

## Message from the ISAAC President

Juan Bornman

Dear ISAAC-Family,

We don't always notice the clouds – they simply form a part of the sky. However, at times they unexpectedly change to command our attention and capture our imagination.

The year 2021 was like a giant cloud floating through the air – sometimes passing by unnoticed and other times fueled by a headstrong wind. We all know that time flies, and in 2021, I sometimes had the distinct feeling that it was applying for a Formula 1 racing position! Definitely not the kind of traveler who knows that the journey is just as important as the final destination! Where has the year gone?

While reflecting, I was reminded that despite the speed at which the year moved, we were not left empty-handed. Sometimes we had our heads in the clouds as 2021 brought precious memories with lasting impressions to cherish forever. Who will forget ISAAC Connect, our first virtual event that enabled more persons who use AAC and their families than ever to participate? Despite not being physically together, this event allowed us to collaborate,

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connect and grow together. And what about the Prelude to ISAAC film on the history of AAC and ISAAC? The film made us realize how far we've come as we were able to stand on the shoulders of giants in our field. We are also reminded of AAC Awareness month in October that had active participation from all corners of the globe.

However, during 2021, there were also times when we were desperately trying to repel the dark clouds as we learned about the passing of some of the leaders in our field.

During the past year, we were also reminded that all the clouds that come into our lives do not necessarily result in rain or stormy weather. Sometimes they are simply there to ensure a breath-taking sunset full of colour!

How I wish I could share an African sunset with each and every ISAAC member. Everyone should get to experience the sheer glory of the sun dipping down into a vibrant pot of gold against the backdrop of a fever tree in the savanna bush.

For me, the enchantment of clouds lies in the fact that they are constantly changing and moving – sometimes beautiful and harmless and other times ominous and angry.

In 2021, we all came across thin, fleece cirrus clouds that come quickly and are gone just as fast. These clouds remind us that some things and people float into and out of our lives, in an almost weightless manner, and that this is okay!



Some situations and tasks were like low-lying stratus clouds that form a cloud bank and demand a methodical layer-by-layer approach from us.

But without *clouding* things over, I also want to remind us of the cumulus clouds. These are the clouds that become bigger and bigger to turn into cumulonimbus thunderclouds as their bellies fill up. They take up the horizon and block out the light – until they break open.

These are the clouds that gradually take over our vision until we can see nothing else on the horizon and have to agree with Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's, "*Heavy clouds were putting out the stars*". This is when our souls respond by bursting open with water pouring from our eyes, until the clouds are gone, and we can see clearly once again.

At these times, we should be reminded that behind even the most thunderous of clouds – the sun is still shining. When we feel stuck, we need to look up at the clouds and be reminded that everything changes.

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## Message from the ISAAC President ...continued

Of course, a cloud does not know why it moves at a certain speed or in a particular direction – that is all determined by the air currents. This is true for humans too. If we do not live in a mindful way, aware of which wind drives us and what fuels us from the inside, we will be like clouds drifting on a random sky.

No wonder there are so many cloud idioms: we could be on cloud nine, or have our heads in a cloud, or there could be a cloud on the horizon that eventually leads to a cloud of suspicion!

Just as clouds consist of droplets packed together, so is a circle of friends and family.

We all need to be part of a cloud (*and not only the cloud where we store data!*) and attempt to be a rainbow in someone else's life. So, thank you to everyone who was part of our ISAAC cloud this year!

*Messages from ISAAC's  
President and Executive  
Director are available in  
French, Italian, and  
Portuguese translation on our  
[website](#).*

Thank you for allowing us to stand together in the midst of all the haste and constant movement.



As 2021 draws to an end, I hope you have some time to lie flat on your back and watch the clouds float and drift in the heavens to remind us that there are no architectural rules for building a castle in the clouds.

“*May you be re-energised and rejuvenated by simply sitting and watching the clouds, like we used to do when we were children.*”

In 2022, may we all live – not with cloudy vision – yet with our eyes on the clouds!

*Juan*

[Juan Bornman](#)

ISAAC President 2020 -2022

# From the Executive Director

## Franklin Smith

Welcome to the December 2021 edition of The ISAAC Communicator.

As we prepare to close out 2021, I am sure all of you reading this around the world are like me: looking forward to “turning the page” on this year, and greeting 2022 with a renewed sense of hope and excitement.

Here at the ISAAC International office, we are gearing up for 2022, which we are planning on and hoping will be the year that our in-person 19<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference (Conference Cancún) will finally take place!

### **ISAAC 2022 Membership**

Membership renewal packages on behalf of ISAAC International, ISAAC-Australia, ISAAC-Canada, ISAAC-US (USSAAC) and, our newest Chapter, ISAAC-Singapore, were sent out in November 2021.

If you are a member of ISAAC through either the International office or one of the above-named Chapters, please find that email and, if you have not yet done so, renew your membership for 2022.

If you are a member of ISAAC through any of our other Chapters around the world, you should be hearing from, or may have already been contacted by, your Chapter for 2022 membership renewal.



Membership renewals for 2022 are so far significantly outpacing renewals from this same time last year, which is, of course, great news! We look forward to providing all our members around the world with exciting and varied opportunities to stay connected with, and grow, our field of AAC.

### **ISAAC Manager of Communications**

ISAAC International has been privileged to have, as part of our Toronto staff team, an amazing individual serving in the capacity as our Manager of Communications for well over 10 years now.



Heather Stonehouse (left, pictured above with ISAAC President 2008-10 Mary Blake Huer), has worked [with six \(6\) consecutive ISAAC Presidents](#) during her tenure with us beginning in 2008.

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From the Executive Director  
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**Heather has now announced her retirement, and her last day with ISAAC International will be December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021.**

Heather's departure will certainly leave "large shoes to fill" on our ISAAC staff team. We are currently in the process of hiring an individual to assume the responsibilities of ISAAC's Manager of Communications. Although we are confident in securing a candidate who possesses the mix of skill sets, experience, and personality to succeed in the role, no one can ever truly "replace" Heather!

I myself will carry very fond memories of working with Heather, which included travel to conferences in Pittsburgh, Lisbon, Toronto (yes, travel within our city of Toronto can quite often be problematic!), and Gold Coast.

Heather, we all wish you and your family all the good things that life brings, and we look forward to staying connected with you through ISAAC.

### **October 2021 AAC Awareness Month**

By all measures, this year's AAC Awareness Month was a tremendous success!

Thanks very much to all our ISAAC International stakeholders from around the world who were involved in [many different](#)

[projects and activities](#) to drive greater awareness of AAC!

### **Conference Cancún**

ISAAC International continues to plan towards the hosting of our 19<sup>th</sup> Biennial conference in Cancún, Mexico during July/August 2022.

We are currently involved in discussions with our venue host, the Cancún International Convention Centre (ICC), with regard to in-person protocols and event management procedures at their facility, and more broadly in Cancún and the state of Quintana Roo.

All ISAAC members can expect to hear further details as they become available early in 2022.

**In the meantime, the Conference Cancún online registration system is [open and available](#).**

As always, I welcome your thoughts and feedback. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly, at [franklin@isaac-online.org](mailto:franklin@isaac-online.org), should you require any further information or assistance.

Regards and thanks,

[Franklin Smith](#)

## News



### Communication Matters (ISAAC UK)



#### Communication Matters International AAC Conference 2021 - #CM2021conf

In September 2021 we successfully held our first ever all [virtual conference](#). Thank you to those who were able to attend — we hope you enjoyed it. The survey for feedback has closed and you can read more about the feedback we have received in the November issue of the Communication Matters Journal.

Do remember that everyone who registered for the conference has access until 17<sup>th</sup> December 2021 to watch the presentations they missed. So, unlike a face-to-face conference, you can watch everything you are interested in!



#### AAC Awards 2021 - #AACawards21

We also held our second AAC Awards ceremony (this time virtually) at the end of the conference, which celebrated all facets of the wonderful AAC community in the UK. You can find details of all the worthy winners on our website [here](#).

#### Communication Matters International AAC Conference 2022 - #CM2022conf

We have already started planning for the Communication Matters International AAC Conference in 2022. This will be held at the University of Leeds (UK) from 11-13 September 2022. We hope you can make it so please put the dates in your diaries now!

Please follow us on Facebook

(<https://www.facebook.com/communicationmattersuk>) or Twitter

([https://twitter.com/Comm\\_Matters](https://twitter.com/Comm_Matters)) to get updates about the conference and if you would like to be added to our mailing list please email

[admin@communicationmatters.org.uk](mailto:admin@communicationmatters.org.uk).

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## News

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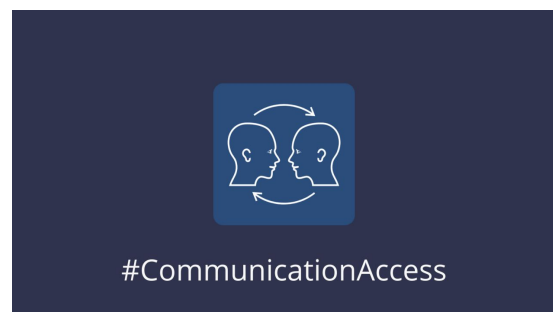
*The Parkinson Building at the University of Leeds, UK,  
lit up yellow for the Communication Matters AAC  
Awards 2021*

### Communication Access UK - #CommunicationAccess

Last November, with help from partner organisations including Communication Matters, the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists launched a free training tool for businesses and individuals to help them become better at communicating with others in an inclusive way.

Over 4,500 organisations and individuals have registered for Communication Access eLearning already, but we're keen to encourage more sign-ups.

Wednesday 17 November 2021, marked the initiative's first anniversary and we raised awareness of the training and how it benefits people with communication difficulties by posting public-facing content on our social media channels, using the hashtag #CommunicationAccess and signposting people to [www.communication-access.co.uk](http://www.communication-access.co.uk).



### ISAAC Denmark



ISAAC Denmark would like to nominate Edda Medici, as a person who has innovated and provided a contribution to the field of AAC.

Edda Medici, Ålborg, Denmark

[medici@kram-consult.dk](mailto:medici@kram-consult.dk)

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## News

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Edda Medici participated at the founding meeting of ISAAC Denmark in 1983, and she has since then (and even before) been a person with true commitment in the field of AAC. She has been creating a lot of AAC materials, sharing it with all of us, always committed to improve the access to AAC for the users, inspiring us all to move forward.



She is fantastic to establish and maintain networking both nationally and internationally. She is now 73, but she

still does not have much spare time, continuing keeping up to date with the field of AAC, especially PODD. She is still contributing to the developing of PODD, both in Denmark and other countries.

She has been translating a lot of relevant materials in the field, among them Pragmatic Profile and the PODD system.

She has been teaching PODD in Denmark and in many other European countries for many years (even in French). She will soon be going

to Croatia. She is an excellent communicator in her field. She is one of the founders of the TAVS group, an AAC network, which has contributed with books, inspiration, and presentations at our last conference in Australia.

She is very helpful to others and very humble as well, and we think she deserves a thank you from ISAAC international.

## BUILD Committee



[The BUILD Committee](#) is a dynamic group that focuses on the work of AAC in emerging countries, finding practical way to support the development of services.

On November 23rd, the BUILD committee had a meeting with members from Chile, Brazil, Bulgaria, USA, South Africa, Philippines and Croatia. The strength of ISAAC is in its members!

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## News

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## United Nations

### December 3rd was the UN International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

The theme for this year was: “Leadership and participation of persons with disabilities toward an inclusive, accessible and sustainable post-COVID-19 world”.

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) shared a message of leadership, participation and inclusion on the eve of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

According to UN DESA's Daniela Bas, Director of the Division for Inclusive Social Development, "A more coordinated approach and a change of mindset from the international level down to the local communities are needed to overcome barriers that increase the gap of inequalities in the social, economic, environmental, cultural, and political dimensions of life that may prevent persons with disabilities to use their abilities to benefit all." View the full article [here](#).

[Learn more](#) about the International Day of Persons with Disabilities and the virtual events that took place to commemorate the day.

## ISAAC Norway



ISAAC Norway formally elected a new board at their general meeting in November.

The new board consists of board members: Stine Indergård, Odd Helge Winje, Solfrid Lie, Lisa Magnussen, Gry Sikveland and Bente Johansen. Congratulations!



## ISAAC Connect



2021 would not have been the same without **ISAAC Connect**, ISAAC's first-ever virtual event.

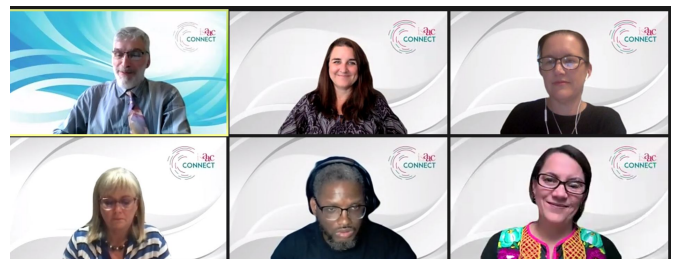
ISAAC Connect took place from August 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> and was an absolute success! From events like the Lightning Pitch, the Prelude to ISAAC Film Premiere and Cooking with our Leaders, the ISAAC community was able to stay connected like never before.

We hope to see you at Conference Cancún taking place in 2022. Register here:  
<https://isaac-online.org/english/conference-cancun/conference-registration/>



“COVID-19 has been bad. But, there are also so many good things that have happened because of the problems COVID-19 has caused. The ability to meet virtually has really been tested and shown to be a viable way to bring people together. I attended some virtual conventions this past year. ISAAC really “hit it out of the park”. The sound and video were great in the presentations. And the socials were a blast.”

– Patrick Regan



Thank you to everyone who helped make this event happen and to all those who participated. You made ISAAC Connect unforgettable!

# AAC Awareness Month



OCTOBER 2021 | #AACaware21

GET OUT, SPEAK UP AND BREAK THROUGH THE SCREEN IN A RECOVERING WORLD

The ISAAC community once again came together this year for an extraordinary AAC Awareness Month in October.

With projects like the Bruce Baker AAC Globalization Initiative and the “This Is Not About Me” film, ISAAC continued to expand its reach in the AAC community.

Many ISAAC chapters hosted their own events in October, including ISAAC Brazil’s first national meeting and ISAAC Denmark’s seminar.

ISAAC chapters also excelled with the use of virtual platforms in ISAAC Singapore’s filmmaking workshop and USSAAC’s virtual auction. Not to mention all the great webinars that took place!

Amazing job in raising awareness of AAC!

## ISAAC-Taiwan and ISAAC Singapore

As a follow-up to AAC Awareness Month, ISAAC-Taiwan invited Sarah Yong and her team members from ISAAC Singapore to present the online seminar: **AAC Also Can! – Experiences from Singapore** on November 28, 2021.

This session was hosted by the Department of Speech Language Pathology and Audiology at Chung Shan Medical University, ISAAC-Taiwan, and Maria Social Welfare Foundation.

ISAAC-Taiwan and Chung Shan Medical University cooperatively disseminated several short versions of “**AAC Introduction**” and “**Myths for Dummies**” posted on Facebook (@CSMUSLPA) beginning in October 2021.



These 23 posts reached over 2,300 people and were shared over 100 times.

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## AAC Awareness Month ... continued



### Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication

South Africa's **AAC Awareness Month 31-Day Challenge** was initiated by final year Masters in AAC students at the Centre for AAC, University of Pretoria, under the supervision of Prof. Juan Bornman: Jess Bartram, Pauline Prinsloo, Jodi Zimmerman, Liné Kruger, Gonda Olivier, and Malikah Parker.

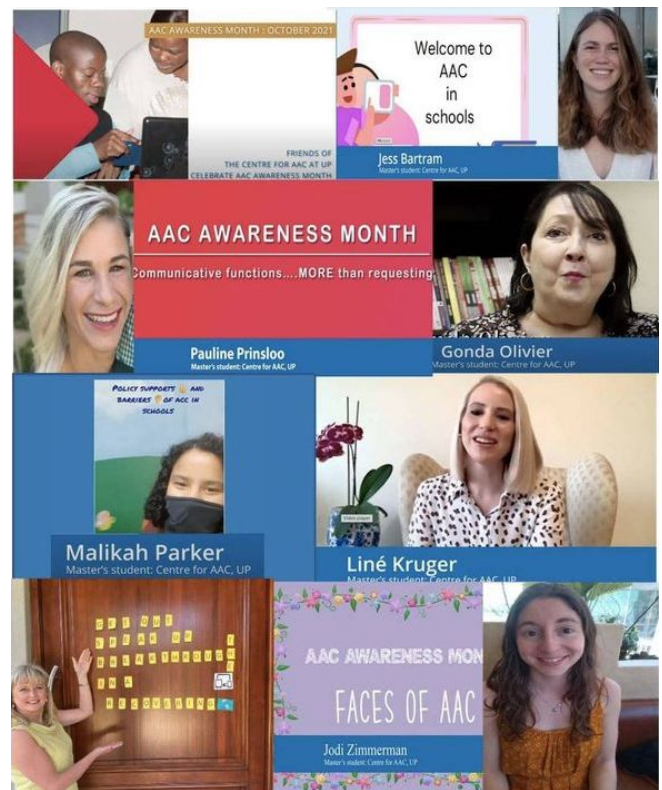
They asked 31 people (many South Africans as well as a few international AAC people) to make 1- to 2-minute videos about their work to create awareness on a variety of AAC-relevant topics.

A new video was launched every day during the month of October on the Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication Facebook Page. The students have made some videos and have also asked former students, teachers and clinicians, parents of children who use AAC, and persons who use AAC to make videos for this challenge. Other students around the world are invited to join in!

Check out all the amazing videos here:  
<https://www.facebook.com/centreforaac>

The AAC Awareness Campaign with its 31 one-minute videos ended on a high note when Edit Micro volunteered to sponsor the six final year Master's students in AAC who initiated the campaign with ISAAC membership for a year!

Thank you Edit Micro for being a part of this success story and for supporting the students' individual careers as they continue to practice in the field of AAC. We salute you for giving back so generously!



## Chapters



ISAAC-Australia • [www.isaacaustralia.com](http://www.isaacaustralia.com)

ISAAC-Brazil • [www.isaacbrasil.org.br](http://www.isaacbrasil.org.br)

ISAAC-Canada • [www.isaac-canada.org](http://www.isaac-canada.org)

ISAAC-Denmark • [www.isaac.dk](http://www.isaac.dk)

ISAAC-Francophone • [www.isaac-fr.org](http://www.isaac-fr.org)

ISAAC-India • [www.isaac.org.in](http://www.isaac.org.in)

ISAAC-Israel • [www.isaac.org.il](http://www.isaac.org.il)

ISAAC-Italy • [www.isaacitaly.it](http://www.isaacitaly.it)

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ISAAC-Norway • [www.isaac.no](http://www.isaac.no)

ISAAC-Poland • [aac.org.pl](http://aac.org.pl)

ISAAC-Singapore • <https://isaac-singapore.org/>

ISAAC-Sweden • [www.isaac-sverige.se](http://www.isaac-sverige.se)

ISAAC-Taiwan • [twsaac.blogspot.com](http://twsaac.blogspot.com)

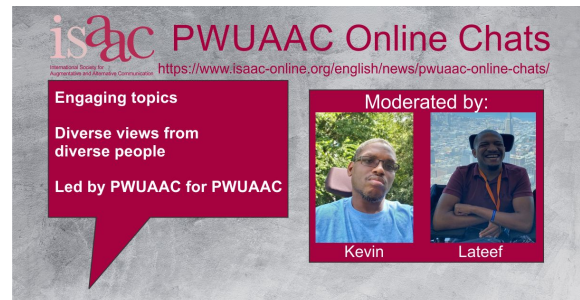
ISAAC-UK • [www.communicationmatters.org.uk](http://www.communicationmatters.org.uk)

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## Contact Us

Do you have a question or comment?  
Please feel free to send an email to  
[feedback@isaac-online.org](mailto:feedback@isaac-online.org)

## PWUAAC Online Chats



Visit [PWUAAC Online Chats](#) on the ISAAC website for information about the next scheduled chat.

## ISAAC Webinars

As of January 2021, most ISAAC webinars and archived recordings are available as a benefit of membership, and accessed through the Members' Only portal. A limited number of [webinar recordings](#) will remain open to the public. Find out how to become an ISAAC member [here](#).



## Our Vision & Mission



*ISAAC's Vision is that AAC will be recognized, valued and used throughout the world.*

*ISAAC's Mission is to promote the best possible communication for people with complex communication needs.*

*ISAAC is a Non-Governmental Organization in consultative status with the United Nations Economic & Social Council.*

## Stay Connected

ISAAC Chapters and members worldwide are invited to submit items of interest from your country or region. News, AAC practice tips, research, personal essays, in article format or as a link to online articles or resources, will be reviewed and made available on the ISAAC website as appropriate. Please send articles and photos to [Nola Millin](#).

## Stay Social

Stay in the loop! Follow ISAAC news & views in the AAC community on our social media!



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## The ISAAC Communicator

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Please contact [Chloe Leon](#).

