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isaac e-news

December 2018

Wishing You All the Joys of the Holiday Season!

What a memorable year 2018 has been! Last July, we held our first-ever Asia-Pacific themed conference on the beautiful Gold Coast in Australia. We are happy to report that it was a tremendous success, with nearly double the attendance of our initial projections. We are thrilled with the spirit of community experienced and reported during Conference 2018. We look forward to our continuing mission of bringing AAC awareness to the world, as we now begin work on Conference 2020, to be held on the beautiful Riviera Maya in Mexico.

Our new Executive Board began its work on October 1st, a date that coincided with the launch of [AAC Awareness Month 2018](#). With the overall theme “Dare to Lead,” ISAAC as an organization celebrated this annual opportunity to increase awareness about AAC. ISAAC members held events and activities around the world that brought to life the visions of people who use AAC toward future leadership opportunities – locally, nationally, and internationally. Using targeted email communications and frequent social media updates, we saw a significant increase in engagement with ISAAC and AAC during October 2018. Thanks to everyone for participating!

Giving our efforts a much-appreciated boost was our sponsor, [The Attainment Company](#). With their support, we were able to extend our digital reach and create an exciting graphic identity to draw attention to AAC Awareness Month 2018.

“The future is collaborative,” said Dr Jordan Nguyen, a Vietnamese-Australian biomedical engineer and visionary, in his special presentation at ISAAC 2018. At ISAAC, we are looking forward to a collaborative year ahead with our Chapters, members, and friends in AAC.

With thanks to you all, and our very best wishes,

[Meredith Allan](#)
ISAAC President

[Franklin Smith](#)
ISAAC Executive Director



Update from Meredith Allan, ISAAC President

2018 is coming to an end, but in the last week I have been very busy representing ISAAC at events, forums and workshops.

Women with Disabilities Victoria launched a DVD and resource booklet on “Our Right to Safety and Respect” – safety from violence and abuse www.wdv.org.au. I was on a discussion panel representing the AAC community. I spoke about the embedded silence in the AAC culture and the power of the voiced person over us. Our words are meaningless unless the communication partner comprehends and understands us. We cannot rely on the communication partner being able to read what we write, as people are most likely to mis-read conversations – even people with high literacy levels. We must demand to be heard and understood. Our safety depends on it.

Last Thursday night I attended a Deakin University Alumni event where Dr Ulrika Fern from Sweden was speaking. Ulrika has adapted AAC Communication Boards for hospitals in Sweden to help refugees communicate with health professionals. These boards have been translated into 11 languages. *[To find instructions for download, see page 9]. The condition of use is that they are not to be used for profit.* Franklin Smith, ISAAC Executive Director, recently received a request from a UN worker for resources to use in Tanzanian refugee camps. Ulrika and her team made their resources available free.

On Sunday, I attended a full day workshop facilitated by Jens Boenisch and Tobias Bernasconi from Germany on the Core Word Vocabulary. The workshop was sponsored by Deakin University and ISAAC-Australia as part of International Day of Persons with Disabilities on December 3rd. The workshop was booked out two weeks before the event. It was great to see a range of different people attending the workshop – parents, family members, support workers, teachers, and allied health professionals. Jens and Tobias are currently using the core word vocabulary in Germany to teach refugees German. We can all be very proud to see the tremendous work of the AAC community over the past 35 years being used in many ways.

On Monday, I was at a conference for higher degree research students. A woman there saw my sticker, “We NEED Plastic Straws”, and her response was “We DON’T need plastic straws”. I asked the people around, “What is your solution for people with cerebral palsy and others who need straws?” One person responded, “Paper straws” and I responded, “Useless”. Another person responded, “Metal straws”, and I responded, “What if it is a hot drink ... cuts into palate”. Then I offered solutions – bamboo straws and silicone (still being developed) – and then mentioned the cost involved. Two important things that have been said to me recently: Straws have already gone up in price by 50% and we do not want opportunist companies charging \$50 for a packet of straws.

The United Kingdom has banned plastic straws from 2025. Momentum is building in Australia, the United States, and Canada to ban plastic straws. We need to be vigilant in making sure we enter the debate and make sure the issues are known. The issues never end, our voices must be heard!

[Meredith Allan](#)

ISAAC President

International AAC Awareness Month 2018



Amazing people who use AAC doing amazing work, share their powerful stories of leadership, success, and community:

50,000,000 Users Worldwide*

Dare to Lead
50 million people in the world rely on AAC to communicate

isaac
#AACaware18

AAC AWARENESS MONTH 2018 • www.isaac-online.org

*Total number of AAC users quoted is based off ASHA's estimate of the number of users in US, projected onto the global population of 7.7B

Quotes from the infographic:

- "In 2007 I learned to communicate via computer. It changed my life—no one seems to consider that even people who are thought to be intellectually impaired can change as they grow older." — Martin Pletorius, Author
- "It's all about a positive attitude, it's about accepting ourselves...and accepting the difference in others." — Jasja Ghosh, Social worker MSW
- "We have a moral duty to remove the barriers to participation, and to invest sufficient funding and expertise to unlock the vast potential of people with disabilities." — Stephen Hawking
- "As a writer and intellectual who uses AAC, I truly value the ability to express my ideas and to advocate for the AAC community who share some of my experiences." — Lateef McLeod, ISAAC VP for LEAD
- "AAC is more than communication, it's quality of life." — Meredith Adams, ISAAC President 2018-2020
- "...yes, I use a synthesized text-to-speech voice for motivational speaking. But that doesn't mean my life is boring and unfulfilling. Very far from it, in fact!" — Glenda Watson Hyatt, Keynote speaker

AAC Awareness Month 2018, was themed **Dare to Lead**. The entire month of October was dedicated to raising awareness of AAC and to informing the public about the many different ways people communicate using high-tech or low-tech communication aids and innovative communication strategies.

Lateef McLeod, ISAAC LEAD Committee Chair, says, "Thanks to the power of AAC, I am proudly one of those people able to make my voice heard and make an impact on the world around me."

Many individuals and organizations around the world submitted their stories about AAC awareness activities held throughout October, and they

have been posted on our [website](#). We know there are many more! If you'd like us to add your event to our website, please send brief text and photos [here](#).

To find even more AAC awareness activities worldwide, search #AACaware18 on Twitter.



Egypt Awareness Workshop,
St. Peter's School



Open Day at Vidya Sagar, Chennai, India



Lateef McLeod,
ISAAC LEAD
Committee Chair

AAC
Awareness
Month 2018,
sponsored by
[Attainment
Company](#),
dedicated to
helping
people with
disabilities
succeed at
school, work,
and life.

Read Lateef's
AAC Story on
[ISAAC's Blog](#)



ISAAC 2018: Highlights from ISAAC-Brazil

Submitted by Eliana Cristina Moreira, President, ISAAC-Brazil

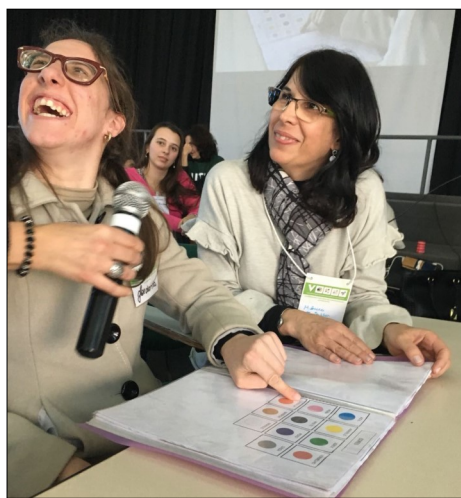


Membros da ISAAC-Brazil representando o Brasil em trabalhos científicos e reuniões.



Five Brazilian professionals participated in this event. It was a great learning opportunity and gave us new ideas to implement at our next conference.

ISAAC 2018: Highlights from ISAAC-Brazil *continued*



The V Regional Meeting took place in Curitiba, with 270 participants. It was a success!!! Clinicians and teachers discussed their work and AAC users presented about their life, recreation, problems, and dreams.



Post-ISAAC 2018: ISAAC-Brazil encouraged its members to organize activities in their communities to promote AAC during October 2018. You will find a summary of their activities on the ISAAC website, [here](#). **Also:** Planning for the **VIII Brazilian Congress of AAC**, December 4-6, 2019 is underway! Details to follow.



News from ISAAC-Denmark

DIALOGUE WITH MICROSOFT – ACCESSIBILITY FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

Some time ago we cooperated with an AAC centre in Hillerød, Denmark, to encourage Microsoft to increase accessibility for social media (e.g., Skype) for people with cognitive and/or physical challenges. In October 2018 we attended a Skype meeting with five Microsoft employees, each with different backgrounds and responsibilities. We observed their responsiveness and curiosity concerning the theme of accessibility. Michael Hjort-Pedersen from the [Kommunikationscentret Hillerød](#) presented the different challenges and ideas for solutions. At this meeting it was evident that Microsoft wants to reach as many users as possible via social media and they expressed significant social responsibility to provide the best possible accessibility.

We discussed four different kinds of accessibility:

1. Physical accessibility
2. Cognitive accessibility
3. Visual/auditory accessibility
4. “Sound accessibility”

We look forward to ongoing cooperation with Microsoft. However, Microsoft is not the only company from which we would like to see increased

accessibility. For this, we need international effort and support.

CONTACT WITH GOVERNMENT

We have contacted the Danish Government with suggestions for the Minister of Education to formally include AAC into education policy and for the Minister of Higher Education and Science to highlight the need of teaching AAC to students who through their later jobs will meet people with complex communication needs. We have not received answers to our requests at this time.

AWARENESS MONTH 2018

We contacted all 98 of the local Disability Councils in Denmark, suggesting that they focus on citizens with communication disabilities in each Local Government.

Specifically, we asked:

- Are communication and the need for AAC solutions a natural part of each year’s action plan for citizens with disabilities?
- What is the educational background for professionals who come into contact with citizens with complex communication needs – and what expectations exist from leaders and politicians

...continued

ISAAC-DENMARK ... continued

about the knowledge and competencies of the professionals, according to these people?

- Is time scheduled in a way that the staff is able to support the citizens to develop and communicate via AAC?
- Are there in each age group possibilities for relevant education in and with AAC solutions for people unable to speak, and how do you involve the family?
- Do you have the option to obtain special knowledge related to citizens with complex communication needs and do professionals know how to get it?
- How do you pass on and coordinate knowledge about communication in families and within professional arenas? This applies both to changing between different daily arenas and through larger transitions, for instance, between kindergarten, school, education, job, home, and housing?

AAC USERS' "AUTUMN GATHERING"

This has become an annual event in our ISAAC calendar. This year the users had presentation and dialogue on the theme: Sexuality and disability.

Another theme was accessibility for AAC users to use "ordinary" technology. A workplace in Denmark showed how AAC users can become capable of making video reports and



*Translation of the text on the computer:
"I have got a lot of new knowledge"*

presentations (for instance, as they have done in the Ministry of Social Affairs). The participants also had time to compare setups on different AAC devices. The gathering also featured a party and swimming in the pool.

Definitely the theme of the gathering was important for the participants and among other things they told us how important the vocabulary about the subject of sexuality is. We will bring their ideas further to the seminar on sexuality.



...continued

isaac ISAAC-DENMARK ... continued

SEMINAR ON SEXUALITY

Another Awareness Month activity was moved to January 2019 for different reasons.

In cooperation with the national CP organization and a national organization called LEV (relatives and citizens with learning disabilities), ISAAC-Denmark has arranged a day for professionals, relatives, and citizens with special needs. We are trying to come closer to questions like:

How broad a definition of “sexuality” should we use? How can you experience your sexuality if you have psychological or physical challenges? What are your rights and possibilities when you are dependent on help in your home?

Which problems can arise in the relations between the citizen and the helper? How can you get a vocabulary around this subject as an AAC user, and how can you choose the right words?

ISAAC STAFF CHANGES

ISAAC extends a warm welcome to [Carol Silverberg](#), who is ISAAC’s new Membership Coordinator as of January 2019.

On behalf of ISAAC International, the Council, Executive Board, and staff would like to once again express their sincere appreciation to Teraiz El-Deir for her years of service, and we wish her well in her retirement.



Delegates represented at ISAAC 2018



From Sweden: AAC Resources for Refugees

Submitted by
Ulrika Ferm

Dart, the Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication and Assistive Technology at Sahlgrenska University Hospital, Region Västra Götaland in Sweden, has developed two resources called KomHIT Flykting (ComeHere Refugee) and bildstod.se.

At www.kom-hit.se/flykting you can watch a movie (there is English text if you press the button down to the right), which explains how speech therapists, linguists and computational linguists have collaborated with health care and dental care professionals from different organization and hospitals in producing a large number of pictorial support material for information and face-to-face communication in different care activities. The project started in March 2016 as a response to the large number of people fleeing to and seeking asylum in Sweden. It is supported by state funding allocated for handling the refugee situation in Sweden and will continue through 2019.

If you click at the boxes at <https://www.kom-hit.se/flykting/verksamheter-och-bildstod/>, you will find different picto sheets that can be downloaded and printed for free. We are working to get a better English translation of the

text on the web page. All material has been or is about to be translated into eleven different languages (<https://www.kom-hit.se/flykting/verksamheter-och-bildstod/infektionssjukvard/>) English is coming.

All material can also be found and changed according to your preferences at www.bildstod.se. This is how to do it: 1) Find the picto sheet that you want to use at www.kom-hit.se/flykting/verksamheter-och-bildstod/. 2) Look at and copy the heading in black at the top of the picto sheet. 3) Go to www.bildstod.se. 4) Paste the heading into the space where it says Sök (or Search if you changed the language to English). 5) Press Sök. The picto sheet will appear and you can open and modify it as you want.

It is all for free and we are very, very happy if it can be used in the refugee camps in Tanzania, or wherever needed!



Meredith Allan, ISAAC President (left)
with Ulrike Ferm

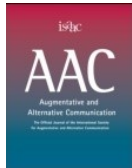
ISAAC RESOURCES



AAC CURRENT ISSUE

[ONLINE HERE](#)

Follow @AACjourn on Twitter!



Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group

AAC JOURNAL NEWS

ISAAC extends our heartfelt appreciation to Martine Smith and Bronwyn Hemsley for their tremendous leadership as editors of the **AAC Journal** over the past number of years. We warmly welcome Ralf W. Schlosser and Rajinder Koul, who will be taking over as editors in January 2019. Best of luck, Ralf and Rajinder!

2018 ISAAC MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

2018 ISAAC Membership Directory in PDF is available here, in the [Members Only](#) section of the ISAAC website.

Tales of ISAAC

Memories of the very beginnings of AAC and ISAAC, shared by some of the original founding members as well as other ISAAC members from the early days. More information and a free PDF download [available here](#).

CSWN NEWSLETTER

ISAAC publishes the CSWN Newsletter twice each year, with its goal being to offer practical information to those interested in AAC and assistive technology in areas of the world where these fields are still emerging. It aims to present new ideas that are easily adaptable across settings. To view the December 2018 issue and archives, please [click here](#).

It's Time to Renew your ISAAC Membership!

If you are one of our valued Chapter members, please respond to your Chapter in a timely fashion to ensure that your membership is renewed for 2019. If you are an ISAAC International member, please new directly with the international office.

For 2019 and 2020, the ISAAC Executive Board approved the continuation of a "no additional cost" subscription to ISAAC's scientific journal, AAC, for all Institutional and Corporate members.

****NEW for 2019**** In order to better meet the needs of our Chapters (current or future) in developing countries (as defined by the World Bank), the ISAAC Executive Board authorized the creation of a new group of Chapter membership rates specifically for these Chapters.

All of the above-noted 2019 Membership Renewal information has already been forwarded to members of the ISAAC Council.

isaac Chapters

[ISAAC-Australia](#)

(www.isaacaustralia.com)

[ISAAC-Brazil](#)

(isaac.org.br)

[ISAAC-Canada](#)

(www.isaac-canada.org)

[ISAAC-Denmark](#)

(www.isaac.dk)

[ISAAC-FSC](#)

(www.isaac-fr.org)

[ISAAC-India](#)

(www.ayjnihh.nic.in)

[ISAAC-Israel](#)

(isaac.org.il)

[ISAAC-Italy](#)

(www.isaacitaly.it)

[ISAAC-NF](#)

(www.isaac-nf.nl)

[ISAAC-Norway](#)

(www.isaac.no)

[ISAAC-Poland](#)

[ISAAC-Sweden](#)

(www.isaac-sverige.se)

[ISAAC-Taiwan](#)

(twsaac.blogspot.tw)

[ISAAC-UK](#)

(www.communicationmatters.org.uk)

[ISAAC-US](#)

(www.ussaac.org)

At the ISAAC Council Meeting held on July 22, 2018, on Gold Coast, Australia, updates were presented by the ISAAC Chapter representatives in attendance. You can find these presentations incorporated into the PDF titled, "[ISAAC 2018 Council Meeting Presentation](#)" posted in the *Members Only* section of the ISAAC website.

ISAAC has 15 Chapters worldwide. For information about how you can participate in ISAAC's mission, contact the organizations listed above, or ISAAC International for areas not listed.

CONTACT US!

Do you have a question or comment? Please feel free to send an email to

feedback@isaac-online.org



ISAAC se complace en anunciar que el próximo XIX Congreso de la Sociedad Internacional de Comunicación Aumentativa y Alternativa, ISAAC 2020, se llevará a cabo en la **RIVIERA MAYA, QUINTANA ROO, MÉXICO.**

1-2 DE AGOSTO

Campamento CAA, Talleres Preconferencia, Juntas Ejecutivas y del Consejo

3-6 DE AGOSTO

Congreso Principal, Riviera Maya, Quintana Roo, MÉXICO

ÚNETE Y PARTICIPA en eventos de CAA, perspectivas, lo último en investigaciones e innovaciones clínicas, talleres, seminarios, exhibiciones, eventos sociales, entretenimiento y todo lo que esperas de un congreso de ISAAC ¡y mucho más!.

**Anótalo en tu calendario y aparta
la fecha para ISAAC 2020 en México**

Para mayor información consulta nuestro sitio web
www.isaac-online.org y síguenos en **#ISAAC2020** en Twitter

isaac
International Society for
Augmentative and Alternative Communication

www.isaac-online.org



ISAAC is excited to announce that the 19th Biennial Conference of the International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication, **ISAAC 2020**, will be held on the **RIVIERA MAYA, QUINTANA ROO, MEXICO**.

AUGUST 1-2

AAC Camp, Pre-Conference Workshops, Executive and Council Meetings

AUGUST 3-6

Main Conference, Riviera Maya, Quintana Roo, Mexico

JOIN US for AAC events and perspectives, the latest in research and clinical innovations, workshops, seminars, exhibits, social events, entertainment - everything you have come to expect from an ISAAC conference, and more!

**Mark your calendar today, and save
the date for ISAAC 2020 in Mexico!**

**For more information, visit us at www.isaac-online.org
and follow #ISAAC2020 on Twitter.**

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International Society for
Augmentative and Alternative Communication

www.isaac-online.org

**INTERNATIONAL
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AUGMENTATIVE &
ALTERNATIVE
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www.isaac-online.org

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](#).

ISAAC E-News is published four times each year. Comments on this issue are welcome. Please contact [Heather Stonehouse](#).



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 and Social Council (ECOSOC).

Executive Board 2018-2020

Meredith Allan
President, Australia

Gabriela Berlanga, Vice-President
without Portfolio, Mexico

Juan Bornman
President-Elect, South Africa

Sally Clendon, Vice-President without
Portfolio, New Zealand

Nadia Browning,
Chair of the Council, Brazil/Canada

Dorothy Fraser, Vice-President for
BUILD, Scotland, UK

Signhild Skogdahl, Chair-Elect of the
Council, Norway

Lateef McLeod, Vice-President for
LEAD, USA

Staff

Franklin Smith, Executive Director

Teraiz El-Deir, Membership Coordinator

Heather Stonehouse, Manager of Communications

Nola Millin, Editor, ISAAC Website

Martine Smith and Bronwyn Hemsley
Editors, AAC

Jackie Brown
Editorial Assistant, AAC