



**Communication Support World Network Newsletter June 2016**

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

**Editor's Note:** *Welcome to the June issue of the Communication Support World Network newsletter. This issue features, among other things, an important topic about the limited number of early intervention programs for children with special needs that exist in developing nations in southern Africa and other under-resourced areas of the world. Experts in developed countries have documented the enormous significance of the early developmental years for children with special needs and they have created sophisticated programs for such children. However, these programs still rarely extend to young children in less-developed countries around the world.*

*We also have articles with news about important work in Malawi, Ghana, Mexico, Egypt and several European countries and a resource section that we hope our readers will find interesting. We have included a special section featuring presentations at the upcoming ISAAC Conference in Toronto, August 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup>. We hope to meet and greet many of you there.*

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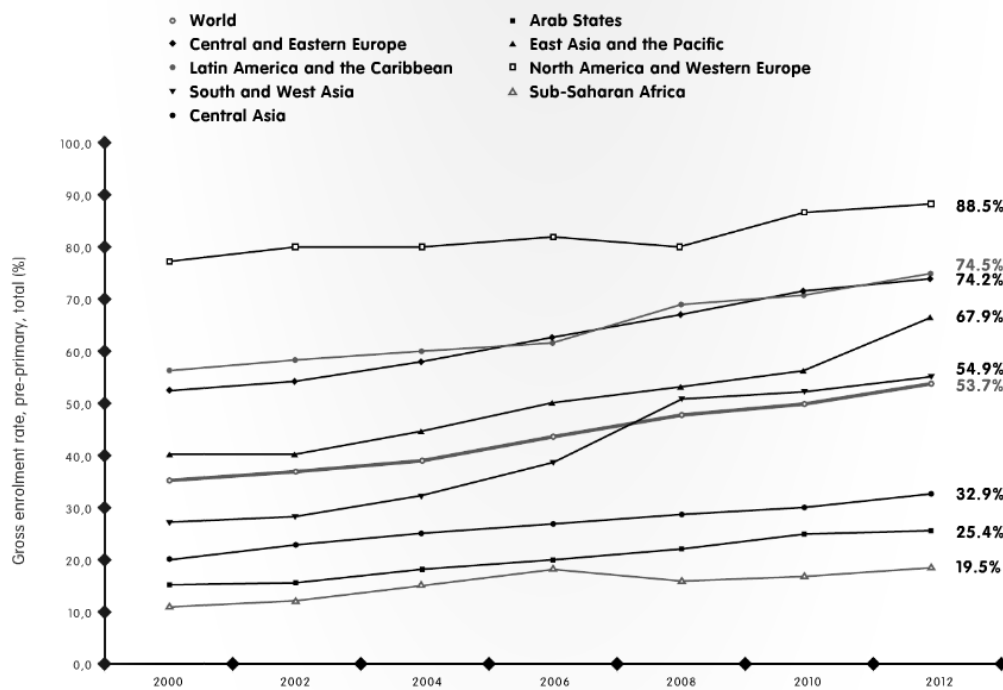
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# EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

**Editor’s Note:** Relatively few programs for children with disabilities below school age currently exist in sub-Saharan Africa, yet the importance of the earliest years of childhood and of the early developmental progress of such children, is increasingly apparent. We have rounded up descriptions of a number of early intervention programs for very young children with disabilities in southern Africa and other developing areas.

We hope the next decade will witness the rapid proliferation of such programs and it is important to publicize promising practices that already exist. We encourage our readers to share their stories or references to other preschool programs for children with special needs in emerging areas and hope to continue to spread information about what is already going on. In Figure 1 below, we have reproduced a graph from UNESCO. Note that programs in sub-saharan Africa are especially low (19.5%) when compared to other areas around the world, but is also now trending upward.

Figure 1 Global gains in pre-primary enrolment



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (online)

Figure 1. Plotting access to pre-primary programs in areas around the world from 2000 to 2012

NOTE: To read the full report *Early Childhood Matters*, [click here](#) or go to <http://r4d.org/knowledge-center/global-gains-and-growing-pains-pre-primary-education-around-world>]

Western-produced Early Childhood Development (ECD) programs for nations such as those in sub-Saharan Africa are likely to fail to effectively contribute to child learning if they use examples and teaching methods that have nothing to do with the local situation. One of the most common shortcomings of ECD programs is ignoring the fundamental importance of linking the experiences and

materials children are learning about in school to their natural surroundings. In an interview with *Early Childhood Matters*, Kofi Marfo called for the courage to “consider appropriateness and relevance whenever we find ourselves implementing programmes and ideas demonstrated to be impactful in other parts of the world.” Marfo is the Founding Director of the Institute for Human Development (IHD), with locations in South-Central Asia, East Africa and the United Kingdom. With sub-Saharan Africa lagging behind all other areas of the world in the realm of ECD (as shown in Figure 1 above) and with increased attention to development programs in this part of the world, it is becoming more important to ensure that local contexts, conditions and resources define problems and solutions.

### **South Africa: Afrika Tikkun: ECD for Children and their Communities**

Early Childhood Development not only addresses child protection and success in primary and secondary school, but also promotes overall community well being. The Noble Group’s Charity



Foundation and the Afrika Tikkun’s Early Childhood Development (ECD) Programme founded a preschool program for orphans and underprivileged children outside Johannesburg, South Africa, in the Alexandra community. The goal is to empower communities by providing care and education to children in need.

The ECD Centre has activities that develop numeracy and literacy and age-appropriate computer skills, as well as a food nutrition program of two meals and a snack daily for its “Tiger,” or preschool, class. Through support of children’s learning and health and employment of local

community members, the center is focused on preparing children for primary school as well as community involvement and sustainability. To learn more about their program, [click here](http://www.afrikatikkun.org/what-we-do/core-programmes/early-childhood-development/%20) or go to <http://www.afrikatikkun.org/what-we-do/core-programmes/early-childhood-development/%20>

### **Zambia & Kenya: Villages of Hope (VOH) give hope for the future**

Villages of Hope (VOH) Africa is a Canadian non-profit organization that is dedicated to helping orphaned and vulnerable children receive the love and care they need, starting at the preschool level. Their daily preschool programs are shorter than upper primary and allow students to have more playtime and movement.

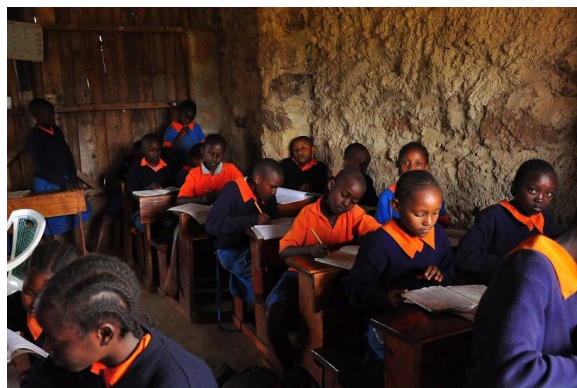
The first Village of Hope was established in Kitwe, Zambia in 1999 in response to a HIV/Aids pandemic that left many children orphaned. The program’s success led to the creation of seven other Children’s Villages in six countries throughout East Africa. The programs currently provide over 3,000 children with education, nutrition, healthcare and shelter. Success stories include welcoming 21 new preschoolers to their Kenya location in 2015, providing water for an entire village in Chongwe,



Zambia and ending child malnourishment through the Save A Life feeding program. More updates on their locations can be found at <https://vohafrika.com/blog/2015-02-06/voh-kenya-preschool/>.

### **Kenya: Girls' Education at the Upendo School**

The Upendo School and Children's home is dedicated to giving orphaned, destitute, abused and abandoned children new hope by providing care and protection. The school, located in Murang'a East district in Kenya, began as a source for food, clothing, medication and education for local children in need. It expanded into an orphanage, taking in seven young girls (ages eight months to three years). With help from the local community, Upendo now provides a nursery, pre-primary and primary education for the 40 girls in the orphanage and an additional 190 children from surrounding communities. Twenty-five of the orphans at Upendo have graduated primary school and found sponsors to send them to secondary school. Two of the Upendo orphans have graduated from secondary school and are awaiting exam scores and university selection.



Upendo is run by a dedicated staff consisting of a social worker, two housemothers, three farm assistants, two night guards, and 8 teachers along with a Board of Directors. Six classrooms have been constructed in addition to volunteer quarters and a water tank since 2002. As the center continues to expand, it is working to become more self-sufficient through farming, fisheries, and revenue from some of the children in local communities who can pay to attend. As the girls earn scholarships/sponsorships and move on to secondary school and university, Upendo will take new girls into the orphanage. Learn more by clicking [HERE](#) or go to <http://eastafriachildrenshope.org/current-projects/upendo/>.

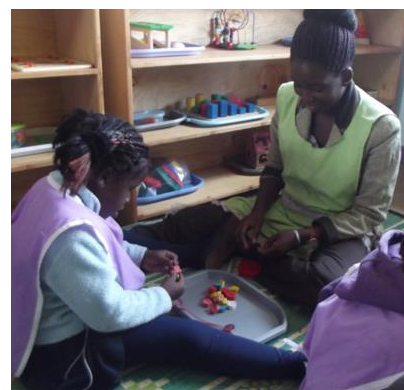


### **Zambia: Special Needs Help for Mukuni**

The Zambian government provided the Mukuni basic school with a special education needs teacher and no resources, something that is quite common in Africa. Thanks to the St. James' Place Foundation, this has now changed. Through a generous donation supporting The Butterfly Tree, a new special needs program is being formed at Mukuni. They are currently working to raise funds for donkeys, on which disabled children can ride to school. In addition, the Fountaindale School in Mansfield is providing key resources such as books, setting up a teacher exchange program and working to raise funds to provide food at Mukuni. Learn more about what the organizations are doing or to donate to their cause at <http://www.thebutterflytree.org.uk/pages/2009/special-needs-for-mukuni/>.

### **Kenya: Little Rock: Turning Early Scars Into Stars**

The children of Kibera, a Nairobi slum, are trapped in a vicious cycle of education inequality, keeping them generationally trapped in poverty as adults. Primary School is free in Kenya, but the curriculum requires basic skills that most children in Kibera



do not have. It is for this reason that Lilly Oyare founded the Little Rock Inclusive Early Childhood Development Centre in 2003 to provide a unique education for vulnerable children ages 0-8 to and give all students “the same chance of succeeding at school.”



The Little Rock center is part school, part community center, and part tutoring agency. Over 1,000 children currently use the institution, among them 140 are children with special needs, 400 attend the kindergarten schooling, 556 have transitioned to different primary school in the neighborhood and 65 have joined the government secondary school. Little Rock provides early childhood education, feeding programs for breakfast and lunch, a parents’ support group, library access, tutoring and scholarships for primary and secondary education, teacher training, sports teams and creative

afterschool activities. To learn more about Little Rock and the ongoing work in Kenya, follow these links: <http://www.ablechildafrica.org/our-partners/littlerock-partner/>  
<http://littlerockkenya.org/newsite/>  
<http://www.eliminatepovertynow.org/ept-live/ept-hero-lilly-oyare>.

### **Nigeria: Open Doors Special Education Centre**

Many children with physical or learning disabilities in Nigeria are shunned by their families and communities. The Open Doors Special Education Center, located in Jos, provides these children with an education tailored to their specific needs, including special education, vocational training, speech and language therapy and physiotherapy. The program currently serves students in a facility with 13 classrooms and two offices. Student athletes train regularly, and two of them took part in the Special Olympics World Games in China and Greece. Learn more about Open Doors and its efforts to serve those with disabilities in Nigeria at <http://opendoorsnigeria.org/>.



### **Belarus: Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Intervention Centres**

Children with disabilities aged 0-4 years represent 75% of all children living in institutions in Belarus (UNICEF Annual Report Belarus, 2010.) Since 2007, Belarus has been tackling this issue through the development of interdisciplinary Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) Centres across the country. The main focus is on health and education programs, child and family support and integration of these children into schools. ECI programs use both center-based services and home visits to ensure parent participation and involvement in identifying children with disability risks, supporting day-to-day functions at home, integrating the children into classrooms and participating in spare-time activities. Learn more about lessons learned from the practice of ECI at [http://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/Raport\\_Rajonal\\_3\\_Eng\\_Web.pdf](http://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/Raport_Rajonal_3_Eng_Web.pdf) (pages 27 and 28).

## **Palestine, Lebanon and Jordan: The Saïd Foundation’s Child Development Programme**



In a time when conflict and migration is widespread and continually increasing in the region, the Saïd Foundation’s Child Development Programme supports community-based groups in Palestine, Projects include medical rehabilitation of Syrian refugees with disabilities in Lebanon, special and inclusive education for children in the Za’atari Refugee camp in Jordan, and rehabilitation and reintegration for children with disabilities in Palestine, Lebanon and Jordan. You can learn more

about the specific projects that the Saïd Foundation is supporting at

<http://www.saidfoundation.org/child-development>.

## **ARTICLES**

### **Malawi: Able Kids Foundation Rehab Center Grows, Thrives and Explores New Ground**

*Katie Lampe*

We’ve written about Victor Musowa in several of the previous issues of our newsletter. He’s been busy, as always and we wanted to give you an update on the extraordinary work going on for young children with disabilities in Malawi.

In December, 2015, Victor traveled to Ontario, Canada, where he received a prestigious award from his alma mater, Georgian College. While in Canada, Victor had an opportunity to talk with many folks about his work in Malawi. In fact, you can watch a speech he gave at Georgian College at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z9hK5psW80g&nohtml5=False>, and read about his

accomplishments at [http://www.georgiancollege.ca/wp-content/uploads/GeorgianView\\_2015\\_FV01\\_DIGITAL-VERSION1.pdf](http://www.georgiancollege.ca/wp-content/uploads/GeorgianView_2015_FV01_DIGITAL-VERSION1.pdf) (page 10) and at

<https://www.barrietoday.com/local-news/georgian-grad-changing-attitudes-in-small-african-country-80528>.



Victor was recently nominated for the Ashoka Fellowship (December, 2015) and the King Baudouin Prize (March, 2016). In addition the AKF Rehab Clinic was featured in the 2016 UNICEF calendar (pictured to the right).

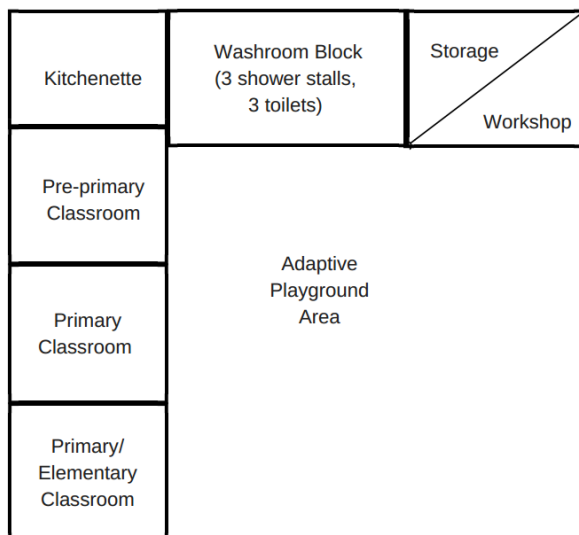
- Ashoka Fellows “are practical visionaries who get systems unstuck and open new opportunities for citizens to be changemakers. With creativity and entrepreneurial skill, they push ahead their idea until it changes a pattern through wide adoption, often over many years.”

View Victor’s nomination and learn more about the important work that he is doing at <http://www.centralcoastchildrensfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Ashoka-Nomination-Victor.pdf>.

- The King Baudouin Prize “rewards innovative approaches, initiated and led by Africans”, which (1) stand out as the best in their field, (2) can be duplicated elsewhere on the continent, and (3) have a longer term vision and a proven track record in improving the quality of life of local communities. If awarded, Victor will receive 200,000 euros and a unique opportunity to promote his cause to international audiences, including the United Nations, the World Bank and the European Union. You can read the nomination narrative, which outlines many of Victor’s accomplishments at <http://www.centralcoastchildrensfoundation.org/blog/>.

Victor is now back in Malawi and as always, hard at work making his school and clinic for children with disabilities better and better. The demand for spots at his school has grown to the point that there are now many more children on the waiting list than are actually enrolled in the school. The AKF Clinic now opens on Saturdays and provides services to children on the waiting list and their families. They often have over 100 children in attendance.

The adaptive therapy chair project is also continuing to expand. Fifteen more chairs were constructed and distributed to the homes of children enrolled in the school, for use both at the school and for children in need on the waiting list. One chair has even found its way to the local public school to support a student from AKF who is now partially included in the local public school. The chairs are enabling children, who previously have had to lie on a mat at home, to sit up, both at home and at school. A few families have even returned the therapy chairs because their child is now able to sit independently.



#### AKF EXPANSION PLANS

Victor and his staff have big plans for expanding the AKF Rehab Clinic. They are vigorously pursuing grant funding to build a new school and therapy center so they can better meet the needs of their students. Currently, AKF is located in a rented house, which is both too small and too expensive. This building does not meet the rapidly growing needs of the organization and its growing constituency. Victor hopes to raise enough money to build a new complex with separate classrooms for each age group, a therapy gym, an accessible playground and temporary boarding facilities that can better serve the families who bring their children from far away.



The proposed infrastructure (seen in the building plan to the left) consists of three separate classrooms, a kitchenette, a storage area and a washroom block. These new facilities would support the increasing need for educational and clinical services for children with disabilities in the area, as well as enable AKF to expand its programs to reach more students. The kitchenette allows space for staff to prepare meals, which currently benefits not only the students enrolled but also the students and families on the waiting list who attend the weekend activities.

Mr. Musowa has already raised part of the funds needed for the new building and has applied for a grant to cover the remaining costs. Victor's partners in Canada have created a website that better showcases the work that Victor and his staff are doing everyday at the Able Kids Foundation Rehab Clinic to ensure that children with disabilities have access to education. The website features information about the educational and clinical services of the organization, updates on developments in Malawi that impact its services and operation and inspirational stories about the AKF staff and students. There are photos, a blog and an opportunity to subscribe to receive regular updates. The website is now "live". Go to <http://www.ablekidsrehab.org/>.

You'll also find information about AKF activities and programs on the Central Coast Children's Foundation website at <http://www.centralcoastchildrensfoundation.org/able-kids-foundation/>.

## **South Africa and Malawi: Toolboxes from Pathways**

*Katie Lampe with Victor Musowa*

Educational toolboxes, created by Pathways, in Pretoria, South Africa, are a great resource for children of various ages, learning levels and abilities. Pathways is a non-governmental organization (NGO) in South Africa that was, "founded by parents in their quest to find school accommodation for children with various disabilities." It currently serves 110 students, from age three to young adults. The school sells a variety of educational toolboxes, geared primarily toward children with disabilities. Each toolbox has many activities related to a specific theme, such as literacy, numeracy, sensory stimulation, snack time, growing up, *etc.*

During a recent interview, Victor Musowa, who runs the school in Malawi described above, told us about how he and his staff use the toolboxes at the AKF Rehab school and what he finds most useful about them. The toolboxes all have a range of activities in them, starting from very simple and basic, to more advanced and complex. One of the things Victor likes most about the Toolkits is that they are very "practical." For example, he notes that one activity allows children to go on a "shopping trip" in their school and use pretend money to purchase everyday items.

In another activity, children participate in cooking local dishes. They scoop flour into measuring cups and weigh it, before adding it to the recipe. Activities also include number and letter recognition, matching activities and mazes. To instill a love of reading in children, the book reading toolkits come with puppets and stuffed animals to engage children in the story. Victor noticed that, "kids like to make the noise the animals make" as they follow along with the story. These basic activities allow children to build up skills and eventually participate in more advanced (and complicated) activities in the kit.

Victor has also found the toolboxes useful for assessing individual children. For example, for children

who have a hard time sitting still, he can choose an active activity to engage their interest. He has also found the toolboxes helpful during the weekend sessions for children on the waiting list offered at his school. Because these sessions consist primarily of unstructured play with a large number of children and families, staff can use the toolboxes to demonstrate activities to parents that they can adapt for use in their homes.

When asked to give advice to other teachers that might be interested in buying the Pathways toolboxes, Victor said that they contain “very good activities,” but they are best to use one-on-one with students, or in small groups, rather than an entire class. He also stressed the importance of teachers familiarizing themselves with all available activities, so they can choose the activities that correspond to the appropriate level and interests of each child. He also noted that the toolboxes are very useful for giving feedback to parents about how their child is progressing.

You can find a complete list of available toolboxes available, along with their prices, at [http://www.ptapathways.co.za/downloads/toolbox\\_manual\\_2016.pdf](http://www.ptapathways.co.za/downloads/toolbox_manual_2016.pdf). You can also contact Pathways to order a toolbox at [info@ptapathways.co.za](mailto:info@ptapathways.co.za).

## Cyprus: Assistive Technology and AAC: A Case Study Experience

*Katerina Mavrou*



Gregory is a 30-year-old man living with his family in a small city in Cyprus. He is diagnosed with cerebral palsy (spastic quadriplegia) and is non-verbal. He has no additional sensory or intellectual disabilities. Due to his physical disabilities and profound difficulties in verbal communication, he attended a special education unit in the mainstream school, in both primary and secondary education. Educators were unable to define his cognitive abilities. However, evaluation reports always mentioned a good level of understanding, but made no reference to whether he had any literacy skills or

was able to complete specific tasks. Gregory’s Individualized Educational Programmes (IEPs) focused on the development of basic concepts and receptive vocabulary, mostly in social studies, and less in mathematics, computers, science and language. His communication was restricted to YES/NO questions, to which Gregory was responding with eyes and head movement.

At the age of 16, while attending a lower secondary education urban school, Gregory was referred to the Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture for an assistive technology (AT) assessment. Educators acknowledged his need for further communication and independence so he could access information, learning and competence.

**Some background information to clarify the picture:** In Cyprus, almost 100% of the students, including children with disabilities, continue their education at the higher secondary level. In the past, the provision for children with disabilities traditionally took place in segregated special schools, even though integration was unofficially implemented. The 1999 Education Act legitimized integration in the mainstream schools for children with special needs and was formally implemented in 2001. This policy is translated into practice by (a) providing special education settings with at least one computer

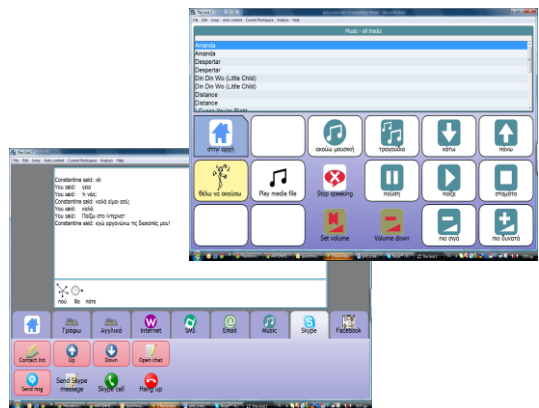
and/or a computer cluster for the special schools, and a package of basic assistive technology (AT) including Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) and (b) providing AT/AAC to individual children based on the assessments of specialists.

### What did this mean for Gregory?

*Referral & Assessment:* Gregory was referred to the Special Education Committee in 2005, specifically requesting “a laptop computer”, as the concept of AT was not well known in the system yet. Gregory had never used any AAC technology. He communicated with eye movement to respond to YES/NO questions (which were mostly only understood by his mother). During this visit, the AT specialist suggested a laptop computer with switch accessible software (Clicker5) and a large size switch with a wireless adaptor. The equipment was provided three months after the assessment. However, the equipment proved ineffective over time as his communication needs and abilities increased. After two years, the AT specialist requested a re-assessment. This process involved the family, the physiotherapist and his school technology teacher and focused on the use of eye gaze for access along with a synthesized voice AAC software.

*Implementation:* The initial AT solution was rarely used for communication. Rather, his teachers used it so Gregory could watch educational movies, mostly in history and religious classes. Also, he found the use of the switch frustrating and ineffective, increasing his involuntary movements. In addition, the school staff lacked training as they were not sent to the informative training sessions organized by the Ministry of Education.

2 years later with the introduction of the eye-control AAC device (Tobii) with the Grid 2, supported with Widgit symbols, Gregory’s life changed completely.



With support from his family and technology teacher, he was able to develop excellent skills in a very short time and has become a very effective user of Tobii for both communication and access. In addition, by using symbol-supported text, he has gradually developed literacy skills and computer skills and now uses the Internet, social media and Skype.

You can watch Gregory talking about himself in a video found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tiAfBqVKsk>.

### AAC Awareness

In Cyprus, where AAC is emerging as a key part of social and educational policy and practice, we find it is challenging to break away from traditional views about disability. Prior attitudes on disability are one of the major barriers to inclusion and views specifically about AAC continue to be influenced by prior medical and charity models of disability.

Research findings indicate that hands-on activities and practical experiences with AAC are essential components for changing attitudes and getting people to begin to understand and discuss relevant issues. Additionally, the increased number of students using AAC in classrooms has created a greater awareness in schools and also us with opportunities to engage peers in the whole process. Finally, it is worth noting that older students, (e.g., secondary and higher education) who themselves participate in awareness raising events, benefit from the experience.

[For more information on this subject, you can check out some of Katerina Mavrou's journal articles, found at <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/abs/10.1108/17549451111173488> and [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259611005\\_Assistive\\_Technology\\_as\\_an\\_Emerging\\_Policy\\_and\\_Practice\\_Processes\\_Challenges\\_and\\_Future\\_Directions](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259611005_Assistive_Technology_as_an_Emerging_Policy_and_Practice_Processes_Challenges_and_Future_Directions). ]

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## **Romania**

### **The First Romanian AAC Book**

*Doru Vlad Popovici and Alina Stefania Tutu*

AAC began in Romania almost 10 years ago in Bucharest. In small steps, it began to spread around to other cities: Cluj, Sibiu, Constanta, especially in the past 4-5 years. This growth was facilitated by close international cooperation and the development of European projects.

One such European project was the SOPHRD grant: *Quality Education for Children with Special Needs: Lifelong training for teachers in Augmentative and Alternative Communication*, in partnership with the *Movic bez Slow* Association from Poland and the University of Bucharest. Through this project an AAC training program for teachers was accredited, and became available to special education teachers in Bucharest. The project was very fruitful because the successful training program in Poland was adapted to meet the needs and realities of Romanian special education. As a result, practical ideas on how to implement AAC strategies in special schools were gathered and are now available in the first AAC Romanian book *AAC strategies for non-verbal children*.

Doru Vlad Popovici from the University of Bucharest collaborated with other authors: Adrian Cozma, Alina Tutu, Madalina Constantin, Petrica Cotae and Stelian Neagoe, who are teachers in special education. The book, which combines scientific and practical features, is a very practical tool for specialists. It focuses especially on how to tackle communication development in school environments for children with severe and multiple communication problems, offering practical ideas for teachers and therapists. However, it is also a very useful guide for home-based individual therapies because it presents step-by-step guides to intervention.



The first two chapters analyze the general problems of language and communication and differences in children with typical development and children with severe and multiple communication problems. These chapters also present a general overview of different approaches in therapy.

The third chapter concentrates on a description of the components of AAC: different types of symbols, techniques and devices used in AAC strategies.

The fourth chapter contains practical ideas for teachers, starting from the assessment and diagnosis of children and their general level of development and then tackling the subsequent diagnosis of functional communication skills. This approach leads to designing a functional, individualized intervention program that reflects the specific potential of each child. At the same time, it stresses *parent involvement as partners in every step of the intervention program*, alongside the team of specialist (teachers, psychologists, speech therapists, physiotherapists and doctors). The chapter also provides examples of how to build an individual intervention plan over time and how to deal with school documents, necessary for teachers and therapists who work with students with severe and multiple communication problems.

The final chapter describes, step-by-step, the AAC intervention strategy-leading the child from the pre-symbolic, reflex or non-intentional communication stage, to a symbolic and intentional stage of communication. It explains how children can develop language using AAC. It also offers differentiated approaches in applying AAC strategies for deaf-blind children, for children with autism, children with cerebral palsy and for students with other severe syndromes who mostly attend special schools, but may also be included in mainstream environments.

This book has important theoretical and practical value, is useful for specialists, special education teachers, kindergarten teachers, parents and can benefit students with severe and multiple communication problems throughout Romania.

## Another Step Forward in Egypt

By: Yvette Abdel Malek

For the past several years Yvette Abdel Malek has taken the lead in spreading the word about augmentative communication to clinicians, teachers and parents throughout Egypt. For example, see our June 2015 issue, in which Yvette described a workshop she conducted in Jordan for teachers from Jordan, Palestine and Iraq about various AAC methods and the use of functional speech for teenagers and adults with autism. ([www.centralcoastchildrensfoundation.org](http://www.centralcoastchildrensfoundation.org)) That workshop included activities such as visual tracking, social stories, and creating daily schedules. Below are some photos from *that* workshop.



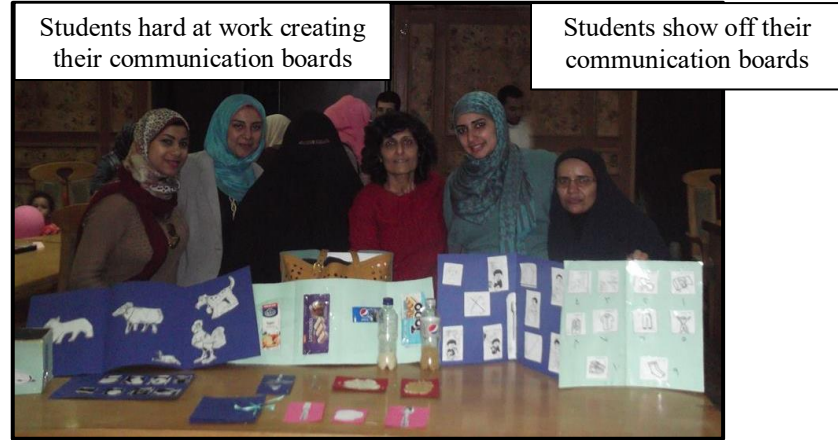
In the following brief report, Yvette describes some of the professional training activities she recently conducted that focused on people with delayed language and complex communication needs. In March, 2016, Yvette held a “Speech Diploma” training in the Psychological Council Center in Ein Shams University in Egypt. About 60 students participated in the workshop and made communication boards to express needs, schedules, daily life and stories. Below Yvette shares some candid photos of the activities. These photos demonstrate that Yvette has a great understanding of how to involve adults in hands-on, creative activities.



About 60 students participated in the workshop and made communication boards to express needs, schedules, daily life and stories.



Students hard at work creating their communication boards



Students show off their communication boards



## Poland: International Collaborations

*Dot Fraser*

### **PUBLISHER'S NOTE: News about Dorothy (Dot) Fraser's activities as senior representative of Central Coast Children's Foundation for Eastern and Central Europe**

Dot's home is in Scotland. As an avid traveller and networker extraordinaire, she leverages her wealth of knowledge for resources, tips and tools and her involvement with Central Coast Children's Foundation (CCCF) to connect with people in countries around the world by attending as many AAC events and conferences as possible.

Originally requests she received in 2003 were from Romanians employed in special education who asked for training, support and practical advice from UK to cater to the needs of their staff and pupils. Although she is still involved with projects for education the focus has changed over the years, as requested by host countries and now the emphasis is on social justice, inclusive societies and communication in healthcare. The latter is of special interest to Dot as her passion for AAC stems from back in the 1990's, when she was working as a physiotherapist in a community based rehabilitation team and saw the positive effect of AAC on the lives of adults who had traumatic head injuries and on their families.

Dot's alliance with Central Coast Children's Foundation (CCCF) began after the 2010 ISAAC biennial conference hosted in Barcelona. She finds that this connection and being a member of the Patient Provider Communication Forum [www.patientprovidercommunication.org](http://www.patientprovidercommunication.org) has opened up opportunities to expand from her initial international projects, only working with Romania, to collaborations with several other European countries and provision of relevant material including low tech devices kindly donated by CCCF and USA suppliers.

Dot became a member of ISAAC BUILD committee in 2014.

<https://www.isaac-online.org/english/about-isaac/activities-and-projects/international-activities-build>. In 2015 she participated in the plenary session at Communication Matters (ISAAC UK) conference with a presentation emphasising developing international collaborations with Poland. This led to an agreement between ISAAC BUILD subcommittee for Europe and Communication Matters board of trustees and members who offered to support BUILD activities in Europe by sharing their expertise and resource material with other countries at varying stages of AAC development.

This comment from Dot, during a recent interview with a member of the CCCF team, highlights an example of the benefits of her connections within UK and with USA “ If I had to name the 2 most important / favourite topics that I use in all countries I work with they would be

*Personal Communication Passports*, developed by Sally Millar

<http://www.callscotland.org.uk/home> and *Social Networks*, developed by Sarah Blackstone. These 2 SLT /AAC specialists have been for many years (and still are) my main sources of information and inspiration to support people with complex communication needs.”

### Dot's report

December 2015 was a very special time in Zamosc, Poland, when the Step by Step association (*Krok za Krokiem*) celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary with an international conference entitled "Step by Step to Participation". The Conference was organised under the rubric of a project entitled "From a patient to citizen - promoting the bio-psycho-social model of disability and the concept of ICF".

Eminent speakers from Canada, the USA, the UK and Europe were invited to Poland to participate and a panel discussion led by alumni of the Step by Step association focused on the conditions necessary for social inclusion. I was invited to speak on the topic “AAC for functional communication skills and participation of people with cerebral palsy in society.”



Prior to the conference, Agnieszka Pilch, deputy head teacher of *Krok za Krokiem* school and I provided four days of training workshops for therapists and teachers who work with adolescents and adults. To cater to the large number of applicants from many parts of Poland, we divided them into two groups and ran the workshops over a period of two weeks. I included material and videos from the UK which you can access at the following links: <http://www.aacscotland.org.uk/>, <http://www.communicationmatters.org.uk>, and <http://www.nowhearme.co.uk/>.



We dedicated one day to the topic of communication during medical encounters, as part of our ongoing project for patient- provider communication in Poland. This included material translated into Polish. *Krok za Krokiem* participated in the preparation of the Polish versions of Widgit health care material, which you can access at <http://www.widgit.com/products/health/patient-communication-sheet.htm> and <http://widgit-health.com/downloads/medical-encounter-board.htm>. More information about Widgit health materials can be found at <http://widgit-health.com/downloads/languages.htm> and <http://widgit-health.com/news-projects/index.htm>. [Additional information about patient provider communication can be found at [http://www.centralcoastchildrensfoundation.org/wpcontent/uploads/2015/05/3.2\\_EncounterNewsletter.pdf](http://www.centralcoastchildrensfoundation.org/wpcontent/uploads/2015/05/3.2_EncounterNewsletter.pdf), and a link to our warm-up activity can be found at <http://www.callscotland.org.uk/common-assets/cm-files/books/keep-talking.pdf>. ]

On the final day of both weeks, members of the *Krok za Krokiem* school AAC club joined the workshop participants and led lively discussions.



### **Furthering connections with Lublin**

At the end of the 2 weeks of workshops in Zamosc, Agnieszka and I were invited by Andrzej Kiciński to give presentations at KUL, Catholic University Lublin, as part of our ongoing AAC Awareness collaboration with the university.



**Note:** I have been working with Agnieszka since 2012 on projects in Poland to promote AAC use and awareness. Our work is based on her knowledge of what is required locally so we have built up a bank of resources from my presentations and workshops. I am extremely grateful to Agnieszka who kindly stepped in at the last minute and did my presentation in March this year at a conference in Lublin, because I was unable to travel from Scotland to Poland. **The benefits of teamwork!**

### Ghana AAC Retreat

Every January, a group of Columbia University graduate students in speech therapy journey to Ghana for an immersive two-week experience in the schools and hospitals of Ghanaian towns and cities. Under the enthusiastic leadership of Dr. Cate Crowley and her colleagues, these students regularly help conduct a three-day weekend retreat in augmentative communication for 40-60 teachers and teacher-leaders who work in Ghana's nationally supported special education programs. Previous retreats have yielded some useful outcomes. Some examples include a simple set of instructions for a variety of low-tech classroom communication activities (<http://www.centralcoastchildrensfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/ACWDecember2013.pdf-final-2.pdf>), videos of in-service training activities conducted both by Columbia personnel and by indigenous unit school leaders and a variety of other useful videos and reports.

One of the teacher-leaders most deeply involved the past, Ms. Belinda Bukari, has recently been elevated to the position of the Director of the Unit School Program in Ghana. She sent a report detailing activities at the January 2016 Teachers' Retreat. The goal was to help teachers from the Unit Schools in Kumasi develop curricula and support communication for children with autism and/or intellectual disabilities using augmentative and alternative strategies, tools and technologies. Participants included 23 teachers from Unit Schools and 3 teachers from Kumasi's Special Education schools, Ashanti Special Education Coordinator, officials from Ghana Education Service (Special Education Division) and professors, staff and 15 Master's degree students from Teachers College, Columbia University in New York



The workshop was interactive and practical. Participants learned about and discussed (1) Talking Mats; (2) Name Tags; (3) AAC market cards (pictured); (4) Five finger story retell; (5) Communication Passports; and (6) Making of Ghana bags. Participants were enthusiastic about the workshop and indicated they hoped it was offered every year. They also

indicated they had used strategies they learned in previous workshops successfully in their classrooms.

## OF NOTE

### **Australia: Communication Boards can Save Lives**

How can lifeguards on a beach deal quickly with barriers to communication with a victim? A recent initiative at Newcastle beaches (New South Wales, Australia) has incorporated picture boards and sign language training into its lifeguard program. After interviewing lifeguards, speech pathologist Emily Armstrong saw a need for the boards that can be useful tools to communicate across language barriers



and to communicate with someone with complex communication needs. Communication boards can save lives, particularly with an injury where it is critical that the victim does not move. The full article is located at <http://www.theherald.com.au/story/3754012/communication-boards-could-save-lives/>.

### **England: The Shippey Campaign**

The Shippey Campaign is an innovative initiative started by parents with children on the autism spectrum. Their children all love watching football, but were overwhelmed by the noise and stimulation at the stadium. So the family worked with their local football club to develop The Nathan Shippey Sensory Room at Sunderland AFC. They are now working with football clubs throughout the Premier League to develop similar sensory rooms, so that people with special sensory needs can enjoy live football games in a more accommodating environment. To find out more about this initiative, visit their website at <https://theshippeycampaign.com/>. You can also find an exciting video on their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/video.php?v=1001829629893446>.

### **Malawi: Tiphunzire!**

Young female teachers can become Agents of Change to battle issues of poor sexual and reproductive health, gender expectations and poverty. In Malawi teenage girls at the early stages of puberty are at high risk of dropping out; only 25% of girls start secondary school.

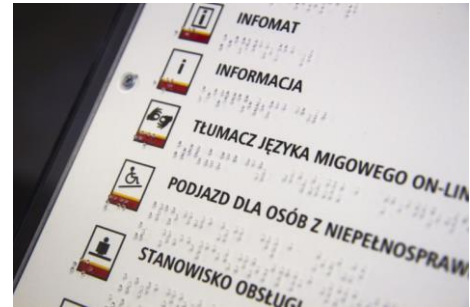
Tiphunzire! aims to improve the literacy, numeracy, self confidence, sexual and reproductive health of marginalized girls. The program trains 315 young female teachers as Agents of Change. After completing training the Agents of Change serve for 2.5 years.

As Agents of Change, teachers reach many girls across rural Malawi through the Interactive Radio. The radio program consists of recorded radio drama shows that raise awareness of social issues. Through free text messages to the show, listeners can change the storyline, characters or plot to reflect their own personal experiences and give a voice to marginalized girls across the country. To learn more about Agents of Change and their initiatives to keep girls in school, click [HERE](#) or go to <http://www.educationinnovations.org/program/tiphunzire-empowering-young-female-teachers-create-inclusive-learning-environments>.

## Poland: Special Boards for Blind and Partially Sighted People in Citizens' Service Departments in Warsaw

Tactile graphics boards for blind and partially sighted people, which facilitate moving around offices, appeared in Citizens Service Departments, increase self-reliance in dealing with administrative matters.

Tactile graphics boards have been prepared for a project called "Virtualna Warszawa" (English "Virtual Warsaw"). The idea originally was incorporated under a "participatory budgeting" system, but Capital City Hall has now extended their use to all districts and increased their functionality. In the future, the boards will be equipped with Beacons to allow for the preparation of mobile applications and enable individuals to navigate a virtual space (Polish= WOM) in addition to having a book in alphabet Braille, printing transparent - illustrating and describing the interesting and important places for the district and the entire city.



The Warsaw Commission for Social Dialogue for People with Disabilities has evaluated the proposal to prepare tactile graphics boards. At the next stage of the project, the Polish Association of Blind People and many others who represent people who are blind and partially sighted were consulted regarding whether the tactile graphics boards convex plans (maps) were prepared correctly in terms of technical, essential and editorial content. For example they asked if pictograms, labels used with those plans/maps are legible and done in

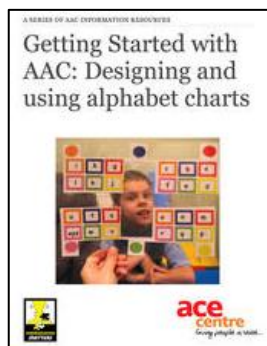
ways that can meet the needs of people who are blind and partially sighted.

## RESOURCES

### Getting Started with AAC

The ACE Centre in partnership with Communication Matters and 1Voice have developed three iBooks to introduce users to low-tech alphabet charts, symbol boards and how to adjust these tools to fit individual student needs. Although these AAC methods are an easy, inexpensive way to help children with disabilities communicate, they can be daunting to those who have never used them. With the help of three freely downloadable books, families and professionals now have a step-by-step guide to creating low-tech communication tools, teaching students with disabilities how to use them and making them accessible when standard pointing is not an option for students. If you have an iPad or another Apple device, you can download the books for free at <https://itunes.apple.com/us/book/getting-started-aac-designing/id1090937118?mt=11>. Otherwise, you can learn more about the books and the ACE Centre at <http://acecentre.org.uk/getting-started-with-aac-books> and check back periodically for a free web-based version of these books that will

soon be available to everyone.



## Tawasol Arabic Symbol Dictionary

The Qatar National Research Fund sponsored a project in Doha to create a freely downloadable Arabic/English symbol dictionary for people with communication and literacy difficulties. The dictionary contains images and pictograms of the most frequently used words in spoken and written communication (known as Tawasol in Arabic). You can download the dictionary for free at <http://tawasolsymbols.org/en/home/>, and you can also access various other AAC resources at <http://tawasolsymbols.org/en/resources/>.

## Glenda's Assistive Technology Information

Light tech communication books are an inexpensive, versatile introduction to augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) when they are designed, taught and used correctly. In her blog, Glenda Hampton Anderson has put together a list of important things to remember when making and using communication books. For example, the books are personalized and even partially designed by the student. It is important to know exactly for what the student will use the book before you select vocabulary and to include words other than basic nouns so the student can use it to have a full conversation. Finally, the student needs to learn how to use the book and should be encouraged to keep it readily available at all times. To learn more about how to make a useful communication book and to explore other pages of Glenda's assistive technology blog, follow this link:

<http://atclassroom.blogspot.mx/>.



## SKOOG: Music Therapy and Creative Play



*[Please note that this is a high-cost resource and may not be suitable for many areas of the world.]*

Autism Spectrum Australia has created a new method for teaching communication, partnership, music, and creative learning through Lego Music Therapy. The process includes use of SKOOG, a soft and colourful cube that communicates with an iPad or other device to play music. Students can touch, hit and move the cube in different ways to make various sounds. Lego Music Therapy involves a team of three students working together to play a 16-note song. Find out how the exercise works with SKOOG and Lego at [http://skoogmusic.com/blog/skoog-action-autism-spectrum-australia/?utm\\_source=Facebook&utm\\_medium=Social&utm\\_campaign=Social](http://skoogmusic.com/blog/skoog-action-autism-spectrum-australia/?utm_source=Facebook&utm_medium=Social&utm_campaign=Social) and <http://www.autismpedagogy.com/blog/2016/3/9/skoog>.

## Speech and Language Therapy Resources

On March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016, speech and language therapists throughout Europe celebrated the 12<sup>th</sup> annual European Day of Speech and Language. In celebration, Afasic provided one or two free resources each day. You can still download them for free at <http://www.afasic.org.uk/2016/03/a-celebration-of-speech-and-language-therapy/>.

## The Ultimate Toy Guide for Children who are Visually Impaired



*Wonder Baby* has created an extensive list of techniques, toys and suggestions for enhancing learning and development through play for children with visual impairments. Emphasis is placed on balancing fun and learning and helping a child grow sensory skills through textures and various accessibility features. You can discover which toys are best suited for blind children, how and why to adapt toys to better suit a child with visually impairments, where to buy such toys and how to create your own low-cost toys at <http://www.wonderbaby.org/articles/toy-guide-for-blind-children>.

## 5 Ways to Teach Your Blind Child How to Use an iPad

*[Please note that this is a high-cost resource and may not be suitable for many areas of the world.]*

With the iPad continuing to increase in popularity among children, there is no reason children who are blind or visually impaired cannot use the devices. Cause and effect apps are a great way for children to begin understanding that if they touch the iPad, it will respond. In addition, the iPad can be both fun and provide developmentally appropriate activities for your child through games, connecting things your child is learning to his or her personal life or interests, adding accessories so the iPad is more accessible and using the device for educational purposes. Visit the WonderBaby website for instructive videos about each step and for links to download relevant Apps, found at <http://www.wonderbaby.org/articles/teach-blind-child-use-ipad>.



## Miss Spider's Tea Party for people with Visually Impairments

As part of graduate coursework for people with visual impairments and multiple disabilities, students developed creative ways to teach and discuss storybooks. For their project, the graduates focused on Miss Spider's Tea Party because it includes brightly colored images and is written in rhymes. The four methods focus on 3D representations of the story and its characters, increasing comprehension through symbol cards and an audio recording for children to listen to as they flip the pages of the book. The ideas, presented at <http://www.pathstoliteracy.org/strategies/making-miss-spiders-tea-party-accessible-students-visual-impairments%23Tactile%20Communication%20Symbols>, are adaptable to any picture book.



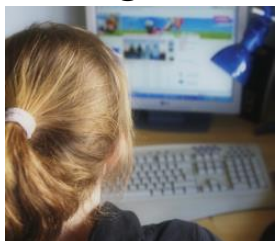
## Making Science Accessible

While children with sight are able to learn about and explore the natural world through observation, those with visual imparments require more hands-on activities and verbal explanations to interact with the world around them. To aid science teachers, the Perkins School for the Blind has created a teaching guide that highlights key considerations when adapting lesson plans. It lists 10 general teaching tips and has links for additional resources and tips. The guide is available at <http://www.perkinselearning.org/accessible-science/getting-started>.

## Comprehensive Literacy Instruction for ALL Students

Inclusive education is difficult for teachers because it means teaching students who are at different levels at the same time. To help in determining the types of activities and lessons to include in classroom literacy instruction when teaching to both conventional and emergent readers, Jane Farrall Consulting offers an extensive guide, which outlines (1) how to determine student needs, (2) what activities are best suited for emergent versus conventional readers, and (3) how to incorporate ALL students in ways that can suit everyone equally. Emphasis is on how to ensure that students with disabilities have access to a strong AAC system. To learn more, [click here](#) or go to <http://www.janefarrall.com/comprehensive-literacy-instruction-meeting-the-instructional-needs-of-all-students-in-our-classrooms/>.

## Reading with Audiobooks and Text-to-Speech



*[Please note that these methods require advanced technology and may not be suitable in many parts of the world.]*

Technology today can help students with disabilities practice reading and increase their reading comprehension. This guide, from the Center on Disability and Technology (USA), includes eight easy steps for starting to use audiobooks and text-to-speech. It also includes a narrative of how one student, Emma, uses these methods to read, learn, grow and be more independent. Find it at

[http://ctdinstitute.org/sites/default/files/file\\_attachments/Getting%20Started%2C%20Reading%20with%20Audiobooks%20and%20Text-to-Speech\\_0.pdf](http://ctdinstitute.org/sites/default/files/file_attachments/Getting%20Started%2C%20Reading%20with%20Audiobooks%20and%20Text-to-Speech_0.pdf).

## Eye Gaze: A More Accessible Mouse

*[Please note that this is a high-cost resource and may not be suitable for many areas of the world.]*

With the help of Eye Gaze, computers can enable individuals who are unable to use their hands to access a mouse or use a switch to access a device to control a computer or tablet with their eyes and click anywhere on the screen by staring at the icon for a few seconds. CALL Scotland has put together an extensive resource guide for further exploring this technology. A list of software, resources and a seminar on how eye gaze can be useful and how this works is available at <http://www.callscotland.org.uk/information/eye-gaze/>.



## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### ISAAC Conference Reminder and Previews of Presentations

The ISAAC Conference 2016 venue is the Westin Harbour Castle hotel in Toronto, Canada, from August 6 – 13, 2016. You can find updates on Twitter #ISAAC2016 and on ISAAC International's Facebook page. For more information, you can email [conference2016@isaac-online.org](mailto:conference2016@isaac-online.org)



The upcoming August ISAAC conference in Toronto will feature some unique and remarkably useful presentations by several unique and remarkable presenters.

If you are attending (and we hope to see you there) be on the lookout for the following:

### **Editor's Note:**

Three presentations describe some (but not all) of the exciting and innovative activities happening right now at The Bridge School in Hillsborough, California. As many of our readers are no doubt aware, the Bridge School was founded almost 30 years ago by Neil Young and his wife, Pegi Young to serve as a "lighthouse" school for children with significant physical disabilities, as well as the need for augmentative communication interventions.

Over the years, the Bridge School has fostered many valuable initiatives, including an international "teacher in residence" program, which has brought change makers from around the globe to work and learn for months at the school. Ripple effects from this effort are now observable in Mexico, India, Poland, Singapore, South Korea, South Africa and many other parts of the world.

But, there has probably never been a time during the school's history that as many important innovations are being pioneered simultaneously. Three of the most interesting of these pioneering efforts include (1) creating accommodations for the many children in this population who have cortical visual impairment (CVI), (2) introducing hands-free upright mobility units for children who are usually considered "wheelchair-bound", and (3) introducing early literacy and writing activities for children who too many people don't ever expect to become functionally literate.

Each of these workshops are exceptionally valuable, but we strongly recommend that people attending the ISAAC Conference consider attending all three to get an impression of the revolutionary impact these initiatives provide for children when implemented simultaneously. The Bridge School staff provides dynamic evidence of groundbreaking differences in the education of children with severe physical disabilities and complex communication needs.

### **"Movement Matters!! Children with SSPI Use Hands-free Support Walkers to Move, Play, Interact and Learn"**

*By: Christine Wright-Ott and Joy McCollum-Franco*

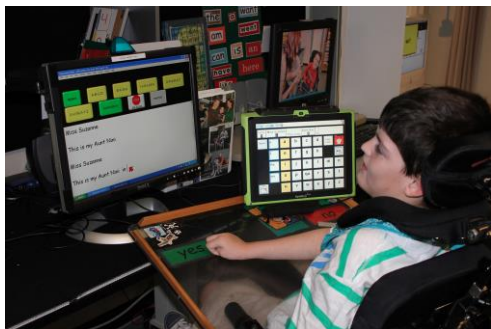
Children with the most advanced levels of severe speech and physical impairment (SSPI) can and should experience movement, people, objects and activities in ways that contribute to motivation, play, learning, achievement and fun! Along with accumulating evidence that motor development contributes to communication development and that delays in self-locomotion negatively affect future school performance, there is growing support that early intervention focusing on active exploration, playfulness and problem solving promotes advancement of foundational skills across broad and lasting learning domains. To maximize participation, playfulness and learning, every effort should be made to provide early movement and communication options that allow children with SSPI to do and experience what all children do and experience at school and home. Learn more about ways to enhance participation and mobility for children with SSPI, as well as how to monitor progress in this exciting presentation. **August 9th 8:30 – 9:00, Pier 8**





## **Towards Getting it "Write": Designing Effective Writing Instruction for Students with CCN and SSPI**

*By: Holly Peartree*



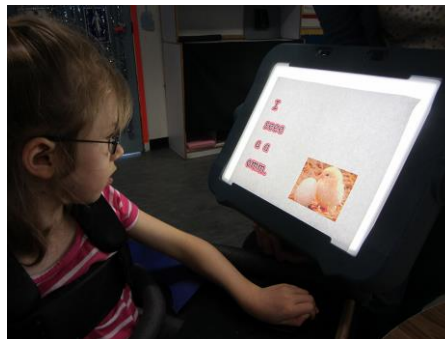
All students need access to effective writing instruction that supports active engagement in authentic and meaningful writing experiences. This session describes an instructional approach for elementary students with severe speech and physical impairments (SSPI) with complex communication needs (CCN) as they learn to write for varied purposes and audiences while concurrently learning to access and use a range of AAC tools, strategies and devices. With general education instructional frameworks as the starting point, participants are

guided through a range of considerations for selecting appropriate accommodations and writing tools for elementary students with CCN, with an emphasis on developmentally early writing stages and beginning writers. **August 10th 11:00 – 12:00, Pier 9**

## **“Integrating CVI Interventions, Strategies, and Accommodations into Instructional Programs for Students Who Rely on AAC”**

*By: Aileen Arai, Janelle Moynihan and Caitlin Sale*

How can you best support the specific visual needs of students with severe speech and physical impairments (SSPI) and Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI) who rely on AAC for daily communication needs and participation in academics and literacy instruction? To maximize the participation of these students, The Bridge School has developed interventions, strategies and accommodations based on *The CVI Range*, an assessment tool which provides rich descriptive information about a student’s visual abilities and characteristics. This innovative presentation shares strategies to support systematic implementation of accommodations that recruit and increase the student’s use of vision for communication, academic instruction, assessment and accessing the environment. **August 11th 8:30 – 9:30, Harbour C**



## **Other “Not-To-Be-Missed” Presentations include:**

### **Steps Toward Preparing People with Complex Communication Needs for Emergencies and Medical Encounters**

*By: Sarah Blackstone and Harvey Pressman*

Blackstone and Pressman have discontinued their stand-up comedy routine, but some elements of their previous shows may creep into this interactive session, which will focus on the pressing issue of how to prepare people with complex communication needs (CCN) to communicate effectively and efficiently during the many future medical encounters each will inevitably face over a lifetime. There

will be samples of patient encounter communication boards, a collection of healthcare communication resources and real-life examples of how they are and can be used. The presentation will stress low-cost and no-cost ideas and resources that are readily accessible, easy to use and highly successful at facilitating communication between those with CCN and various healthcare officials. **August 9th 11:00 – 12:00, Pier 3**

**Providing Communication Access for Patients: The Role of AAC Across Healthcare Settings**

*By: Sarah Blackstone, David Beukelman, Kathryn Yorkston, John Costello,  
Richard Hurtig and Lisa Bardach*

During this presentation, authors of the leading (and only) volume on the many faces of patient-provider communication will explore the vast new wave of opportunities that healthcare policies and practices have opened up for SLPs. As health care shifts from volume-based to ‘value-based care’ policies in the United States, SLPs are becoming the “key point person on interprofessional teams” (Paul Rao). The focus will be on pertinent areas and scenarios, including outpatient visits, emergency/disaster situations, rehabilitation, ICU and hospice, where SLPs can make a difference in patient-provider communication across the healthcare continuum. **August 10th 8:30 – 10:30, Metro West**

**Producing a Bilingual Training Video: A Cross-Border Collaboration**

*By: Gabriela Berlanga Ramirez, Sarah W. Blackstone, Christine Roman-Lantzy*

Do you sometimes struggle with how best to use AAC tools in settings outside of the classroom and try to engage and support family members? This presentation will delve into theory, evidence and suggestions from international experts that feature a child’s primary Circles of Communication. Through a bilingual video, in English and Spanish, Latin American and U.S. experts feature how they have collaborated with the family of a child with severe physical disabilities, cortical visual impairment and complex communication needs for the past four years, featuring some of the concrete, practical tools and examples of how close collaboration can make a difference in young children’s lives, as well as in the lives of the adults who care about them. **August 9th 16:00 – 17:00, Pier 8**

**Enhancing Function and Participation for Children with Complex Communication Needs and Cortical Visual Impairment: Frameworks for Success**

*By: Christine Roman-Lantzy, Ph.D. and Sarah W. Blackstone, Ph.D.*

What happens when two world-renowned experts from two different fields collaborate to make things better for children with severe disabilities? During this engaging presentation, you will learn more about what CVI is, hear about tools to diagnose CVI and how it affects an individual child and uncover a framework for adapting a child’s environment to maximize his or her communication, learning, motor functioning and participation, while also addressing vision. **August 11th 8:30 – 10:30, Metro East**

**Communication Matters (ISAAC UK) and BUILD European Subcommittee; Collaborating to Support European AAC Developing Nations**

*By: Dorothy Fraser and Catherine Harris*

How does ISAAC promote AAC in emerging nations? Join the authors of this presentation and learn about the latest practical steps in team work, knowledge sharing, diversity, cultural and economic inclusion, social media and networking real people are actually taking as it relates to AAC and Assistive Technology (AT). Delegates will also be provided with information on progressions and future aims of 2 specific areas requested by professionals and PWU AAC in European AAC developing nations: communication in healthcare and integration in society of young adults who use AAC . International collaboration is key to aiding those with CCN and communication vulnerabilities through expanding awareness and use of AAC and AT knowledge and skills, so you won't want to miss this unique perspective.

**August 11th 15:00 – 15:30, Harbour A**

**ISAAC BUILD Committee**

*By: Sarah Yong*

The BUILD (Emerging AAC Countries) Meeting is an opportunity for ISAAC members from various countries to share, network, dream and plan for how we can advance AAC in countries where the work is emerging or developing. There will be sharing of projects happening around the world. There will also be a 'book table' with AAC resources, donated by ISAAC members, to take home. If you are from an Emerging AAC country or would like to get involved with this exciting work, please do make the time to join us. Hope to see many of you there! **August 11th 12:30 – 14:00, Pier 9**

**Patient Provider Communication Presentations at ISAAC 2016**

*This year there are an increasing number of presentations at ISAAC's biennial conference dealing with the burgeoning field of patient-provider communication. Stimulated in part by the 2015 publication of the Blackstone, Beukelman, Yorkston book on this topic (Plural Press) and the growth of the patient:provider communication web site ([www.patientprovidercommunication.org](http://www.patientprovidercommunication.org)), this is an area where the need for greater support for people who rely on augmentative communication is becoming more and more obvious. For those who are interested in concentrating in this topic at the ISAAC conference, we list here nine additional presentations that expand and extend on the presentations by Blackstone, Pressman, Beukelman et al. described more fully above.*

*Putting Patient-Provider Communication at the Forefront: Overcoming Barriers through Phases of Pediatric - Altschuler, Quarles, and Santiago, **09-Aug-16 8:30-10:30 Harbour B***

*Communication with Patients with Acquired Speech-Language Disorders in a Rehabilitation Hospital - Awad, Ben-Or, Katz, and Lebel, **09-Aug-16 8:30-9:00 Pier 2***

*Providing Communication Access for Patients: The Role of AAC Across Healthcare Settings - Bardach and Beukelman **10-Aug-16 8:30-10:30 Metro West***

*AAC as universal design within dental services for children - Bengtsson **11-Aug-16 11:00-11:30 Pier 9***

Nurses' perspectives toward patient communication using a low technology communication board in an IC U- Bornman, Gropp, and Johnson **08-Aug-16 11:00-11:30 Pier 2**

Patient-centered conversations with a patient who has multiple disabilities in a medical setting - Chinen and Kiyasu **10-Aug-16 16:00 Queen's Quay**

Putting Patient-Provider Communication at the Forefront: Overcoming Barriers through Phases of Pediatric - Costello and Francin **09-Aug-16 8:30-10:30 Harbour B**

Providing Communication Access for Patients: The Role of AAC Across Healthcare Settings – Costello, Hurtig and Yorkston **10-Aug-16 8:30-10:30 Metro West**

Pediatric Nurses' Perceptions and Experiences with AAC - McCarthy and McRoy **10-Aug-16 11:00 Queen's Quay**

*SantéBD : Penser l'accès aux soins pour tous types de handicap* - Negre, APF, **11-Aug-16 2:00, Pier 9**

*We hope to see, meet and greet many of you there!*



## **Communication Matters Conference, celebrating their 30th anniversary**

The annual Communication Matters conference will take place on September 11-13, 2016, at the University of Leeds. The conference is the UK's leading annual AAC event, with a diverse programme of plenaries, presentations, posters and an exhibition held over two and a half days and provides a unique forum to meet and exchange information with representatives from all disciplines associated with AAC, including people who use AAC, parents, carers, professionals and suppliers of AAC equipment. Communication Matters encourages and supports people who use AAC to attend. For more information, visit the conference website at <http://www.communicationmatters.org.uk/page/conference>.

## **Assistive Technology and Communication: Conference on Advanced Technology for People with Disabilities**

Croatia September 1-2, 2016

Under the patronage of the President of Croatia, Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović

This 2 day conference hosted in the Westin Hotel, Zagreb, Croatia brings together 16 presenters from nine different countries and has three broad themes:

1. Generating Possibilities; 2. Improving Quality of Life; 3. Focus on the User

To learn more about the conference programme and specific topics, or to register, visit the conference website at <http://www.ataac.eu/en/>.

## **Farewell Note**

Thank you to all who kindly contributed items for this edition of our CSWN newsletter. We look forward to seeing many of you at ISAAC Conference in Toronto in August where the theme is **“Bringing us Together”**.

My farewell thought:

Let’s take this positive theme from the conference and continue bringing people together in future newsletters through information from even more countries.

Please send enquires and contributions to my email address [dotfraser2@gmail.com](mailto:dotfraser2@gmail.com)

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