

THE ISAAC COMMUNICATOR

June 2019

Message from the ISAAC President



Meredith Allan

It is nearing winter in Australia and the last of the tree leaves are falling onto the ground. I am glad I will miss the first few weeks of winter as I am flying to New York, USA, and Cancun, Mexico.

In New York I will be attending the [CoSP 12](#) conference at the United Nations, which is the abbreviation for the 12th Session of the Conference of States Parties to the UN CRPD, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. Speech Pathology Australia (SPA), the American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA), and the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT) submitted a paper to the conference, titled *People with Communication Disabilities Speak Up for Inclusion and Participation: How the implementation of the CRPD and SDGs can support this right*, and it was accepted. SPA, ASHA and RCSLT asked me to be on the panel as president of ISAAC and as a person who uses AAC. I am honoured and grateful to be a part of the panel. I will be speaking on my lived experience, “Barriers and Challenges and Opportunities” – including communication accessible environments. I will be speaking from an international perspective.

It has been wonderful, too, to use [ISAAC’s NGO status](#) to register for the conference. We have had NGO status for nearly 20 years, thanks to the hard work of Mary Blake Huer (US, former President of ISAAC). The Executive Director of ISAAC, Franklin Smith, and I have learnt a great deal about the complexities and



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International Society for
Augmentative and Alternative Communication

processes of working with the UN systems! It is my intention, now that we know how to get involved with the UN, that we use our NGO status more in future years.

The Executive Board meets in Cancun in mid-June. ISAAC's 2020 conference will be held at the Cancún International Convention Centre. The Executive Board and 2020 Conference Committee will have its meetings in the venue as it plans for 2020 and beyond.

 *We have had NGO status for nearly 20 years*

In April I was saddened to learn of the tragic death of Graham Clarke from South Africa. I met Graham in 2002 at the ISAAC conference in Odense, Denmark, then again in 2004 at the AAC conference in Johannesburg. Graham's life and witness to many of us that knew him showed that determination can lead to a fulfilling life. I lectured to Medical students in Australia and my co-lecturer uses Graham's "Communication Frustrations," published in ISAAC's "Beneath the Surface" (2000), to help tell the students how incredibly difficult communicating without a voice can be.

Finally, on a happier note, I want to tell you about a friend who was in hospital recently. My friend is a young man who uses many ways of communicating. When he was readmitted to hospital a second time, his mother asked "How do you feel?"; he answered using his PODD book, "What do you think?"!!!! His answer has given me a lot of laughter and smiles.

[Meredith Allan](#)
ISAAC President

From the Executive Director

Franklin Smith

Welcome to the June 2019 edition of The ISAAC Communicator. 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 2020

Preparations for Conference 2020, to be held August 1st through August 6th, 2020, in Cancún, Mexico's beautiful gateway to the Riviera Maya, are now well underway. The [Conference 2020 Call for Papers](#) is opening this month, and our [Conference 2020 Co-Chairs](#) and the entire Conference 2020 Leadership Team are now in "full conference mode."

Conference 2020 is being held at [the Cancún International Convention Centre, or ICC](#). The decision to host Conference 2020 at the Cancún ICC was a collaborative one taken by the entire Conference 2020 Leadership Team, with full consideration for accessibility, ease of travel, hotel availability, and cost. The full press release on this announcement can be read on the [ISAAC website](#), or directly by clicking [here](#).

The Conference 2020 Call for Papers is scheduled for opening on June 25th, with support for paper submission in both English and Spanish. Our Scientific Programming Committee is looking forward to supporting a very strong conference program, in keeping

[Click here to read the Message from the President and From the Executive Director in translation](#)

with this conference's mandate of furthering the field of AAC within the Spanish-speaking world.

Conference 2020 is also now starting its Sponsorship and Exhibitor Sales efforts. We look forward to providing our sponsors and exhibitors with multiple opportunities to showcase their products and services over the next year, including at Conference 2020.

A number of initiatives are currently being planned to coincide with Conference 2020, aimed at supporting one of the overriding objectives for hosting Conference 2020 in México, namely the promotion of AAC within the Spanish-speaking world and the creation of the Spanish-language Chapter of ISAAC, ISAAC-Español. We look forward to releasing more information in the coming months.

ISAAC International Financial Audit 2018

The audit process for 2018 has now been completed, and the Finance Committee and Executive Board (EB) have reviewed and discussed the 2018 financial audit. The overall results from 2018 were very positive, thanks in part to the tremendous efforts of our Conference 2018 Co-Chairs group, as well as our AAC Journal Editors. The 2018 financial audit statement and our Canadian and US 2018 tax filings will be posted in our website's ISAAC Members Only area during the coming weeks.

Executive Board (EB) "Face-to-Face" Meeting, June 2019

The ISAAC EB, in accordance with the governing by-laws, will be holding their annual "face-to-face" EB meeting this month in Cancún, México. In addition to these meetings, the EB and Conference 2020 Co-Chairs will also be meeting to coordinate the coming year's worth of efforts in support of Conference 2020. You can anticipate seeing some pictures of

our EB and Co-Chairs hard at work around the conference table in Cancún.

Webinars

Working with USSAAC and other ISAAC stakeholders around the world, we have been able to present a number of extremely interesting and well received webinars so far this year. All webinars are available for viewing from our archives, by clicking [here](#). A full schedule of upcoming webinars can be found on the ISAAC website, by clicking [here](#). We are now planning our webinars for the final half of the year (Q3 and Q4 2019), and will be communicating directly with many of our stakeholders. If you have an interesting AAC topic that you would like to present, please contact our Manager of Communications, Heather Stonehouse, via [email](#).

Membership Directory, 2019

ISAAC plans on releasing its newest version of the annual Membership Directory during July 2019, which will be available to all members from the Members Only area. Our 2019 membership renewals and sign-ups are growing, and we are now including new members from some "first-time" countries and regions, including Gibraltar and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Thanks again to all of our Chapters and volunteers for helping to make this year's membership drive another successful one.

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 2020



A Message for Exhibitors and Sponsors

Hello/Hola!

ISAAC is excited to kick-start our Sponsorship and Exhibitor program in support of the 19th Biennial ISAAC Conference taking place from August 1st through August 6th, 2020 at the Cancún International Convention Center in beautiful Cancún, México. Sponsors and Exhibitors will be featured throughout the ISAAC Conference. The Exhibitor Hall is open from August 3rd – August 6th.

In addition to participating as an Exhibitor, there are many exciting sponsorship opportunities available through which you can promote your company's brand to an international audience. We will help create a sponsorship/exhibitor package that's right for you.

Many of you already know Judy Shapiro (ISAAC Sponsorship Specialist) and Tony Needer (ISAAC

Exhibitor Sales Specialist). Both Judy and Tony are back on board and are committed to helping your company achieve a most rewarding Conference experience. Conference 2018 on Gold Coast, Australia, was a sell-out and our sponsorship support reached an all-time record!

We will be reaching out to you in the coming weeks. Get ready to join ISAAC on the road to a successful 2020 Conference in Cancún, México.



CSWN Newsletter



The ISAAC CSWN Newsletter is published twice each year. It offers practical information to those interested in AAC and assistive technology in areas of the world where these fields are still emerging. Its aims are to present new ideas that are easily adaptable across settings. Watch for our next issue in July 2019!

[Past editions are posted on the ISAAC website.](#)



News



Brazil

On June 14th ISAAC-Brazil will host the **1st Latin American Meeting of Augmentative and Alternative Communication** at UNICAMP – Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Campinas/Brazil. This meeting will happen through video conference with the Latin America ISAAC Chapter Members and ISAAC-Brasil Members in order to promote the sharing of experiences.

Another important event is the [VIII Brazilian Congress of Augmentative and Alternative Communication](#), which will take place December 4th to 7th, 2019, in partnership with UNICAMP and with the support of the Down's Syndrome Foundation. The theme is, "Dialogue Partners in Diversity." The event will address different contexts in which people who use AAC have the opportunity to dialogue. It will be a rich learning space with international guests, in addition to Brazilian professionals with extensive experience in the subject.

Denmark

Our 30th Birthday, and Conference 2019

This year is the 30th birthday of [ISAAC-Denmark](#). We celebrated with a champagne toast at the General Assembly of our national conference, held on March 18-19. Ole Brunbjerg, who attended the founding meeting 30 years ago, also attended in 2019. During the dinner one of our members entertained us with an account of the history of our time.

The national conference, with 217 participants, again set a record for attendance (the fourth in a row). According to the electronic evaluations submitted after the conference, the content was also a success. We can see from the evaluations that participants have very different backgrounds. That is why we always end up with a varied program.

The Conference started with a session by Astrid Siemens Lorenzen, a high school student and AAC user. She spoke about the importance of having the right conditions for communication and how AAC users have to overcome barriers in order to get a high school education. Her speech was very inspiring for all the professionals who worked in the AAC field. We all need insider knowledge.



We all need insider knowledge

Our chair, Birgitte Brandt, picked up inspiration from ISAAC 2018 in Australia to address a subject we have considered covering for a long time: AAC and Autism. Cynthia Cress from Nebraska, a lively and creative presenter, invite some participants to take part in an exercise in order to visualize the challenges in being a person with autism and wanting to communicate.

Tenna Lygum illustrated the efforts to bring AAC in use in a place for grown up people with complex communication needs. She offered hope for this process for many professionals and people working with other age groups.

[For the full text of this article plus photos, please click here](#)

News +



Poland

On May 10th members of the board of “Mówić bez Słów” – ISAAC-Poland met with guests from St. Petersburg, Russia, to share information about the work of Polish and Russian AAC associations, including the activities of Russian ISAAC members. The group represented the cooperating organizations within the framework of the AAC dissemination project in Russia. The itinerary included visits to leading Polish AAC centres in Zamość, Warsaw, Kwidzyn and Krakow.



From left: (Back) Olga Lotosh (Director, Caritas Educational Center for Social Service), Anna Baliakova (Pavlov Institute of Physiology of the Russian Academy of Sciences), Irina Tekotskaya (President, AAC Association), Aldona Mysakowska-Adamczyk, (President, ISAAC-Poland). (Front) Iwona Stępniewicz (Vice President, ISAAC-Poland), Anna Walkiewicz (Polish representative to ISAAC Council) and s. Bożena Kondrusik (Project Manager, Caritas Educational Center for Social Service)

South Africa/Sweden Emergency Communication Boards for Communication in Mozambique

The art of communication is the language of caring

In the wake of cyclones Idai and Kenneth, millions of Mozambican citizens are left in need of humanitarian aid. An emergency communication board was developed in order to bridge communication gaps between rescue and support workers who might not speak Portuguese, and Mozambicans (e.g. children and elderly persons) who only know Portuguese.

This board contains the most important health and medical information supported by pictures with both the Portuguese and English words to facilitate interaction. The health care/rescue worker can then ask questions by pointing to the pictures, and the person in need of support can reply by also pointing to the pictures. The pictures have been designed in such a way that they are gender, age and culturally appropriate.

Supporting the interaction with pictures can help to eliminate possible communication breakdowns and misunderstandings. The boards and additional material are available [here](#).

This project was part of a collaboration between the Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (Centre for AAC) at the University of Pretoria and our research partners at DART (Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication and Assistive Technology) at Sahlgrenska University Hospital, Sweden.

News +



Emergency Communication Boards ... *continued*

Since 2016, DART has been leading a project designed to support communication between asylum seekers and medical and dental professionals. The project is supported by public health-care authorities using government funding allocated for handling the refugee situation in Sweden and has resulted in picture supported written information and a large number of communication boards for different care activities and procedures. All material is translated to eleven different languages and is free to download from the website www.kom-hit.se/flykting.

The current communication board was a continuation of this work, and can be downloaded [here](#). Instructions on how to use a communication board, provided by Sahlgrenska University Hospital, can be found [here](#).

For the current project, ISAAC assisted with ensuring the correctness of the translations.

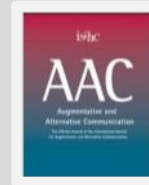
The Accessible Canada Act

An Act to Ensure a Barrier-free Canada, Bill C-81, has recently been adopted by Canada's Parliament. The next step is Royal Assent. The purpose is to make Canada barrier-free in areas under federal jurisdiction.

Bill C-81 will help to change the way that the Government of Canada and organizations in the federal jurisdiction interact with Canadians.

AAC Current Issue

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Volume 35, 2019



Taylor & Francis
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It defines a proposal for standards development, regulations, compliance and enforcement measures, the complaints process, and roles and responsibilities for implementation. For an accessible summary of Bill C-81, please select the format that works best for you here: [Summary of the legislation](#)

Communication Disabilities Access Canada (CDAC) was instrumental in "communication" being added as a priority area to the bill. Submissions are [here](#).

Once the bill becomes law, [CDAC](#) will connect with [ISAAC-Canada](#) and other organizations to provide input on the regulations that will follow.

CDAC is a Canada-wide non-profit organization that focuses on social justice and accessibility for people who have communication disabilities.

UN Special Rapporteur

Catalina Devandas is the first UN Special Rapporteur appointed by the Human Rights Council to support the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. All of her reports in EasyRead versions can be found [here](#).



Embracing Diversity

UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities

Events



Global Challenges in Assistive Technology – Bologna, Italy, August 27-30, 2019

The AAATE 2019 conference will address issues related to technology and disability: technological developments in the field of AT, including ambient assisted living (AAL), smart environments, and the Internet of Things (IoT) applications; social assistive robotics; digital and connected health; virtual and augmented reality.

“ The impact of societal changes...makes assistive technology ever more relevant

Issues addressed will include the ethical implications of these new possibilities, data privacy, and self-determination of users with disabilities and older adults; innovations in AT for cognitive, sensory, and motor disabilities; the impact of societal changes that makes assistive technology ever more relevant and needed; and the need to provide wider access to AT on a global scale.

ISAAC is pleased to be a collaborating organization for AAATE 2019 and to participate in its scientific program development and onsite at the conference.

[For the full text of this article, with AAATE conference highlights, please click here.](#)

ISAAC Calendar of Events

[View on the ISAAC website](#)

The 4th annual International Assistive Technology and AAC conference, ATAAC 2019, hosted in Zagreb, Croatia, October 15-17, 2019

Leading AT and AAC experts and manufacturers will be presenting information, research, and products, and sharing experiences and valuable advice on working with children and persons with communication support needs.

The [ATAAC 2019](#) conference can be attended in person or watched online.

Applications for poster presentations at the ATAAC 2019 conference are still open! You are encouraged to register your posters and share your work with colleagues all around the world.

Find more info here: www.ataac.eu/posters/

All poster authors get a free 3-day ticket for the conference!

More information can be found on the ATAAC 2019 website, and regular updates can be found on the [ATAAC Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) profile.



Keep Current with ISAAC Webinars

Check out our [upcoming webinars](#). All webinars are recorded and posted on the ISAAC website. Archives are available [here](#).

Chapters



ISAAC-Australia • www.isaacaustralia.com

ISAAC-Brazil • www.isaacbrasil.org.br

ISAAC-Canada • www.isaac-canada.org

ISAAC-Denmark • www.isaac.dk

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ISAAC-UK • www.communicationmatters.org.uk

ISAAC-US • www.ussaac.org

Contact Us

Do you have a question or comment? Please feel free to send an email to feedback@isaac-online.org



ISAAC Council News

ISAAC Council Chair, Nadia Browning, held two online Council meetings earlier this year, with 17 people representing 12 different countries: Mexico, Italy, the US, India, Australia, Brazil, South Africa, Netherlands, Poland, Denmark, Norway, and Russia. These meetings followed up on the ideas brought up at the 2018 ISAAC Council meeting on Gold Coast, Australia.

The group identified four topics as important:

- UNCRPD (UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability);
- Communication Access Standards;
- Creating a Practical AAC Booklet;
- Access to Social Media Internationally.

An email has gone out to invite Council members to join any groups they are interested in. If you are still interested in participating in one or more of these working groups, please contact [Nadia Browning](mailto:Nadia.Browning@isaac-online.org) as soon as possible.

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](mailto:Nola.Millin@isaac-online.org).

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The ISAAC Communicator

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Stay Social

Keep informed about ISAAC news & in touch with the AAC community on our social media!

