper understanding among students and educators about the challenges faced by PWDs and to promote the integration of rights-based approaches in development initiatives. The seminars provided participants with practical insights into how they can contribute to creating a more inclusive and equitable society, emphasizing the importance of active participation, accessibility, and advocacy for the rights of PWDs.



Wheelchair Distribution 2023-2024

Since the foundation of Saaya Association Islamabad in 2008, a tradition of helping those in need has been upheld, particularly through the distribution of wheelchairs, especially during the holy month of Ramadan. We are grateful to Allah Almighty for providing us with the opportunity to assist those in need, doing as much as we can within our capacity. Each year, Saaya Association Islamabad has successfully distributed hundreds of wheelchairs and Eid suits to people from various parts of the country. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the individuals and community members who have supported us throughout this process.



In collaboration with HANDS, and Sightsaver International, more than 200 wheelchairs have been distributed to people with

disabilities under the umbrella of the CBID Network.

The Annual Wheelchair Distribution Ceremony for 2024 was held on May 25, 2024, at Margalla, Islamabad. This event not only provided essential mobility aids to those in need but also served as a testament to the ongoing commitment of Saaya Association and its partners to improving the lives of Persons with Disabilities across Pakistan.



Five-Day Internship Programs for Students with Disabilities 2023-2024

Saaya Association, in collaboration with HANDS Pakistan, has organized twelve (12) five-day internship sessions for students with disabilities at the Saaya Centre for Independent Living in Islamabad. Over the course of the year 2023-2024, sixty (60) students with disabilities participated in these sessions.

The primary goal of these internships was to enhance the participation of students with disabilities in society by providing them with valuable internship opportunities. Additionally, these sessions aimed to foster positive changes in perceptions and attitudes towards disabilities within the private sector.



The internship program covered a range of topics designed to equip participants with essential skills and knowledge, including:

- **Understanding Disability and Inclusive Development:** Insight into disability issues and strategies for promoting inclusivity.
- **Independent Living:** Skills and strategies for leading an independent life.
- **Self-Acceptance and Self-Confidence:** Building self-esteem and personal confidence.
- **Confidence Building and Decision Making:** Techniques for boosting confidence and making informed decisions through group discussions.
- **Types of Disabilities:** Understanding various disabilities, including physical, visual impairments, hearing impairments, and intellectual disabilities.

- **Diversity and Making Friends:** Navigating diversity, building friendships, and working effectively in an office environment.
- **Team Building:** Strategies for effective teamwork and collaboration.
- **Skills Improvement:** Enhancing research skills, group communication, interpersonal communication, and observational skills.
- **Disability Models:** Overview of different models of disability.
- **Challenging and Changing Attitudes:** Addressing and shifting negative attitudes and beliefs about disabilities.
- **Adaptability to Change:** Strategies for adapting to new situations and changes.
- **Community Work:** Engaging in and contributing to community activities.
- **Effective Communication:** Developing strong communication skills.
- **Value-Based Social Responsibilities:** Understanding and embracing social responsibilities based on personal values.
- **Personal Characteristics:** Exploring traits that contribute to personal and professional success.
- **Individual Issues and Barriers:** Identifying and addressing individual challenges faced by disabled persons.
- **Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving:** Developing skills for critical thinking and effective problem-solving.
- **Positive Thinking:** Encouraging a positive mindset and approach.
- **Importance of Outreach Activities:** Understanding the role of outreach and its impact.
- **Experience Sharing as Role Models:** Sharing experiences and insights as role models.
- **Society's Responses to Disabled Persons:** Examining societal attitudes and responses towards disabled individuals.
- **Growth and Care Model:** Focusing on personal growth, self-recognition, and discipline (both self-discipline and professional discipline).
- **Networking and Mentoring:** Building networks and seeking mentorship for personal and professional development.

These sessions were designed to empower students with disabilities, enhance their professional skills, and promote a more inclusive and understanding society.

Monthly Awareness Sessions 2023-2024:

The Saaya Centre for Independent Living conducts Monthly Awareness Sessions on understanding disability and the concept of Independent Living at the Saaya Office in Islamabad, with the support of HANDS. The main purpose of these sessions is to raise awareness about disability among newly disabled individuals and to help them emerge from isolation, enabling them to become active members of society. Parents of children with disabilities and community members also attended the sessions. A total of one hundred and twenty (120) people with disabilities, including family members, participated in the Monthly Awareness Sessions in 2023-2024.

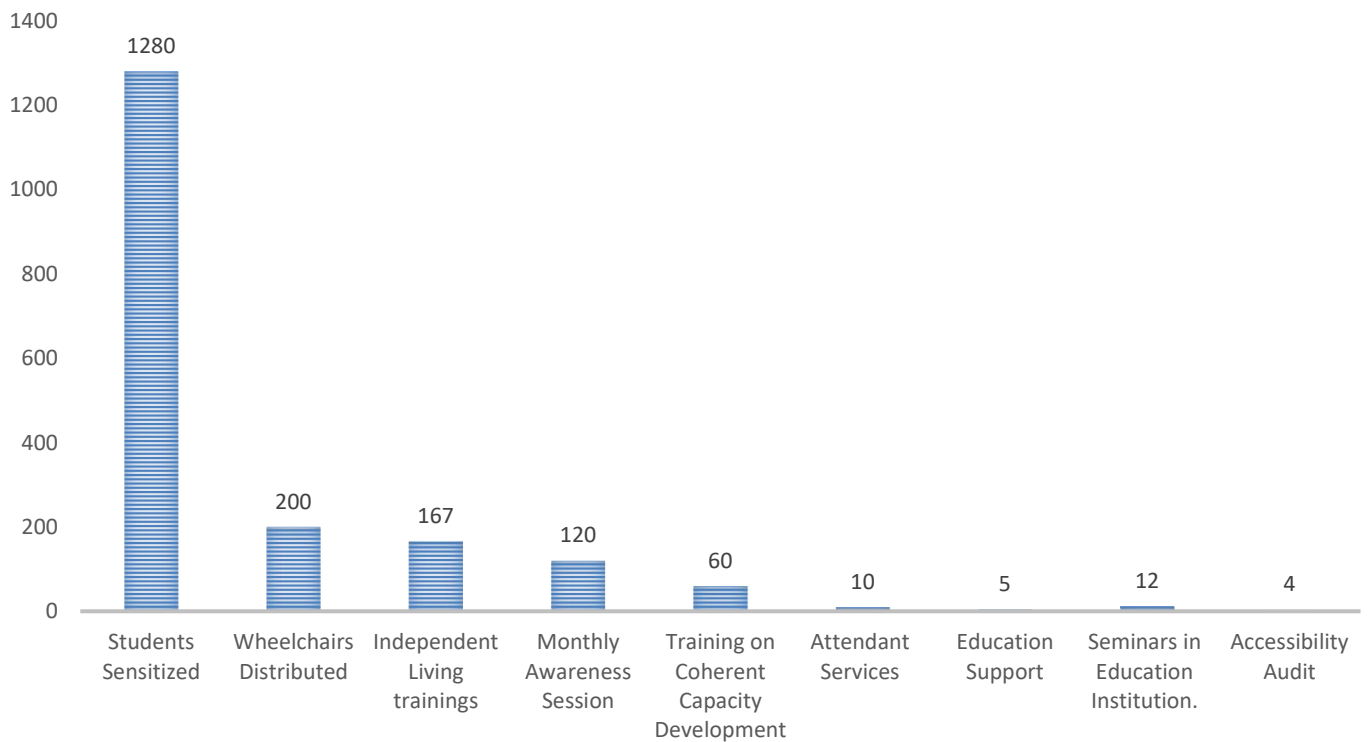


Activities and Trainings Organized by Saaya Team for Persons with Disabilities

Saaya CIL aims to bring Persons with Disabilities out of their homes and into active participation as members of society. It also seeks to create an environment in Pakistan—particularly at the Independent Living Centre—where Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) can visit marketplaces and other public spaces without facing prejudice or feeling ashamed of using a wheelchair or any other assistive device.



ACTIVITIES & BENEFICIARIES DETAILS: 2023-2024



Conclusion:

Saaya Association plays a fundamental role in enhancing the understanding and improving the lives of Persons with Disabilities by providing them with innovative platforms to realize their creative potential. With a clear vision focused on Independent Living, Inclusive Education, and the development of a barrier-free and rights-based society, Saaya is committed to elevating the status and dignity of Persons with Disabilities.

Through its leadership, Saaya Association has expanded opportunities for newly disabled individuals. The organization actively changes the lives of many people with disabilities through various initiatives, including counseling sessions, disability awareness programs, group discussions, independent living trainings, and capacity-building activities.

Saaya Association has also established strong relationships with development partners, donors, INGOs, NGOs, other OPDs, public sector partners, private sector partners, journalists, electronic media, news reporters, academic institutions, and more. These efforts are undertaken to ensure the development of an inclusive society for all individuals in Pakistan, regardless of disability, while also promoting Saaya's work and visibility.

Thank you!!