

# SENSES CULTURAL

## ANNUAL

## REPORT

## 2019

*Building a peaceful  
& healthy world  
by fostering  
understanding  
about autism and  
neurodevelopmental  
disorders.*

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SENSES CULTURAL  
PROMOTES HOLISTIC  
PROGRAMS TO RAISE  
AWARENESS ABOUT  
AUTISM AND  
NEURODEVELOPMENTAL  
DISORDERS THROUGH  
CUTTING EDGE SCIENCE,  
RESEARCH AND THE ARTS.



What an eventful and remarkable year! We held a fundraising event filled with fun and laughter, where we received the support of our community to expand our research programs on autism and its treatment in the Middle East. The event helped launch our International Autism Conference

held in Tehran, Iran. The conference marked our journey to link Sacramento to Tehran, and soon other cities across the Middle East, to promote the science and treatment of autism. This is work that matters because we aim to support the region's refugee, migrant and under-served communities. We have a long way to go, but this year was a fresh start to achieving our higher goals. We could not have achieved these goals without your help. Thank you for your support, and I look forward to more years of working together.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tata Monfared', written in a fluid, cursive style.

Tata Monfared  
Founder and President,  
**SENSES CULTURAL**

# Key Milestones in 2019

## Education

- Developed concept paper to launch pre-school curriculum programs for autistic children in Iran.
- Held scientific and community workshop in California on autism with a Middle East focus.

## Health

- Became founding sponsor of the first international stem cell conference on autism and neurodevelopmental disorders, organized by the UC Davis Mind Institute.
- Held talks with World Health Organization (WHO) representatives in Iran to encourage joint supervision of projects.

# Mission

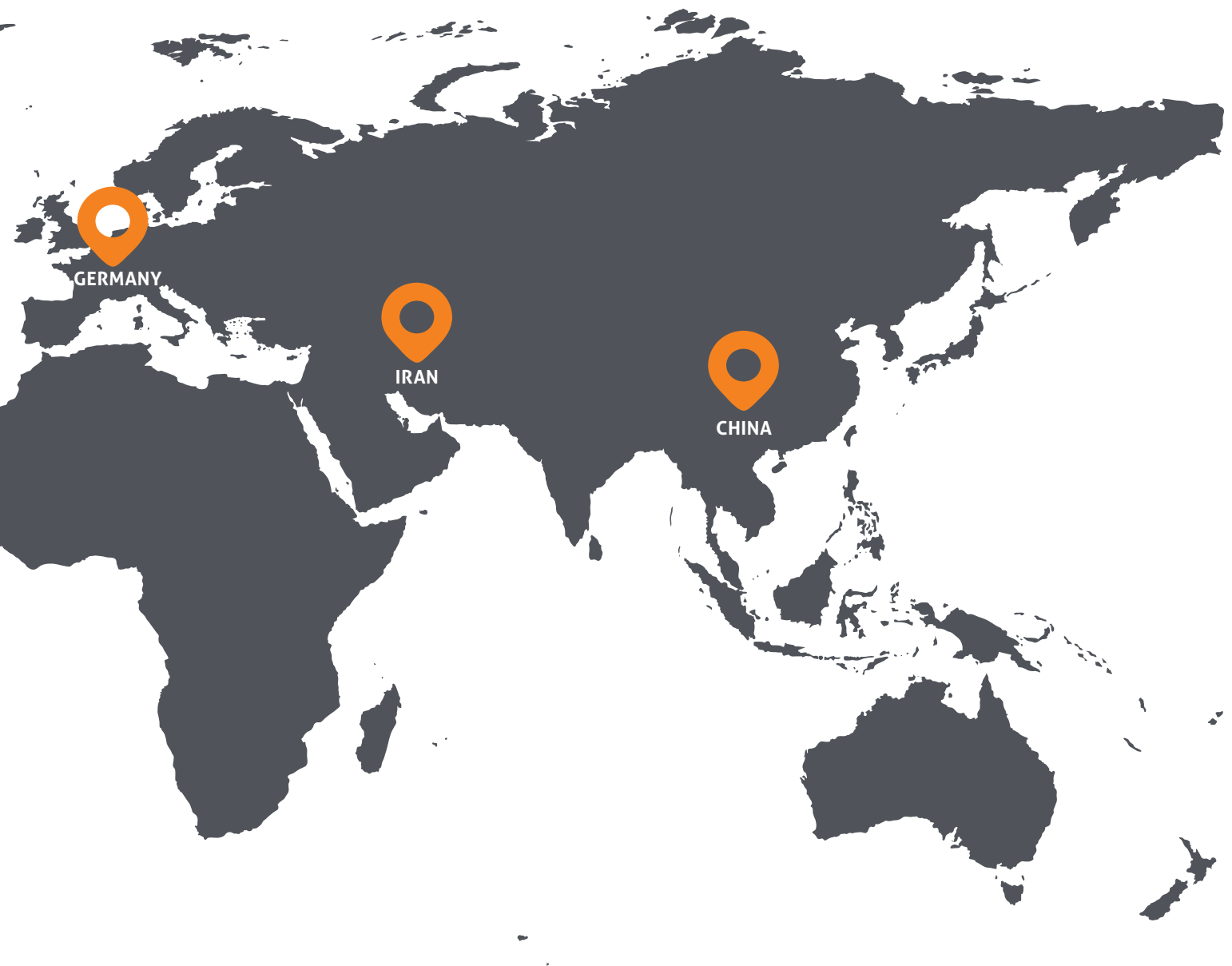
Established in 2012, **SENSES CULTURAL** is a non-profit organization based in Sacramento, California, dedicated to creating a **peaceful and healthy** world by fostering understanding about **autism and neurodevelopment disorders**. We cultivate relations with a national and international network of artists, scholars and cultural advocates who work in the field, and organize events for health experts and artists beyond their own geographic

and social borders. **Senses Cultural** offers partnership opportunities to interested organizations to collaborate, sponsor, host and promote projects that fulfill our common goals of serving communities dealing with autism and neurodevelopmental disorders. We encourage projects in which we can partner with others to build cross-cultural understanding and tolerance, and celebrate the diversity of the autistic community.



# Where we work

Together with  
communities,  
scientists, researchers,  
social workers, teachers  
and psychologists,  
**SENSES CULTURAL**  
is slowly but surely  
making a global impact.





# Our stories, Our impact





## SPOTLIGHT ON EDUCATION

LAUNCHing The INTERNATIONAL  
STEM CELL and Gene Therapy for  
neurodevelopmental disorders  
CONFERENCE AT UC Davis MIND  
Institute

In January 2019, **SENSES CULTURAL** held a preliminary planning meeting with health leaders at the UC Davis MIND Institute to discuss collaborative measures to hold an international stem cell research conference. The conference will advance stem cell research in the fields of autism and neurodevelopmental disorders. Due to the pandemic, the conference which was

scheduled to take place in September 2020 was postponed to 2021. But Senses Cultural has secured funding to sponsor the participation of a top specialist in mitochondria and cell fate reprogramming at the Max Delbrück Center for Molecular Medicine (MDC) in Berlin, Germany. and the differences between collectivist (Middle Eastern) and individualistic (American) cultural approaches to treating trauma in autistic communities.

## Autism with a Middle Eastern Focus

Wed, May 8, 2019, 5:00pm-8:00pm  
Sacramento Zoroastrian Association  
10528 Armstrong Ave, Mather, CA 95655  
Free and open to the public!



## SPOTLIGHT ON AUTISM BEYOND BORDERS

### SENSES CULTURAL HOLDS WORKSHOP ON AUTISM WITH A MIDDLE EASTERN FOCUS

**SENSES CULTURAL** Family and Patient Advocacy Advisor Robert Miller moderated a workshop on Autism with a Middle Eastern Focus this year. Mr. Miller tied his experience with the organization to his travels to the Middle East on behalf of **SENSES CULTURAL**, to discuss our work filling an important gap to make sure that families from a Middle Eastern background, whether they live in the region or in the US, have access to all the knowledge and services available to serve children with special needs including autism and other neurodevelopmental disorders. The workshop brought

together four prominent speakers from UC Davis and The Mind Institute, and the Sacramento health community, to offer evidence-based practice and research in the area. Themes covered in the workshop included migration-related trauma for autistic children, disability rights advocacy in California for migrant communities, Middle Eastern cultural barriers to treating autism, and the causes of autism.

**SENSES CULTURAL** is the recipient of the U.S. Treasury Department's sanctions exemptions license to carry out humanitarian projects in sanctioned countries such as the Islamic Republic of Iran. Building on years of experience promoting the science, research and treatment of autism in Iran, and working collaboratively with Iranian experts in the field to develop culturally nuanced treatments, **SENSES CULTURAL** reached out to head of the Health and Treatment Commission of the Islamic Consultative Assembly and the Secretary General

**MIDDLE- EASTERN INFORMED CERTIFICATION PROGRAM**



Senses Cultural is pleased to offer a wide range of clinical, behavioral, and cultural training programs by experts from recognized academic and healthcare institutions across many fields of specialty. Our training programs are customized to fit the needs of agencies, non-profits, organizational staff, schools/teachers, parents, and healthcare professionals.

- Middle- Eastern Informed Certification Program
- Neurodevelopmental Disorders Certification Program
- Parenting Skills Training Program
- School based Middle Eastern Informed Certification Program
- Refugee focused Training Programs

of the Majma Kheireen Salamat Keshvar (The Society of Charities for Country Health) in Iran to organize a collaborative project to develop a nationwide preschool program and curriculum for children with autism in Iran.

## SPOTLIGHT ON RESEARCH

### SPONSORING RESEARCH TO ADVANCE THE SCIENCE OF AUTISM AND NEURODEVELOPMENTAL DISORDERS

**SENSES CULTURAL** and the UC Davis Mind Institute are exploring a research partnership with the Max Delbrück Center for Molecular Medicine (MDC) in Berlin, Germany, to advance the science of autism and neurodevelopmental disorders. In 2019, **SENSES CULTURAL** launched a fundraising campaign for this research project, including at Google, which matches funds given in memory of **SENSES CULTURAL** Advisory Board Member Dr. Marzieh Forghani who sadly passed away this year, after devoting her life to helping children and migrant communities dealing with autism in California.



Announcing New Date for Our Next Major Conference

**STEM CELL AND GENE THERAPY FOR NEURODEVELOPMENTAL DISORDERS CONFERENCE**

September 24-25, 2021  
 UC Davis University, The Mind Institute





photo credit: Sarah Silbiger/Getty Images

## SPOTLIGHT ON ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCACY AND AUTISM

### SENSES CULTURAL MISSION TO SUPPORT CLIMATE STRIKERS

The coordinated action of cers to hold protests across some 150 countries has once more shed light on how important it is to preserve and protect our environment. Cutting edge research by **SENSES CULTURAL** demonstrates that environmental health directly impacts autism and other neurological disorders.

**SENSES CULTURAL** has promoted the work done by Greta Thunberg as an autistic activist fighting Climate Change. Our workshops brought together world medical experts, and shed light on the latest research in the field of autism and environmental pollution. Experts agreed that environmental pollution is a known cause of autism and other neurological disorders.

**SENSES CULTURAL** will continue its mission of raising awareness about the impact of the environment on autism. We proudly support the climate strikers and its leader Greta Thunberg who courageously turned the gift of being autistic into building a worldwide movement against environmental degradation.

## CELEBRATING WORLD AUTISM DAY AND PROMOTING ART FOR AUTISM

**SENSES CULTURAL** celebrates World Autism Day in April, with a series of luncheons, community workshops, and fund-raising programs. This year, the organization organized community

lunches with Middle Eastern themes, and promoted art that lies on the intersections of culture and autism in different communities.



# Annual Financials

## SENSES CULTURAL

receives the bulk of its funds from The Senses Cultural Foundation.

In 2019, major donors to the organization included Alex Burk and Javid Javidan Nejad.



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# CONTACT

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