



Caspian Event Organisers

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Social Project: Congress for people with special needs “Fərqli Fərdlər”

Organisers: Caspian Event Organisers - the organiser of international exhibitions and conferences in Azerbaijan and Edutainment.az – educational platform.



The idea of the project belongs to Suzanna Burezgi, the Head of Marketing and PR Department of Caspian Event Organisers, who is also the founder of the Congress. Suzanna Burezgi has 18 years of experience in the exhibition industry and is the mother of a child with autism. The “Fərqli Fərdlər” Congress is part of the CSR program of the Caspian Event Organisers.



### Quick background, nature and general objectives of the initiative

For the first time “Fərqli Fərdlər” was organized in 2019 in the capital of Azerbaijan, Baku. The public initiative was supported by many state and public structures and representatives of the private sector. The first Congress included the following topics: Autism Spectrum Disorders, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD and ADHD), Tourette's Syndrome and Down



Syndrome. A separate panel was devoted to the issue of parental burnout and how to overcome it. The theme of the second Congress was autism. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Congress is dedicated to both children and adults with special needs. Particular attention will be paid to the problem of socio-psychological adaptation of those



individuals who have been working under extreme conditions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, including military operations. The producer of the “Fərqli Fərdlər” Congress Program is the Head of Project for support of people with Aspergers’s syndrome and autism, the person with autism, Antonina Steynberg (Russia).



### Aims of the Congress:

- to draw the maximum attention of society to the development and upbringing of children with special needs;
- to create a dialogue between parents, specialists and educators;
- to build and expand an inclusive society;
- Early diagnosis. In addition to humanistic values, inclusive education and early diagnosis have significant economic benefits. Studies in the USA



have shown that every dollar invested in the education and rehabilitation of a child under three years old is equal to seven dollars invested in a child at age 7, and then the figure triples.



The distinctive feature of the Congress is that well-known international and Azerbaijani practicing specialists, parents of children with ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorders) and Down's Syndrome take part in it at the same time. During the Congress, volunteers receive certain knowledge, invaluable experiences, and skills that they will be able to use in other international events.

### Results of the "Ferqli Ferdler" Congress:



1. The organizers of the Congress took the initiative to implement an accessible environment program for special people at the Heydar Aliyev International Airport in Baku. The airport management supported and implemented this program. Baku Airport is one of the best airports in the world, with numerous international certificates. Now there is also a service for people with autism, dementia, Alzheimer's disease. The flights have become more comfortable and less hectic for passengers with special needs. Special-designed

yellow lanyards with a sunflower which is an international symbol of hidden disability began to be used.

The project was also presented at the 2nd Congress for Children with Special needs "Ferqli Ferdler 2020".



2. More than 300 Congress participants received free consultations from international experts, saw the experience of people who care for people with special needs, and heard success stories told by people with special needs themselves.



3. The Congress gave an opportunity to perform for many children's art groups, consisting only of people with special needs, also Congress helped to stage a performance under the direction and script of a girl with autism.



4. Within the framework of "Ferqli Ferdler" a conference on the topic ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) "Applied Behavior Analysis" was held. ABA therapy is an intensive educational program that builds on behavioral technologies and teaching methods to study the influence of environmental factors on behavior, thereby allowing it to be corrected.

5. At the initiative of the organising committee, Tony Attwood's book "The Complete Guide to Asperger's Syndrome" was translated into Russian. The entire team working on the project for the translation and publication of the book are people with special needs. So, people with Asperger's syndrome Antonina Steinberg and Alexey Voskov were engaged in translation.





6. The Congress helped to identify several problems, such as the opening of an autism center, a center of psychological assistance for parents and people who take care of people with special needs.

To create a favorable environment for people with special needs at the Congress the organisers provided the following:

- Rest zone for the people with special needs
- Children's area
- Special identification elements
- Special separate lines for people with special needs (during registration, coffee break and lunch)
- Accompanying people for people with special needs
- Special navigation
- Constant food for people with special needs throughout the Congress
- Sign language translation

**Next steps:**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Congress for people with special needs "Ferqli Ferdler" will be held in Baku on 17-18 April. The international Congress will be held online due to COVID-19.

Discussions will be attended by leading local and foreign experts and will cover the

following five areas:

- The issues of diagnosing (the importance of unique tests for diagnosis for each country, differentiation of diagnosis for children and adults, diagnosis of autism, danger of over-diagnosis, eating disorders, bipolar disorders, kleptomania, ADHD, dyslexia)
- How to choose the right specialist for diagnostics, maintenance, and correction?
- Life of children and adults with special needs in the isolation period, etc.
- Post-school future of children with special needs; their further life at universities and at work.
- Special session - posttraumatic syndrome (PTSD). Psychological assistance to the families of the fallen soldiers and those soldiers who have recently returned from the battlefield. Other cases of PTSD.

Various seminars, workshops and other events will be held in parallel to the Congress.

**Notes:**

The people who work on the project are volunteers. All sponsor's grants go to the technical support of the Congress, tickets, and accommodation for international specialists, provide all the necessary for people with special needs. The organisers are ready for any kind of cooperation and ready to share their experience with colleagues.

Website: <https://ferqliferdler.az/en-main/>

Youtube:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJoZri7Vi5NreAk1Qhq1aiA/videos>

FB: <https://www.facebook.com/ferqliferdlercongress>

