



Gregor Renner,
ISAAC President

March 2017

Message from the President

Dear ISAAC Members:

Last time I had the pleasure of reporting on the tremendous efforts of our friends from *Mówić bez Słów* (Speaking without Words), the Polish AAC organization and proposed new ISAAC Chapter. They have been busy promoting AAC not only in Poland but in Central and Eastern Europe as well. There has been an ongoing strong engagement in the organization of the biennial Eastern and Central European Regional Augmentative and Alternative Communication Conference (ECE-AAC Conference). This conference was first held in Hungary in 1997. This year we look forward to the 11th ECE-AAC Conference in Bucharest, Romania (July 4–7, 2017), celebrating the 20th anniversary of this conference. Aldona Mysakowska-Adamczyk – Chair of the ISAAC Council – will be one of the keynote speakers. Many other well-known experts in AAC will give keynotes or otherwise contribute to the program. Find out who they are at <http://www.comunicare-augmentativa.ro/KeynoteSpeakers.html>.

Significant developments in AAC can be seen in many areas of the world. Webinars are one of the ways ISAAC uses to spread the word. The first ISAAC webinar in Spanish was held on Feb. 22nd. It provided an “Introduction to AAC Systems and Communication in Patients with ALS” and was very well attended. If you missed it, you can watch it at <https://www.isaac-online.org/english/news/webinars/>, where you also find the other ISAAC webinars. This positive experience with a Spanish webinar encourages us to invite Chapters all over the world to reach out to persons interested in AAC in their language. Maybe we can see future webinars in Portuguese, Polish, Mandarin, and many other languages.

After the successful conference in Toronto last year, we are working towards the conference next year in Gold Coast, Australia. The core team for ISAAC Conference 2018, consisting of Co-Chairs Sally Clendon (Vice-President for

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Message from the President *...continued*

Conferences), Meredith Allan (President-Elect), Kate Anderson, Jane Farrall, and Gayle Porter, along with Tracy Shepherd (Vice-President without Portfolio) and Franklin Smith (Executive Director), are doing an incredible job here. Jane Farrall and Gayle Porter made a site visit at the beginning of February and are pleased to report that the conference will be at a great venue and that Gold Coast has a lot to offer.

2018 will be a great conference!

With kind regards,
Yours sincerely,

Gregor Renner
ISAAC President
October 2015 - September 2018

From the Executive Director

Welcome to the March 2017 edition of ISAAC E-News. The ISAAC International office continues its work on behalf of the membership around the world, and is pleased to advise on the following initiatives:

Conference 2018 and beyond...

After the tremendous success (both operationally and financially!) of Conference 2016, the entire organization is now engaged at ensuring similar successes for Conference 2018 in Gold Coast, Australia. Our 2018 Conference (<https://www.isaac-online.org/english/conference-2018/>) will represent the very first time an ISAAC Conference will be hosted in Australia, and is a “not to be missed” event!

Message from the President, and From the Executive Director can be found in translation (French, Italian and Portuguese) on the ISAAC website, [here](#).

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AACcess All Areas
ISAAC 2018
GOLD COAST
AUSTRALIA
21-26 JULY 2018

ISAAC Conference 2018 Call for Papers Opens this June Theme: AACcess All Areas

The Conference 2018 Leadership Team is hard at work now on the 2018 Call for Papers, and we anticipate launching the Call during June 2017. The submission portal is currently only available for systems testing. ISAAC is looking forward to publicly announcing the Conference 2018 Call for Papers soon!

ISAAC International is looking forward to welcoming the world to Gold Coast, Australia. For information on this beautiful area, as well as information useful for visitors to Australia, please visit Conference 2018 on our website. Check back regularly for updates.



From the Executive Director

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Make sure to book your calendars for ISAAC Conference 2018, being held from July 21st through July 26th, 2018 in Gold Coast, Australia. We are excited to be promoting the field of AAC in the Asia-Pacific region.

We are also now planning for Conferences 2020 and 2022, and have released official “Letters of Interest” calls for both (<https://www.isaac-online.org/english/news/>). Please take a few minutes to review both of these “calls”, and if you know of anyone interested in hosting one of these future Conferences let them know, as the due dates for submission are fast approaching!

ISAAC 2017 Membership Renewal

Membership renewal packages were sent in November 2016 via email to members of ISAAC through our Chapters in Canada and the United States (on whose behalf ISAAC International manages membership), and to our “international” members. Reminder emails to those who have not yet renewed were also sent out during January and February 2017.

****NEW FOR 2017**** ISAAC International is now managing membership on behalf of ISAAC Australia. Membership renewal

packages were sent in January 2017, and we have also provided reminders to our Australian members who may not yet have renewed.

If you are a 2016 member of ISAAC through ISAAC-Canada, USSAAC, ISAAC-Australia or ISAAC International you should have already received your email renewal package. If you did not receive it, or would like another copy, please send an email to membership@isaac-online.org.

For these members, your renewal can be processed and paid through the ISAAC International Members Only area at <https://www.isaac-online.org/english/members-only/>.

For members of ISAAC through any of our other Chapters, you will be receiving (or should have already received) your 2017 membership renewal notices from them directly.

ISAAC Strategic Planning, 2018-21

The ISAAC Executive Board is currently engaged in its next round of strategic planning, which is a continuation of the very successful strategic planning process initiated during 2011. The existing Strategic Plan, 2012-17, which was approved by

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From the Executive Director

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the ISAAC Council at its 2012 meeting in Pittsburgh (USA), can be found on the ISAAC website at: <https://www.isaac-online.org/english/about-isaac/organization/long-range-plans-operational-plans/>.

Over the course of the coming months, the ISAAC Executive Board, through the Chair of the ISAAC Council, will be presenting preliminary suggestions and ideas for the Council to consider, as we work towards development and refinement of the next phase of our strategic planning. We want all ISAAC members, through your respective Council members, to be involved in this important organizational process!

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

Regards and thanks,

Franklin Smith



@ISAAC_AAC

Stay informed about ISAAC news on social media by clicking on the logos above. Your likes, follows and feedback are much appreciated!



The UN Enable Newsletter is prepared by the Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (DSPD/DESA) with input from UN offices, agencies, funds and programs, as well as from civil society organizations, including organizations of persons with disabilities. Please take a moment to visit their [website](#).

The January-February 2017 *UN Enable Newsletter* as well as past issues going back to 2008 are posted [here](#), in English, French, Spanish, Korean, Portuguese and Swahili. Find out about volunteering to translate the newsletter into your own national/local language, and how to subscribe to the newsletter [here](#).

Interested in Placing an Ad in ISAAC Directory[®] 2017?

The ISAAC Directory[®] contains listings for all Individual, Institutional and Corporate ISAAC members. Listings are provided alphabetically and geographically, and include names, association with ISAAC, addresses, contact numbers, email, website, and background (e.g., person who uses AAC, occupational therapist, manufacturer, speech-language pathologist).

Please visit [our website](#) for advertising rates and deadlines. Contact Franklin Smith, ISAAC Executive Director, at franklin@isaac-online.org for more information and to reserve your ad space in the ISAAC Directory.



Chapter News

New from ISAAC-Italy

We are pleased to announce the release of a new pamphlet with [updated information from our Italian Chapter](#). Please [click here](#) to view the PDF.

*Submitted
by Dorothy
Fraser*

USSAAC News

In the US, changes to Medicaid are being considered by Congress that could cut federal spending and shift more costs to the states. This could lead to fewer services and higher health care costs for low-income families and put older adults, and people with disabilities and their families at risk. In early March USSAAC was part of a group of 100 national organizations signing a letter to Congress to express their objections to taking away health care from the people they represent. Read the full letter [here](#), and please [click here](#) for more information.

The popular USSAAC webinar series continues in 2017, hosted in cooperation with ISAAC. Check out the [schedule for upcoming webinars](#). Past webinar video recordings are posted on the [ISAAC website](#).

Upcoming Conferences: Eastern Europe

Mark your calendars for two exciting conferences later in the year:
July 4-7: 11th Biennial [Eastern and Central European Regional AAC \(ECE-AAC\)](#) conference in Bucharest, Romania.

September 13-15: [Assistive Technology and Communication: Conference on Advanced Technology for People with Disabilities](#), Zagreb, Croatia.

BUILD AAC Committee

[ISAAC BUILD AAC](#) supports the development of augmentative and alternative communication in emerging AAC countries, finding practical ways to offer them support. For updates from around the world, join [ISAAC BUILD AAC](#) on Facebook.

LEAD Committee

The [ISAAC LEAD Project](#) Committee encourages and supports people who use AAC in taking a leadership role within ISAAC. Follow [ISAAC LEAD Project News and Happenings](#) on Facebook.

Family Engagement Committee

The goal of this Committee is to support families of people with communication disabilities around the world. If interested, please join [Family Engagement](#) on Facebook.

Chapter News



Submitted by
Margit
Grønkjær,
ISAAC-
Denmark

In November 2016 the Danish Government changed the composition of some ministries. ISAAC-Denmark therefore wrote to the new ministers for the Ministry for Children and Social Affairs, the Ministry for Higher Education and Science, the Danish Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health and Health-related Social Services for the Elderly. We congratulated and welcomed them, reminding them of the important job they are going to have regarding a special group of Danish children, youngsters, grown ups and elderly citizens: namely those with complex communication needs. We told them about the special knowledge and interventions they need in order to experience the same kind of freedom of speech as all Danish citizens. We informed them about ISAAC and its NGO status in the UN, based on a worldwide volunteering effort.

We also mentioned the complex status of the AAC area and that different aspects belong to different ministries.

We offered our contribution based on relevant issues about AAC. We received friendly thank-you emails. In particular, the Minister for Children and Social Affairs shared her positive reflections on the focus of complex communication needs.

At the time of writing, we are looking forward to our national conference on March 20-21, 2017. To date we have more than 165 participants, which is very satisfying. *[For updates, follow [ISAAC Denmark on Facebook](#).]*

ISAAC was pleased to host a webinar on February 22, 2017, by and for **Spanish-Speaking ISAAC supporters**. The topic was, "Introduction to AAC Systems and Communication in Patients with ALS." Presented in cooperation with [Irisbond](#), this webinar featured two speakers: Sol Solis, Speech-Language Pathologist (Spain) and Leticia Rodriguez, Occupational Therapist (Argentina). The facilitator was Eduardo Jaúregui, CEO and co-founder of Irisbond. A video recording of the webinar and the presentation slides in PDF version are available on the [ISAAC website](#).



Fifth Pacific Regional Conference on Disability

February 20th - 23rd, 2017



*Submitted by
Meredith Allan,
ISAAC President-
Elect*

I was excited when I was invited to attend the 5th Pacific Regional Conference on Disability in Samoa. People from 18 different countries in the Pacific were participating.

The Tanoa Tusitala Hotel in Apia was the venue. The venue was very accessible and I was surprised most of the Hotel staff knew basic signs. It must be part of the Samoan culture to learn sign language.

Although there were many hearing impaired people at the conference, I was the only person there who uses AAC. I was asked to do a presentation in the "Information and Communication Technology" elective. My emphasis was that communication technology is getting more affordable and it soon will be within reach of those in the Pacific region who cannot yet afford it.

The theme of the conference was "Building a more Inclusive and Equitable Pacific". The conference was organized by the Pacific Disability Forum (PDF). The PDF is funded by a grant from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Australian Government. The conference had close to 200 delegates from 18 countries. Last year the Samoan Government ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The Minister for Women and Disabilities attended the conference on at least two days.

It was wet season in Samoa. It rained and rained. Walkways around the hotel were covered so we were kept dry. Ropes were placed around poles in the walkways so that people with visual impairments could navigate themselves to various venues around the Hotel.

The Women's Conference was held before the main conference. There was also a Youth Conference held at same time in a venue 200 metres away. I attended the Women's Conference.

While most Western governments debate climate change, the Pacific Islands are tackling this on the front line. The islands of Kiribati and Tuvalu will be the first to disappear. The PDF and other Pacific Islands Disabled Persons Organizations (DPOs) are fighting hard to get people with disabilities included in disaster plans.

After Cyclone Winston in Fiji in February 2016, women, children and people with disabilities were kept out of the decision-making process for disaster plans.

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Fifth Pacific Regional Conference on Disability

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Since that time funding has been given by ActionAid Australia to inform women about weather patterns and what to do in disasters. This included disaster plans for children and people with disabilities. The men wanted to be involved as they too were largely ignored by decision-makers, so additional meetings were organized for the men.

Violence against women was another major issue that needed greater awareness. There was recognition that research was needed into violence against women with disabilities. It was also recognized that there were

strong women in leadership positions within the PDF, but they needed to access mainstream women's networks to get a stronger voice.

The main conference was opened by the Head of State of Samoa, His Highness Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Efi.

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Ms Catalina Devandas Aguila, gave the keynote address to the main conference. Catalina had flown from Switzerland via Costa Rica to be at the conference. She spoke about the CRPD, saying 172 member states have now ratified the CRPD. The Samoan Government ratified the CRPD last year. The challenge is now is to move governments into legislative reform and action.



Lunch outside the conference venue

Catalina urged us all to participate, to take our “place at the table,” to do the data collection and to use the International organizations if needed. There was a sense that CRPD had been implemented, with only Fiji, Tonga and Solomon Islands still to ratify the Convention. Now we move into the awareness phase.

During the conference. issues of climate change, employment opportunities, advocacy, access and leadership were discussed.

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Fifth Pacific Regional Conference on Disability

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Disaster Management Plans, Risk Reduction and Recovery plans were again priority learning and we were to remind governments to “leave no one behind”.

The final session of the conference concluded with what we could claim:

- Claim progress
- Claim the United Nations CRPD
- Claim Development
- Claim Self-Advocacy & Advocacy Services
- Claim Women – “Look for us and include us.”

The comprehensive outcome statement from the conference was handed to the Deputy Prime Minister of Samoa, Hon. Fiame Naomi Mata’afa, who closed the conference. The outcome statement will be taken to the Pacific Leaders' Forum.

Traditional Samoan dancing, at the Fifth Pacific Regional Conference on Disability



Thanks to Meredith Allan, ISAAC President-Elect, for attending this conference and reporting on behalf of ISAAC.

Photographs courtesy of Meredith Allan

The Australian Communication Access Symbol in 2016

2016 has been another exciting year for Australia's Communication Access Symbol.



isac



In addition to the symbol being registered as a trademark since 2014 in compliance with the Madrid Protocol (1989), the *rules and standards* underpinning communication access have now been accepted for registration with the *Australian Consumer and Competition Commission*. This means that any place where the Communication Access Symbol is displayed must be in compliance with the registered standards for communication access.

Submitted by
Barbara Solarsh



In 2016, Scope formalized the process of awarding the symbol through the award of three different types of communication access licences. The type of licence awarded depends on the size of the business, and the annual review requirements that have been put in place. We now have over 200 businesses, services or organisations in Victoria, Australia, that have been awarded a Communication Access Approved User Licence, and over 280 customer service points that have been assessed and awarded the Communication Access Symbol.

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The Australian Communication Access Symbol in 2016 ... continued



In **2016**, Scope awarded Communication Access Approved Organisation Licences to a number of *organisations* for the first time. V/Line regional rail services (390 frontline staff trained in disability and effective communication strategies), Public Transport Victoria Call Centre (150 staff trained in effective phone communication for customers who have communication difficulties), Public Transport Victoria Hubs (40 staff trained in disability and effective communication) and the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (60 staff trained in disability and effective communication), were among those awarded an Approved Organisation Licence.

The importance of communication access and a basic human right is receiving increasing recognition with government, businesses and community services.



In addition, in the Speech Pathology 2030 report - making futures happen, Speech Pathology Australia has identified that first of eight key strategic priorities is to create communication accessible communities:

“We will ensure through building communication accessibility that everyone is treated with dignity and respect: communication partners are skilled listeners and talkers (e.g., they provide extra thinking and talking time, they know not to finish off someone’s sentences, etc.) and other methods of communicating (e.g., communication boards, speech generating devices, switches and eye-tracking devices etc.) will be understood, and if required, their use supported.” (vii, Speech Pathology 2030, making futures happen)

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The Australian Communication Access Symbol in 2016

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2016 has built on the awards already received by the communication access team at Scope and by its partners.



In 2013 Scope's communication access assessor team won the Excellence in Improving Participation Award at the prestigious Victorian Disability Sector Awards. In 2014, Communication Access was a finalist in the National Disability Awards. In 2015 and 2016, Scope staff members won Lifetime Achievement Awards for work in communication access at the Victorian Disability Sector Awards. Finally, V/Line was a finalist in the 10th National Disability Awards 2016 for achievements in communication access, and was recognized as one of the four most outstanding organizations nationally in the Excellence in Inclusive Community Design Award category. V/Line was also the winner of the state Award for Corporate Social Responsibility from the Australian Marketing Institute Awards. These are highly commendable achievements and great recognition for the communication access program and the team at V/Line. A video, "Now we are talking- communication access at V/Line" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zocrga4mj-k> showcases the great work that V/Line have done.



The importance of V/line's achievements are reflected in a growing communication access "movement" in the public transport sector, with many transport providers working towards creating communication accessible services.

This article continues on the ISAAC website in PDF format.

To read the article in full, please [click here](#).

If you would like further information about the Communication Access Symbol and/or the Communication Access Starter Kit, please contact:

Barbara Solarsh bsolarsh@scopevic.org.au

isaac Chapters

ISAAC Australia
(www.isaacaustralia.com)

ISAAC Brazil

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
(www.aac.org.pl)

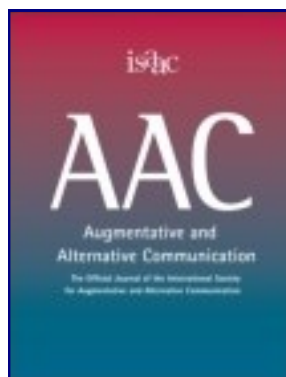
ISAAC Sweden
(www.isaac-sverige.se)

ISAAC Taiwan
(twsaac.blogspot.tw)

ISAAC UK
(www.communicationmatters.org.uk)

USSAAC
(www.ussaac.org)

Just before the publication of this E-News edition, the ISAAC Executive Board officially ratified ISAAC-Poland as the newest ISAAC Chapter. More details will be included in an email announcement to be released shortly!



Now available!

Current issue of AAC Journal
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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).

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