

## **Augmentative Communication World Network Newsletter**

Issue #1, 2012

Editor: Dorothy Fraser

Associate: Anne Warrick

[www.centralcoastchildrensfoundation.org](http://www.centralcoastchildrensfoundation.org)



*Welcome to our first newsletter for 2012. In this edition we have articles from Romania, South Africa, Ghana, China, India, Mexico and the USA. We hope you enjoy the news and we look forward to contributions from many of you and from more countries in 2012.*

### ***Onward and Upward for AAC in Romania***

*by Dorothy Fraser, Editor*

*As Senior Representative to Eastern and Central Europe for the Central Coast Children's Foundation, I begin this issue by sharing news from Romania. I live in Scotland, but I have a Romanian residency permit and an apartment in Sibiu, Romania, where I have volunteered for many years.*

*This new year has witnessed accelerated progress in the introduction of AAC in schools and hospitals in Romania. The following report updates news about my work in special education previously reported in this newsletter (see Augmentative Communication World News, 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter, 2011).*

### **2012 News from Bucharest: Creating an AAC Lending Library and forming an Augmentative Communication Group**

This is the most recent development in our international project for special education in Bucharest, the *tenth* largest city in the European Union. Over the past few years the focus of the Bucharest project was on implementing AAC in one school, Special School Number 6, by

working directly with staff and pupils. Due to the increased interest in AAC and AT within the special education sector and the many successes of students in Special School 6 and the many successful uses of low tech Assistive Technology materials there we now have requests to include more schools in the project. Most notably, speech therapists are no longer “waiting for speech to develop”, but are now providing suitable AAC for younger children.

I work in partnership with Adrian Cozma, Inspector for Special Education in Bucharest, who supports implementation of AAC for special needs in the city. He selected four more special schools to join with Special School 6, and we have formed an Augmentative Communication Group. We are also setting up a lending library of AAC/AT material – a first for Romania.

Our Augmentative Communication Group now has two teachers or speech therapists from each of the five participating schools. I have met with them in February and March, and will meet with them in May and June to support their activities.

### February 2012

At our first meeting we agreed on a plan of action and established the overall aims and objectives of the project “AAC and AT for communication enhancement of children with special needs.”

As part of a donation from Central Coast Children’s Foundation (CCCF), the four schools joining the project received licences to install the Romanian version of Widgit Symbol Software programs, *Communicate in Print* and *Symwriter*. These programs have already proven their worth at Special School 6.

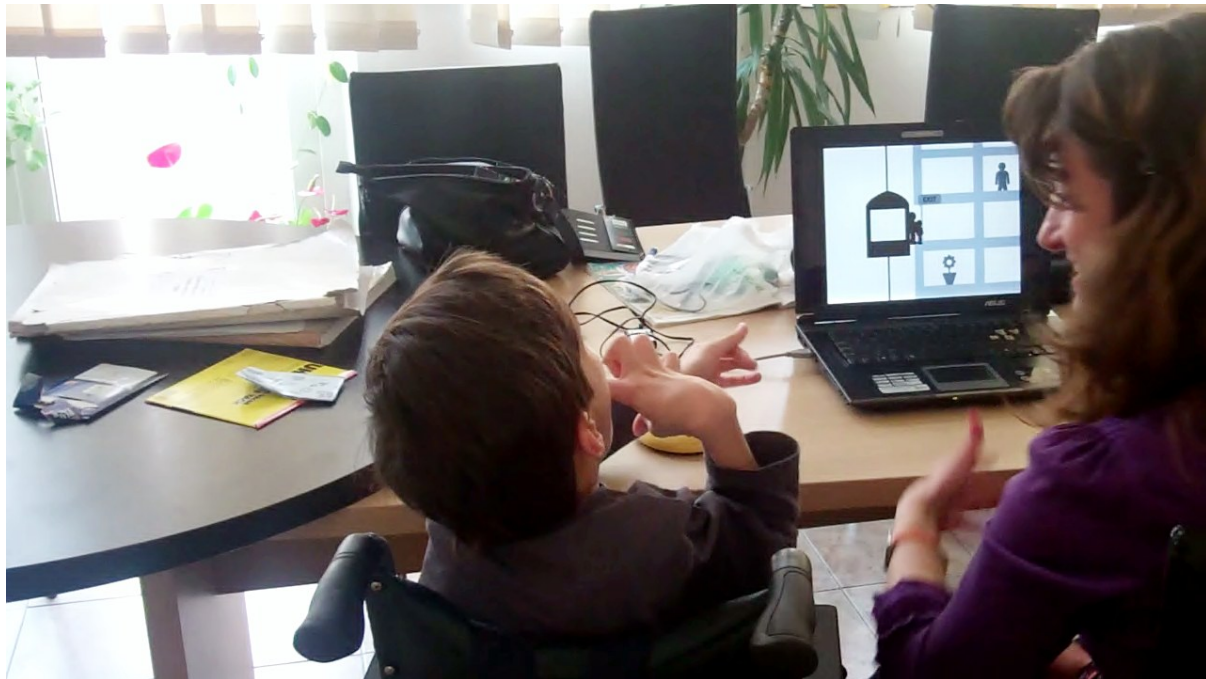
The five schools also received CDs with information from Tina Detheridge, Managing Director, Widgit Symbol Software Company UK, with topics including symbols for learning, special education and inclusion in mainstream, which is now translated into Romanian.

We have discussed which AAC/AT tools and resources would be most relevant for the needs of each school and its pupils in preparation for implementing the project within the schools and for starting a lending library for staff and families.

We have also set up a group email address to help share information within Bucharest. I can also contact others when I’m at home in Scotland or in Sibiu, the other Romanian city where I work with hospital schools universities and a medical school. For example, one of the therapists sent me an email with a question about where to download material. I replied in English and she sent it to the group with an explanation in Romanian.

Before our second meeting, I emailed files to the group. I included practical information about AAC evaluation and intervention strategies in English. Some materials were translated into

Romanian so staff in each of the schools could share them. AAC professionals in the UK and USA gave us permission to translate this content.



Pupil with cerebral palsy enjoying computer games for the first time

### March 2012

At our March meeting we decided that, because of the vast size of Bucharest and the time it takes to travel across the city, each school needs to have a lending library. This will make it easy for staff and families to have access to materials and equipment when they need them.

We discussed some of the problems that all the groups encounter when working with pupils who have complex communication needs. The group decided to focus on one theme for the next three months. The selected topic is: "Parents' concerns regarding the future for their children with CCN when they (the parents) are no longer there to look after them "

Based on the theme and other needs of the group, I prepared CDs. Included are general information about AAC and files specifically related to our topic. These materials will help staff, parents and children work together to produce inexpensive, very effective, low tech AAC materials so children can communicate, express their feelings and much more. Our goal is to encourage interactive communication and increase each child's level of independence.

Before the May meeting, staff in each school will prepare case studies on two children for an open discussion with our Augmentative Communication Group. Romanian schools and many

families have computers or laptops and internet access. Thus, I had provided some switches to Special School 6 in 2011.

For the March group meeting, I brought some of the switches and interfaces that Attainment Company and the CCCF had donated to share. We watched children who because of their physical disabilities had not been able to access computers show us they understand and have many skills. We also saw how accurate they were with their timing, making choices/decisions, participating in curricular activities and having fun!

We are all looking forward to seeing more changes as we unlock these children's potential.



Pupil with athetoid cerebral palsy using his chin for switch control

*Support for this project is much appreciated. Thanks to*

- *The Inspectorate for Special Education, Bucharest*
- *Central Coast Children's Foundation Inc., USA*
- *The Attainment Company, USA*
- *Widgit UK symbol software company and their Romanian partner company, Quartz Matrix*

\*\*\*\*\*

## ***Applying International AAC expertise at the Local Level: Mexico Leads the Way***

By Justin Streight, Central Coast Children's Foundation

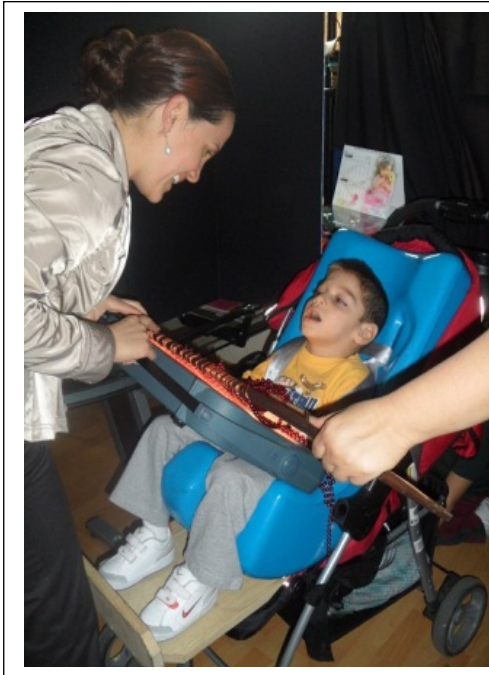
*[This is a joint venture of CATIC, Centro de Apoyo Tecnológico para la Comunicación y el Aprendizaje (Centre for Applied Technology, for Communication and Learning ), Mexico City and ACI, Augmentative Communication, Inc., Monterey, California.]*

Gaby Berlanga , Co-Director of CATIC and Sarah Blackstone, President of ACI, have joined together to create a brand new way to deliver world class AAC services to people in areas of the world where AAC is still at an emerging stage. Gaby and Sarah first met in 2004 at the ISAAC Biennial Conference in Brazil, after Gaby had received the 2004-2005 Bridge School Teacher-in-Residence award. Following her residency, ACI and the Central Coast Children's Foundation (CCCCF) provided on-going support to Gaby and her colleague Marcela Manzur as they began to set up CATIC. Seven years later, CATIC is a thriving AAC clinic and consulting agency with eighteen employees, and still is the only AAC service in Mexico City, with a population of 18 million people.

Through the use of some of the latest available technologies and with the aid of sophisticated videoconferencing tools, staff from CATIC and experts from around the world are now able to work together to support children in Mexico who can benefit from AAC. These international teams view video recordings of clients in their home and school environments, confer with each other from their home offices, develop action plans for each individual, confer with families and schools, formulate goals and assess progress on an on-going basis.

The system works like this: Initially, Gaby meets with parents to explain the project and gets written permission to video-record children with AAC needs at home and /or in school during specific everyday activities. Gaby watches the videos and sends them to Sarah Blackstone in California, who in turn watches the videos and formulates ideas and questions. Sarah and CATIC therapists then meet in a video conference to discuss the child. They often use Cisco System's WEBEX videoconferencing system. During this discussion they develop an action plan and decide on baseline measures. In a subsequent meeting, they meet with the family using videoconferencing to discuss and finalize the initial action plan, which is available in Spanish and English.

Data is always collected at baseline and then periodically throughout the treatment period. Changes are noted over time and plans modified, as needed. Whenever necessary, Sarah recommends and engages an additional expert (*e.g.*, an occupational therapist, a vision specialist, *etc.* from the USA or another country) to obtain their professional input.



Gaby with child with visual impairment and his mom



Child playing game in school with peers using signs

The project began in June 2011. Currently, five children and families are participating, ages 4 years to 20 years old. Positive outcomes include: (1) children are showing progress on specific achievement goals; (2) participating families are enthusiastic and committed to the project; (3) families report an increased understanding of therapeutic objectives and know how to support their children better; and (4) professional growth is clearly evident among CATIC staff, who report they have improved intervention skills. The overall aim of the project is to increase clients' capacities for communication at school, at home and in their communities.

Gaby and Sarah have, over many years, developed a strong *simpatico* connection, and this (plus their dedication and talent) is a major factor contributing to the project's early success.

In countries with few or no experts in these fields, teleconferencing technology can help bypass obstacles to collaboration. The ability of CATIC staff and the consultants to see clients in their natural settings creates unique opportunities for more comprehensive diagnoses.

*[Setting up a program like this can be difficult and would not be possible without support.*

CATIC ([www.caticmexico.org](http://www.caticmexico.org)) and ACI ([www.augcominc.com](http://www.augcominc.com)) are fortunate to have three valuable collaborators:

- The Bridge School ([www.bridgeschool.org](http://www.bridgeschool.org)), which provides technical support and enlists additional sources of help.



- Cisco Systems, who donated Flip video cameras for use in school and home environments and provides their advanced WEBEX web conferencing system to all participants.
- The Central Coast Children's Foundation, Inc., which provides a variety of public information services to CATIC and helped form the original concept for the project ([www.centralcoastchildrensfoundation.org](http://www.centralcoastchildrensfoundation.org)).

\*\*\*\*\*

## ***Another Giant Step for AAC in Ghana***

By Justin Streight, Central Coast Children's Foundation

*Catherine Crowley, Senior Lecturer in Speech and Language Pathology (SLP) at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, is Director of the Ghana Project. Also traveling to Ghana in January were Miriam Baigorri, Clinical Director, Pamela Andres, Clinical Supervisor and 18 SLP Masters students. Each year for the past 5 years, the Teachers College group have gone to Ghana to provide free services for children and adults with communication disorders and to provide professional development for their Ghanaian colleagues. When in Ghana, the group works with teachers of students with intellectual disabilities in Nkawkaw and Effiduasi. They also work with a cleft palate team of doctors and nurses at Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital and Korla Ben Hospital. In January, 2012, they brought along a videographer. Some of the major events during the 2 week visit included:*

- An AAC retreat (residential course ) for Ghanaian special education teachers from 23 special needs schools
- Hospital visits
- Co-teaching with a Ghanaian teacher in a special education Unit School in Effiduasi.
- A visit to a local market to observe the successful use of AAC market cards, introduced by the students on a previous visit.
- A graduate student blog detailing experiences on the trip.

### **The AAC retreat**

Clement Ntim from Nkawkaw and Belinda Bukari from Effiduasi are the principals of two of Ghana's Unit schools. They organised a Study Day on the uses of AAC in the classroom, which was attended by 54 Ghanaian special education teachers from 23 special needs schools and the students and faculty from Teachers College.

Ntim began the day, focusing on teaching about the uses and purposes of Communication Passports. Participants noted his obvious enthusiasm when he talked about the positive effects of personal communication passports on people's lives. Before the course, every teacher was asked to choose one person who would benefit from having their own communication passport. Ghanaian teachers and the graduate students from Teachers College worked together to develop these model passports. The teacher pictured below is sharing the

Communication Passport she made. You can view the video at <http://www.tc.columbia.edu/bbs/speech-language/detail.asp?Id=Ghana+Program&Info=Ghana+2012>



### *AAC Professional Development Retreat at Nkawkaw, Ghana January 7, 2012*

The teachers who attended were full of enthusiasm and eager to apply their new knowledge. They each received a certificate of accomplishment and a bag of educational resources to take back to their own schools. [For more information about communication passports, go to [www.communicationpassports.org.uk](http://www.communicationpassports.org.uk)]

During the retreat Belinda Bukari also introduced *Name Tags* and *AAC Market Cards*. Everyone worked together and learned how to make these materials for their students.

### Special Education Unit School in Effiduasi.

The Teachers College students and faculty also went to Belinda Bukari's school in Effiduasi. They co-taught with Bukari and accompanied her and her students to the market to shop. As shown in the picture below, Bukari and her students know how to put market cards to good use.





For more information about the AAC market cards:  
[http://www.doiap.org/resources/pdf/ACWNNEWSFEB\\_10\\_03\\_04\\_pdf](http://www.doiap.org/resources/pdf/ACWNNEWSFEB_10_03_04_pdf)

### A Communication Book

Another highlight for the students was when the students met a man who had lost the ability to speak as the result of a stroke two years ago. Although he could understand and use gestures, he still experienced communication as very difficult. The man and his brother greatly appreciated a personalised communication booklet the students made. It had ways to talk about football, his favourite food and other personal interests. Initially the students were not sure if a booklet would be enough to satisfy the man and his family. They were very pleased, however, to see the two brothers smiling and enjoying the content together.

For more information about the Teachers College project in Ghana, go to:

<http://www.tc.edu/academic/BBS/speech-language/detail.asp?Id=Ghana+Program&Info=Ghana+2012>

### Congratulations to Catherine Crawley and Miriam Baigorri

As shown below, Cate and Miriam received the Humanitarian Award from the National Council of Ghanaian Association in recognition of their work in Ghana on behalf of people with communication challenges.



\*\*\*\*\*

## **A Celebration of Achievements**

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Regional African AAC Conference**

by Kerstin Tonsing, Centre for AAC, University of Pretoria, SA

From 1-4 August 2011, the Centre for AAC (University of Pretoria, South Africa) hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regional African AAC Conference in Boksburg, South Africa. Held nine years after the first conference of this kind, it presented an opportunity for persons using AAC, their family members, service providers and researchers in AAC to share knowledge and experiences, and also to look back and celebrate the achievements in the field. The conference commenced with a day-long research seminar, followed by the 3-day main conference. After each morning's plenary, the delegates were able to select presentations from three concurrent strands – education, health and empowerment. Skillshops aimed at practical skills and resource

production were presented during the last session of the day in each strand.

After the opening address by Bishop Tutu, Prof Erna Alant, ISAAC president and former director of the Centre for AAC, set the scene for an interactive and inspirational three days. Parents, people using AAC, researchers, educators and therapists all shared the stage, providing a rich exchange and different perspectives. Presenters and delegates came from South Africa, the USA, Sweden, Scotland, Israel and Ghana [editor's note: Belinda Bukari represented Ghana and presented at the conference, see above article on Ghana]. A further highlight was the fact that seven South Africans using AAC delivered presentations – compared to one at the previous conference -a sign of the growth that has taken place in the AAC field in South Africa.

Being or supporting a person with a disability in a country where resources are often severely limited is not easy. As the saying goes – Africa is not for sissies (*i.e.*, the faint hearted)! However, all the conference delegates left inspired and motivated to continue improving the lives of those who communicate with AAC or are in need of it. Many inspirational presentations and personal exchanges during tea or lunch proved once again that challenges, on close inspection, are really opportunities. Opportunities for growth, change, innovation and for making a true positive difference, however small this may be perceived to be.



Delegates at the cocktail event



Having an AAC supported chat





Graham Clarke, one of the plenary speakers



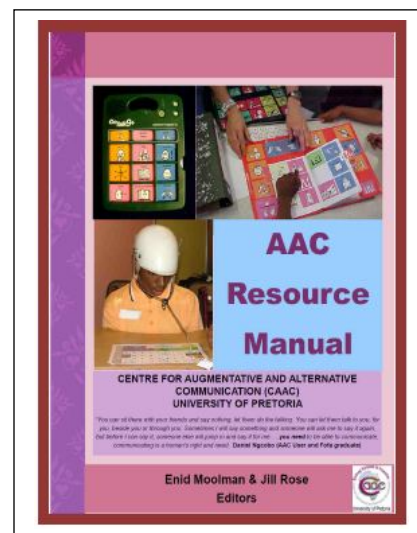
Delegates in the venue

One delegate summarised it like this: *"The AAC conference and presenters succeeded to open eyes, bring about mind shifts, unlock ideas - bridging gaps, unchaining possibilities ... Wow, amazing."*

## Launching the AAC Resource Manual

The AAC Resource Manual was launched at the Second African Regional AAC conference. With contributions by all the staff members of the Centre for AAC along with local experts, including AAC users, the 14 chapters of the manual provide a framework for exploring practical AAC interventions which are intended to fill the gap between theory and practice gap.

The resource manual, published in book and CD format, is the beginning of a journey and it is envisaged that it will become a "living document". New chapters or sections of chapters will be added annually. The manual is a major step forward in ensuring that the message that "all can communicate" becomes a reality.



For much more information about the conference go to

<http://web.up.ac.za/sitefiles/file/46/9742/October%202011%20Interface%20Newsletter.pdf>

<http://web.up.ac.za/sitefiles/file/46/9742/October%202011%20Interface%20Newsletter.pdf>

\*\*\*\*\*

## ***New Scottish Initiative Takes Talking Mats To China***

*A fascinating report from Joan Murphy and Sally Boa on their work in China. One of many countries around the world that benefit from their expertise.*

Talking Mats<sup>™</sup> is a unique Scottish initiative, developed by a team of Speech and Language Therapists in Forth Valley. It is an evidence-based and well-respected communication framework that empowers people to express their views. Talking Mats<sup>™</sup> resources are now used throughout the world. The Talking Mats<sup>™</sup> team regularly undertakes trainings in the UK, Europe, Australia, North America, Asia and South Africa.

In April 2010, Joan Murphy and Sally Boa spent 2 weeks at Shenjing Rehabilitation Hospital, Shenyang, China. The Scottish Churches China Group asked them to provide training for staff on communication and the use of Talking Mats<sup>™</sup>. During their visit, they observed that many patients did not participate actively in their own treatment and that their views were never



sought. As a result, their workshops focused on goal setting and challenging staff to communicate more openly and more often with their patients.

A year later (September 2011), the professor in charge of the rehab hospital, Prof. Zhang, and a senior doctor, Dr. Ba Fang, visited Scotland. They observed both in-patient and community rehabilitation services at National Health Services (NHS) Forth Valley. They also met with the Talking Mats<sup>™</sup> team at the

University of Stirling. At the end of their visit, they asked Joan and Sally to visit Shenyang again to develop further their partnership.

The Scottish group returned to Shenyang in November 2011 and worked with a small group to improve the understanding and practical application of Talking Mats<sup>™</sup>, particularly for patients who had experienced a stroke or traumatic brain injury. They focused on the *Talking Mats Goal Setting Resource* which reflects the World Health Organisation International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health.

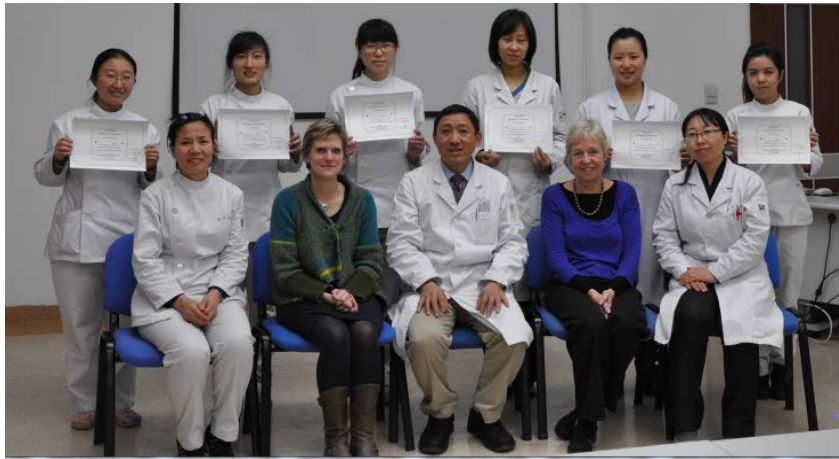
They report that this visit was very encouraging and productive. The small, highly motivated team of staff, supported by Prof Zhang, were committed to using Talking Mats with every patient to ensure all patients' views are taken into account.



Since returning to Scotland, they have received regular updates describing the team's progress and requesting further advice. They noted that a very important part of their visit was the wonderful hospitality and the strong personal relationships they have formed. One of the many highlights was the final meal. "We all sang Auld Lang Syne in both Chinese and Scots!"

### Next steps

Joan and Sally plan to continue to support the 'communication team' to implement Talking Mats™. Prof Zhang wishes to extend their use elsewhere in China, as he is on the National China Committee for Rehabilitation. The collaborators have also agreed to discuss additional training and collaboration plans once the Talking Mats are used routinely in Shenjing Hospital. They are seeking additional funding to extend this work.



The 'communication' team at Shenjing Hospital with their Talking Mats certificates

These visits are supported by the Scottish Churches China Group, Strathcarron Hospice, Talking Mats Ltd. and NHS Forth Valley. Everyone benefits. The Scottish collaborators noted that "this collaboration has provided reflective practice for AHPs in Scotland and enhanced the reputation of Scottish Healthcare abroad."

For further information, go to [www.talkingmats.com](http://www.talkingmats.com)

\*\*\*\*\*



## ***AAC Pioneer in India Masters Home-grown Speech Generating Device***

by Scott Rains

(This article is reproduced from the Sunday Guardian of 3/8/2011:

Source: <http://www.Sunday-guardian.com>

<http://globalaccessibilitynews.com/2011/03/08/technology-helps-disabled-people-but-is-expensive/>

**Rohit Parekh Jain**, a 20-year old from Chennai, has cerebral palsy and has not been able to communicate verbally all his life. But just over a year ago, in February last year, he spoke a sentence for the first time in his life after using Avaz, a device with a graphical interface, processor, software and a non-contact switch that can be used by children with cerebral palsy or poor motor skills to select alphabets and construct sentences.

A former student of Vidya Sagar, Jain was in Class 12 when he first used Avaz. "Using Avaz, he can now say anything that he wants to and can communicate with people on his own," says **Kalpana Rao**, principal of Vidya



Sagar, Chennai. Last year, the innovators at Invention Labs in Chennai launched Avaz (priced at a moderate Rs 30,000), which won the National Award for Empowerment of People with Disabilities in 2010. The device was conceptualised during the Silent Revolution Conference (2005) in Chennai. "For 10 years before that, we were importing a similar device, but this was very expensive," Rao adds.

India is home to nearly 70 million people with disabilities [Ed. Note: This exceeds the entire population of the UK.]. But recent advancements in technology have produced many applications that help make the lives of disabled people easier. Assistive Technologies (AT) not only help them communicate with others, but also develop important life skills.

Some of the most popular AT hardware and software products include speech recognition, which allows data entry by voice commands rather than a mouse or keyboard. Similarly, on-screen keyboards provide the image of a standard or modified keyboard on the computer screen, and touch screens allow direct selection or activation of the computer by touching the screen. Further, modern technology has made many useful tools for people who read and write Braille, such as electronic Braille note takers, which are portable devices with Braille keyboards that visually challenged people can use to enter information. Other technologies range from electronic wheel chairs, computers to automatic page turners.

**Arathi Abraham**, principal designer, 99&1 Design, Chennai, has developed *Slate*, a content development tool aimed at parents and teachers. She says, "The software enables teachers to

create audio-visual communication aids for children with learning disabilities, autism and low vision. It can also be used to create a custom media player for movies, music, audio books and websites that can be accessed independently." Currently, Slate is used in special schools in Delhi, Bangalore and Chennai.

However, experts feel that though technologies can bring about a revolution in the lives of disabled people, they are very expensive, and to make them affordable for everyone is still a distant dream for many in India. "Specially challenged people need affordable and locally usable technology solutions to empower them and overcome challenges. Many of the technologies like JAWS, which costs more than Rs 4 lakh, are beyond the reach of the poor," said Aqeel Qureshi, Manager of Disability News Asia.

Qureshi, who is also the Vice-President of Global Alliance on Accessible Technologies and Environments, says that as of now, there is no policy or law [in India] to support technologies for people with disabilities except the Persons with Disabilities Act 1995. Although **Dr Madhumita Puri**, executive director of the Society for Child Development, New Delhi, feels that technology has revolutionised the way people with visual or hearing impairment participate in society these days, "There is space for development. A thrust must be given to vernacular languages. Also, as most of the materials are in English, there should be more programmes that deal with translation works".

## ***Augmentative Communication (AAC) and Assistive Technology (AT) Resources***

*Useful AAC and AT resources continue to proliferate at an accelerating pace. In this section, we try to help you keep up with the latest and greatest new sources.*

[www.ace-north.org.uk](http://www.ace-north.org.uk)

The ACE Centre works with people of all ages to provide help and expertise in the field of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) and Assistive Technology (AT). The Centre's team of therapists, teachers and technicians provide a range of core specialist services including assessments, equipment loans, training and information. They also undertake project and consultancy work. Sadly, The ACE Centre South (in Oxford) was recently closed unexpectedly. To read about the government's withdrawal of funding, go to <http://www.ace-north.org.uk/ACECentreAdvisoryTrust.asp>

[www.communicationmatters.org.uk](http://www.communicationmatters.org.uk)

Communication Matters, the UK branch of ISAAC, offers much useful information on AAC. Their web site has a valuable feature: when you position the cursor (mouse) over any word (within the main text, not a menu or sidebar) and leave it there for a few seconds, an image appears that graphically describes what the word is (as if it turns into a communication board). The web site has useful free downloads and shares research and other related journals.

[www.callscotland.org.uk](http://www.callscotland.org.uk)

CALL Scotland (CALL- Communication, Access, Literacy and Learning) is a part of the Moray House School of Education at the University of Edinburgh. CALL's web site contains many practical ideas adaptable to situations in emerging areas.

[www.wordtalk.org.uk](http://www.wordtalk.org.uk)

This web site is about WordTalk, a free text-to-speech plug-in that will speak the text of the document and will highlight it as it goes. It contains a talking dictionary to help decide which word spelling is most appropriate and is developed for all versions of Microsoft Word. This software was developed by a Scottish teacher who noted that children with reading and writing difficulties often benefit from having text read aloud to them. Following the highlighted text as one hears it spoken has been shown to reinforce sight reading skills in many circumstances.

[www.appsforaac.net](http://www.appsforaac.net)

This website is a good place to find out about apps for AAC. They have a "Full List" of AAC apps (including over 50 that are free) that is organized by category, speech system and symbol system used. The web site offers a comparison page where one can pick specific apps to view and compare side by side. New apps are listed at the bottom of the homepage, with snapshots and descriptive captions for each.

[www.helpkidzlearn.com](http://www.helpkidzlearn.com)

This web site includes free software and resources from Inclusive Technology, which include many apps that are intended to 'help kids learn.' The apps and services are arranged into the following categories: early years, games, stories, creative, find out. There is also a section for parents. They offer free membership for access to their newsletters and information on upcoming and recent additions to their web site/toolkit.

[www.bagbooks.org](http://www.bagbooks.org)

This web site describes Bag Books, the "only organization in the world that publishes multi-sensory books specifically for people with learning disabilities." This UK organization mainly designs and produces a wide range of multi-sensory books that are age-appropriate stories (each book takes an average of 8 hours to construct). Bag Books also provides specialist multi-sensory storytelling sessions and training to parents, professionals, librarians and teachers on multi-sensory storytelling. They offer these books online, as well as other disability resources, and use the web site as a donation platform as well.

## ***Some Final Thoughts***

Most importantly, a big “THANK YOU” to all who have contributed to this issue of the newsletter. During the next few months I look forward to hearing your news from around the world. In the meantime, my very best wishes to all of you,

*Dot* [[dotfraser2@gmail.com](mailto:dotfraser2@gmail.com)]

**Reminder:** The ISAAC biennial conference will be held at Pittsburgh USA from 28<sup>th</sup> July to 4<sup>th</sup> August. This is a great opportunity to meet old friends and establish new connections and friendships, and will include a presentation by Gaby Berlanga and Sarah Blackstone on the Mexico project described above. This prestigious conference brings together international AAC expertise. For more information, go to [www.isaac-online.org](http://www.isaac-online.org)