



IV INTERNATIONAL AUTISM CONFERENCE

Abu Dhabi UAE

Abu Dhabi Energy Center - April 25-28, 2026



IV International Conference UAE 2026

Autism Ecosystem Strategy Best Practices Proposal

<https://autismconference-uae.ai>

AI & INNOVATION PILLAR

AI & Innovation Pillar Best Practices Vision

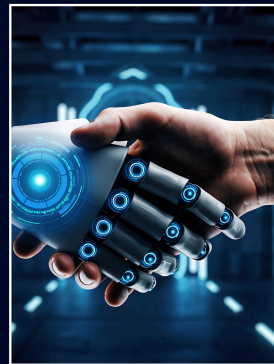
Building an Intersectoral AI Ecosystem for Autism

Dr. Taha RIDENE, PhD

Chair - AI & Innovation Pillar | XR & AI R&D Expert, CIO Professor Skills4Mind (FRANCE / Switzerland)

AI & Innovation Pillar Vision

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY



Building an Intersectoral AI Ecosystem for Autism

Transforming fragmented silos into a unified, data-driven, person-centred continuum of care



Intersectoral Autism Registry

- Big data aggregation across all sectors
- Real-time analytics & dashboards
- Predictive intervention tools
- Interdisciplinary decision trees
- Lean processing & cost efficiency
- Earlier, smarter intervention

Governance & Ethics Framework

- Intersectoral policy alignment
- Vulnerable persons protection
- Data privacy & sovereignty
- AI ethics oversight board
- Regulatory compliance
- Parent & community voice

AI-Powered Care Tools

- Communication support apps
- AI ally for autism families
- Adaptive learning platforms
- Computer vision diagnostics
- Data as strategic asset
- Personalised care pathways

Data · The Blue Gold of the 21st Century · AI Can Revolutionize the Autism Ecosystem

Seeing the Spectrum — Global AI & Computer Vision · AI as Ally for Families · Better Experience · Ethical by Design

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EDUCATION PILLAR

Education Pillar Best Practices

Strategic priorities for reshaping education for more autism inclusion

Mr. Kevin Baskerville

Chair - Education Pillar | General Manager Topland People of Determination, UAE / UK

Education Pillar Vision

The UAE is making great strides to improve Education Provision for people with autism but there is still a long way to go, with significant fundamental changes, adaptations, and developments needed. This conference has highlighted many positive areas of development, some great ideas that are actively happening within the UAE but there is a lot of hard work needed to cement these changes – it won't just happen on its own.

Key Areas Include:

True implementation of the Societal Model of Delivery of Services, with funding structure to support this.

Schools measured on clear goals for inclusion, and not just via attainment routes.

Schools implementing Vocational/ Alternative Curriculum Pathways & these qualifications recognised by employers.

A mandatory program of training into schools and settings around autism – leading to a range of provision within mainstream schools, to meet needs. (Available for ALL)

HEALTH PILLAR

Health Pillar Best Practices

Strategic priorities for advancing autism care across the lifespan

Dr. Biju Hameed FRCPCH PhD

Chair - Health Pillar | Consultant Paediatric Neurologist, SEHA Tawam Hospital

BEST PRACTICE ONE

01

Embed AI-Augmented Early Detection within Primary Care

Age at diagnosis remains the strongest modifiable determinant of long-term outcomes; current pathways fragment between primary care, paediatrics and specialist services.

ACTION POINTS

- Integrate validated digital and AI-assisted screening at routine well-child visits from 12 months.
- Train primary care and family medicine teams in red-flag recognition and structured referral.
- Set maximum wait-time standards from screen-positive to diagnostic assessment.
- Link screening data to a national autism registry to monitor coverage and equity.

EXPECTED IMPACT

Earlier diagnosis, narrower disparities across populations, and timely entry into evidence-based interventions during the period of greatest neuroplasticity.

02

BEST PRACTICE TWO

Operationalise the Autism Hub Model Across the Lifespan

Care fractures at every transition - primary-to-specialist, paediatric-to-adult, and health-to-education. Multidisciplinary Hubs anchored in the DOH framework can close these gaps.

ACTION POINTS

- Co-locate developmental paediatrics, neurology, psychiatry, genetics and allied health within regional Hubs.
- Define structured paediatric-to-adult transition pathways beginning at age 14.
- Embed routine screening for epilepsy, anxiety, sleep, GI and metabolic comorbidities.
- Adopt person-centred care planning with family and self-advocate participation.

EXPECTED IMPACT

Continuity of care across the lifespan, fewer crisis presentations, reduced caregiver burden, and improved quality-of-life outcomes for autistic adults.

03

Build a Standardised Data and Responsible-AI Foundation

Without harmonised data and ethical AI governance, innovation will not translate into equitable outcomes - particularly for under-served populations.

ACTION POINTS

- Adopt common data standards across health, education and social care systems.
- Establish clinical AI governance - validation, transparency and routine bias auditing.
- Invest in workforce capacity for digital health, clinical genomics and informatics.
- Prioritise research and service equity for women, adults and culturally diverse populations.

EXPECTED IMPACT

Trusted, scalable innovation; measurable progress on equity; and alignment with WHO and UAE national digital health priorities.

WORKSPACE PILLAR

WorkSpace Best Practices

Strategic priorities for reimagine WorkSpace for autism Life long Inclusion

Ms. Renate Baur-Richter

Chair - WorkSpace Pillar | Inclusion & Accessibility Strategist (CPABE, CPACC) | Director, Institute for Inclusion & Accessibility

From Early Detection to Life long Inclusion

Together, these three priorities translate the evidence and dialogue of this Conference into a coherent strategy for measurable health outcomes - universal early detection in primary care, integrated lifespan Hubs, and a responsible data and AI foundation.

01 Early Detection in Primary Care

02 Integrated Lifespan Hubs

03 Responsible Data & AI

We invite ministries, providers, payers and partners to endorse these directions and commit to implementation milestones within twelve months.

The UAE needs a localised model for neuroinclusive work, focused on quality of participation rather than job placement.

International frameworks offer principles, not answers, for a labour market shaped by an expatriate majority, strong public-sector aspirations, and sectors still buffered by labour-intensive models. As work shifts towards platforms, projects, portfolios, and AI-supported task design, the question is no longer how to place people. It is how to design their participation.

Three findings

01

The labour market is structurally different

An expatriate majority, a strong public-sector aspiration, and labour-intensive sectors still buffered from automation make the UAE **context unlike the OECD assumptions** behind most international neuroinclusion frameworks. A unique setting !

02

The work itself is changing

Tasks not jobs: Platforms, freelance work, and AI-supported task design are now primary forms of participation, not exceptions. The bottom rung of routine roles is being absorbed into software.

Employment phases become shorter and more project-based. Different outlook in service-centered low- and medium service roles in tourism and hospitality.

03

The goal must shift

From first-job placement to quality of work over time : stability, progression, belonging, wellbeing, and **inclusion of higher support needs**. Long tenure is not the same as a good role. Burn out, mental health related stress conditions (anxiety, depression are common). **Placement is not the same as participation.**

Localising the model requires coordinated shifts across government, employers, and families.

Without alignment, frameworks stay on paper. With alignment, the UAE leads rather than catches up.

Recommended moves, by actor

GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC ENTITIES

Use frameworks as a compass, not a script.

- Adapt Damj to measure progression, quality of work, and inclusion of roles with higher support needs, not only headcount.
- Clarify **how platform work, freelancing, and portfolio careers** can become safe and realistic options for People of Determination.
- Embed neurodiversity into future-of-work and AI strategies, including standards for accessible digital platforms and AI-driven HR tools.

EMPLOYERS, HR, SMES, START-UPS

Design work around strengths, not job descriptions.

- Move from « can this person fit our existing job ? » to « **how do we design tasks and environments around strengths and support needs ?** »
- Treat project-based, part-time, portfolio, and supported work as legitimate forms of participation.
- Invest beyond welcome messaging : work design, manager capability, sensory environment, progression, and belonging over time.
- AI-based tools must be vetted for bias, but can support professional development (see FiA pilots)

FAMILIES, EDUCATORS, SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS

Update what « good work » means in the UAE.

- **Replace the imagined office job** from another era with a realistic picture of platforms, projects, freelance, and supported pathways.
- Build portfolios of evidence : projects, micro-credentials, testimonials, platform profiles. Not only CVs.
- Advocate for quality of life and quality of work across all support levels, including those with higher support needs.
- Plan early for disruptions, hiatus, crisis-caused breaks, and retirement.

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COMMUNITY INTEGRATION PILLAR

Community Integration Best Practices

Strategic priorities for a Community Integration within the autism ecosystem

Ms. Khulood Mohammed

Chair - Community Integration Pillar | Director of Care and Rehabilitation Centers Department Zayed Authority for People of Determination

Community Integration Vision

Best practices

Use frameworks as a compass, not a script.

- Enhance early detection and intervention by expanding early screening programs and family awareness, given its proven impact on improving language and social skills.
- Develop flexible inclusive education systems by training teachers in individualized teaching strategies and adapting curricula to students' needs.
- Expand multidisciplinary rehabilitation and support services (psychological, behavioral, and speech-language) in an integrated and continuous manner to improve quality of life and independence.

Empowering families and individuals through community engagement initiatives

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- Develop flexible inclusive education systems by training teachers in individualized teaching strategies and adapting curricula to students' needs.
- Expand multidisciplinary rehabilitation and support services (psychological, behavioral, and speech-language) in an integrated and continuous manner to improve quality of life and independence.

Integrating family support and maximizing its impact

- **Involve families in therapeutic and educational planning as a key partner in implementing daily plans and enhancing skills.**
- **Provide training and guidance programs for parents to enable them to address behavioral and communication challenges effectively.**
- **Offer psychological and social support services for families to reduce stress and improve their ability to continue providing care.**

Enhancing data integration and organizing student pathways between the Zayed Foundation for People of Determination and the relevant authorities (Health, Education, and Services), ensuring effective information exchange and supporting precise decision-making to determine the most suitable educational path for each student according to scientific and technical standards. This is within the framework of the national Strategy for People of Determination at the state level, being developed by the Ministry of Family and partners, thereby strengthening inclusion efficiency and the quality of its outcomes.

والله ولي التوفيق

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THE UAE MAKES FAMILY A PRIORITY IN 2026



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We are All Aligned



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"Smile" your smile is enough
to make them happy

ABU DHABI UAE

#Together we can make a difference

#معاً يمكننا إحداث الفرق

info@autismsconference-uae.ai

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