



Child Health Improvement Program International

AUTISM IN AFRICA

Newsletter

Volume I, April 2025



CHIP-I 2024 Autism Acceptance festival in Ghana, West Africa

Welcome to Child Health Improvement Program International (CHIP-I)'s newsletter - where hope, inclusion, and impact come together.

At CHIP-I, our work is rooted in one mission: making sure neurodivergent children in Africa get the support and care they deserve. Since 2011, we have been on the ground in Senegal and Ghana, equipping educators, parents, and healthcare professionals with the tools they need to support children with autism and special needs.

Our mission has grown into a movement, partnering with local organizations and institutions across Africa—Senegal, Ghana, Nigeria, Guinea, Cameroon, Uganda, Kenya, and Burundi. CHIP-I was recently selected by Yale University to be part of their Cultural Autism Studies at Yale program where we initiated the 'Autism in Africa' series.

Your support fuels this momentum. Together, we can shine a global spotlight on neurodiversity in Africa—and build a world where every child is seen, supported, and celebrated.



Autism Acceptance Month 2025

'Celebrating Our Differences'

Senegal



CHIP-I once again partnered with 15 special needs centers and schools in Senegal to commemorate Autism Acceptance Month 2025 with a powerful lineup of activities celebrating children with autism and other special needs.

This collaborative initiative pairs centers together, encouraging students to create artwork and handmade items for exhibition and sale, with all proceeds going directly back to the centers. The celebrations featured vibrant music and dance performances, along with insightful panel discussions focused on autism and neurodiversity, and a special TV appearance by Senegal's first speech therapist.

To cap off the celebration, the iconic African Renaissance Monument (Le Monument de la Renaissance Africaine) was illuminated in blue in recognition of Autism Acceptance Month. Thanks to CHIP-I, the monument's directors are offering free entry passes to all children from the participating centers.

Ghana



Autism Acceptance Month 2025 in Ghana featured CHIP-I's third annual 'Festival to Celebrate Diversity and Inclusion', once again organized in partnership with 14 private special needs/inclusion schools under the National Association of Private Special Schools of Ghana.

This joyful event brings together children with special needs, neighboring mainstream schools, teachers, parents and caregivers, and representatives from the Ghana Education Service Special Education Division for a day of creativity, connection and celebration.

The Festival featured an exhibition of arts and crafts, music and dance performances all produced by children with special needs. Occupational therapists and professional musicians, dancers, and artists engaged the children in multi-sensory spaces. The crowd-favorite, as always, was the teacher/caregiver dance-off that never fails to bring smiles and laughter.

It is a fun, heartwarming celebration of inclusion, talent, and community.



Our Updates

Senegal



Nutrition Training:

CHIP-I conducted two training sessions for special needs Centre directors and teachers, focusing on nutrition for neurodiverse children. The training included both the theory on sensory foods and how various food substances can affect behavior, and a practicum session where participants prepared and cooked suitable foods using local, readily available products.



Parent Coaching

CHIP-I is offering individual and personalized coaching sessions for parents and caregivers of children with autism and other special needs in a rural area outside the capital city, Dakar. These sessions focus on addressing individual challenges and providing strategies for effective behavioral management. The sessions are to continue through the year.

Ghana



Behavior Management Training and Coaching

This year marks CHIP-I's third behavior management training course. This impactful, eight-month comprehensive course features three modules designed to train teachers in modifying challenging ASD behaviors and creating inclusive classrooms. At least two teachers were selected from participating schools so that the teams could in turn lead training in their respective schools. Topics include:

- Creative a positive inclusive culture
- Managing maladaptive behaviors
- Developing a Child Study
- UDL Lesson Plan

The course also includes one-on-one coaching sessions for teachers regarding a specific student, and culminates in a final presentation by each participant.





Cultural Autism Studies at Yale

Autism in Africa Series

Cultural Autism Studies at Yale

With special guest

**AUTISM IN AFRICA WITH
CHIP INTERNATIONAL**

Autism Services and Legislation
Across African Countries

THURSDAY, APRIL 10, 2025

12-1 P.M. EDT | 9-10 A.M. PDT
5-6 P.M. BST | 4-5 P.M. GMT

Faby Diallo, M.Ed.
Founder & Director,
Autism Bird

CTCDD
Cultural Autism Studies at Yale
CASY
Sparks

CHIP International is excited to contribute to Yale's Cultural Autism Studies project, advancing global understanding of autism.

The Cultural Autism Studies at Yale (CASY) project is grounded in the principle of “Nothing about us without us”: Empowering autistic individuals to define their own culture and advocate for what works best within it. What started as a social online meetup has grown into a comprehensive curriculum of workshops covering autism and autistic culture globally.

CHIP International's role is to shine a spotlight on autism and special needs in Africa - the hopes, the dreams, the challenges, the successes, and the opportunities for change and immense progress. It is our belief and experience that broadening perspectives is key to creating practical, adaptable solutions that work across diverse contexts.



<https://culturalautismstudiesatyale.space>



Center Profile

New Horizon Special School



New Horizon Special School (NHSS) is the first private school in Ghana dedicated to supporting individuals with intellectual disabilities and autism.

The school was founded by the late Mrs. Salome Francois in 1972, born out of her passion and commitment to find solutions for her developmentally disabled daughter Helen. This was at a time when there was even greater stigma than exists now, and virtually no knowledge and resources to address the challenges of intellectual disabilities in Ghana.

A pioneer in the field, NHSS provides special education for children aged 5 to 18, as well as vocational training employment for students over 18. Its mission is to develop each student's potential to the fullest so that they can lead a productive and fulfilling life. NHSS is a non-profit organization registered with the Ministry of Education.

News articles

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10473371/>

There are significant challenges in diagnosing and treating autism in Africa, including limited access to resources and trained professionals, as well as differences in cultural beliefs and attitudes towards autism. Social and cultural factors, such as stigma, discrimination and a lack of awareness, can have a significant impact on families and caregivers of individuals with autism in Africa.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/380941026_neurodiversity_in_Africa

In Africa, neurodiversity-focused research is lacking, and many communities do not know anything about it. This should not be so. Neurodivergent people need a safe space on this continent; they do not need to be judged or seen as stupid people for thinking differently. To take away a neurodivergent condition is to take away the person.



Get in Touch

Children with autism and developmental disabilities in Africa, like everywhere else, deserve the opportunity to live up to their potential. Your contribution helps to make this possible. Come join us in our mission!

[DONATE](#)



'Toi Aussi...': You should be concerned too



CHIP-I Inclusive Education training with Kansas University SWIFT Education Center at the University of Cape Coast School of Medical Sciences, Ghana

[DONATE](#)

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