

THE ISAAC COMMUNICATOR

June 2022

Message from the ISAAC President

Juan Bornman

Dear ISAAC Family,

Once upon a time, 1 million years ago to be exact, in a far-far away land, somewhere on the African continent, *Homo Erectus* first harnessed fire. Since then, cookware – pots and pans – have become the most important invention to food and cooking as we know it. Think about it... long boiling kills harmful bacteria to make food safe, it makes some foods edible, and even allows the mingling of different foods and spices to create gastronomic magic. Advocates of slow food will remind us that nothing beats a meal prepared the old-fashioned way that honours the process of cooking.

I've convinced myself over time that cooking and cookware are a perfect metaphor for how we approach life. In both cooking and in life, balance is key. Cooking requires a range of different cookware – every pot and pan has a purpose. Likewise, in life we need different types of friends.

We have **stock-pot** or **soup-pot** friends in our lives: they are those dependable people who we can always turn to in times of crisis. Their involvement in our lives is just as deep as these pots and we are never worried that they might boil

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isaac
International Society for
Augmentative and Alternative Communication

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over. We know that involving them in something will always result in a healthy (or delicious) interaction.

Then there are also **Dutch-oven** friends in our lives: they are those extroverted friends who you can safely take along to any activity and will absorb some of the heat and make sure that everything turns out fine in the end. These friendships resemble the huge cast-iron pots that are designed to cook a large batch of any food almost anywhere: on the stove, in the oven, on the grill or over a campfire. There is always something nourishing brewing in these friendships, reminding us that relationships need time to develop into something deeper.

We all have **rice-pot** friends: those ones who bubble over and who love to tell stories. You never tell these friends your biggest secrets because just as you turn away, your story bubbles over...

What about the **pressure-cooker** friends? They are often skilled leaders who stand out because they always take on a challenge without fear of anything or anybody. They tackle and complete tasks with great speed and precision, but even they sometimes build up too much pressure and if they don't cool down, the outcomes can be catastrophic when they eventually let out steam.



There is also the **double-boiler** or **steamer-pot** friends. Like the pot, where you have to pour water into the bottom and allow the steam to cook what you put in the steamer, these friends only function if there is somebody that can help to generate the steam, somebody who can provide support to ensure that the cooking gets done.

And then, the **tagine** friend. Tagines are eye-catching cooking vessels that consist of a wide shallow pot, which doubles as a serving dish, with a conical lid designed to trap moisture for slow cooking. They are typically made of clay or ceramics and sometimes embellished with intricate painted designs. Tagine friends challenge us to think outside of the box and expose us to different worlds.

Last, but definitely not least, friends that resemble the most versatile and trusted kitchen workhorse – the **pan**! Frying pans, skillets, omelette pans, roasting pans or sauté pans – it doesn't matter, these are those open friends with nothing to hide under their lids. The friends who are always willing to lend a hand, no matter what you want to whip up! They distribute heat evenly, adding intense flavour to whatever is cooking. Without pan friends, our lives are lacking and our souls are poor.

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All of these cookware can be magnificent on their own, carrying their own individual merit, but when they are combined in proper proportions, they create magic. A hint of salt in the sweet caramel sauce that turns every bit of life into an exciting adventure. Just as cooking takes time, so does life and building friendships, it doesn't help to rush things. We need to slow down, have fun, and make sure that we add all the ingredients into the recipe of our lives and pay attention to things along the way, otherwise we miss great opportunities.

But sometimes, despite our best attempts to follow a recipe, our dish doesn't turn out the way we wanted. Things happen – that is part of life. Recipes are not fool proof. If you've never had a truly delicious dish, you won't be able to recognise something outstanding. If you've never had a flavourless, dried-out piece of chocolate cake, then you won't appreciate the perfect slice.

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



This is my last message as the 2020-2022 ISAAC President. I want to thank each and every member of our organization who has given their time, talents and treasures so freely to ISAAC during this period. Your support has ensured that ISAAC could explore new recipes as we kept on "cooking". It has enabled us to let go of old recipes at times and to create something truly memorable. As ISAAC continues to grow, let us step outside our comfort zones and trust *The Good Cook*, take risks and discover new flavours.

Be brave! Try out that olive or asparagus!

Juan

Juan Bornman

ISAAC President 2020 -2022

From the Executive Director

Franklin Smith

Welcome to the June 2022 edition of The ISAAC Communicator.

I am thrilled to see that the global COVID pandemic situation appears to be stabilizing and improving in many parts of the world, including here in Canada!

The Canadian government has just recently ended its mandatory COVID vaccination requirement for anyone boarding a commercial aircraft or train in Canada, the last industrialized country to remove these types of restrictions. Definitely a clear sign that the pandemic situation has significantly stabilized and improved!

As an organization, the past 2.5 years has been difficult on ISAAC and all its stakeholders. In particular, the impacts on our stakeholder groups of significant levels of illness and mortality caused directly by transmission of COVID, coupled with the increased work pressures of our hospital and health care stakeholders, and the direct lifestyle impacts on everyone, particularly amongst people who use AAC and their families, has had tremendous mental health impacts.

We certainly want to see a steady “return to normalcy” globally, and will do everything we as an organization can do to assist in this effort.



Conference Cancún

ISAAC recently announced an additional postponement of Conference Cancún, to 2023. ISAAC International has just now announced the new dates for Conference Cancún, with the main conference now taking place on July 24th through July 27th, 2023 (inclusive), with the pre-conference workshops taking place on July 22nd and July 23rd.

More information on the new dates, including a full Conference Cancún Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), can be found on the ISAAC website at <https://isaac-online.org/english/conference-cancun/>

As noted above, the global pandemic has impacted everyone around the world. The postponement of Conference Cancún is no exception, and ISAAC is seeing inflationary pressures on the costs for hosting the conference next year. As previously announced, and as still posted on our Conference Cancún FAQ, previously paid conference registrations that have not been cancelled and refunded are still fully valid for Conference Cancún next year, and will not be subject to any price increases or surcharges. Individuals who have these

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already paid for registrations have been sent emails from ISAAC confirming this (if you did not receive your email, please do contact me directly).

As a result of these inflationary pressures, ISAAC has updated its Conference Cancún registration pricing, effective June 20th, 2022. The new pricing is posted on our website at <https://isaac-online.org/english/conference-cancun/conference-registration/>.

The **Conference Cancún online registration system is open and available** for registrations, and we look forward to finally welcoming the world to the 19th Biennial Conference of ISAAC next year in beautiful (and sunny) Cancún, México!

2022 ISAAC Council Meeting

On June 1st, 2022, ISAAC International President Juan Bornman and ISAAC Council Chair Signhild Skogdal officially released notification that a Special Meeting of the ISAAC Council has been called for 2022 and is being held virtually on Friday, September 23rd, 2022, beginning at 11:00 am (11:00h) Toronto time (see global [time zone conversions](#)).

The official announcement for this meeting can be found on the [ISAAC website](#), and is also reproduced in this issue of The Communicator. The ISAAC EB and Council

leadership will be working hard over the summer to get ready for this important ISAAC International governance meeting, and I would encourage members around the world to reach out to [individual Council members](#) and get involved in this important governance aspect of our organization.

ISAAC International Website Redevelopment

As announced in the March 2022 issue of The Communicator, ISAAC International has embarked on a website redevelopment project.

ISAAC recently released a formal [Request for Proposal \(RFP\)](#), to secure the services of companies with the requisite experience, staff, and skills needed to assist us in redeveloping our website.

I am thrilled to announce that we received an overwhelming response to our RFP, and we are currently in the process of reviewing these submissions with a goal of selecting a single company and beginning our work. We look forward to providing continuous updates in The ISAAC Communicator.

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 Executive Director

2022 Special Meeting of the ISAAC Council



Important Notice



In accordance with section 11.5 of the Bylaws of ISAAC, this is the official notification that a **SPECIAL MEETING** of the **ISAAC Council** is being called by Juan Bornman, President and Signhild Skogdal, Chair of the ISAAC Council.

Date: Friday, September 23rd, 2022

Time: 11:00 to 15:00 (Toronto time) –

[Converted World Times](#)

[Registration Required](#) (Meeting will be held on Zoom)

In accordance with section 11.5.2 of the Bylaws of ISAAC, the business to be conducted at this Special Meeting will be as follows:

- 1. Introduction to Council of 2022-24 EB members and thanks to outgoing EB members:** Juan Bornman and Tracy Shepherd (5 min)
- 2. 2021 Audited Financial Results:** Franklin Smith and David Fosbery (15 min)
- 3. Presentation of 2022 / 2023 Emergency Budget:** Franklin Smith (15 min)
- 4. 2022 Auditor Approval:** Franklin Smith (5 min)
- 5. By-Laws and Governance Handbook:** Tracy Shepherd (90 min)
- 6. Social Break:** Gabriela Berlanga (20 min)
- 7. Council Reports:** Signhild Skogdal and Catia Crivelenti de Figueiredo Walter (90 min)
- 8. Closing Remarks:** Signhild Skogdal (5 min)

Called by the President of ISAAC, Juan Bornman. Called by the Chair of the ISAAC Council, Signhild Skogdal June 1st, 2022

News



USSAAC

USSAAC THE VOICE OF AAC

USSAAC's Disaster Relief Committee (DRC) addresses emergency preparedness and disaster relief for people who use AAC.

Although the DRC's mission is to help people with their AAC needs after federally declared disasters, exceptions can be made in certain circumstances. The DRC received a recent request to replace a speech-generating device (SGD) for an eight-year-old boy in New Jersey, after his was destroyed in a family fire. We successfully worked with the family, a local speech-language pathologist (SLP) and an impressive AAC manufacturer's representative to find a long-term loaner device until a replacement could be secured through insurance. When the school was reluctant to send the device home, despite a two-week period of remote learning, we communicated with the school administration and the Accent 800 with an Xtreme™ case was given the green light to go home. It was a great reminder of how committed professionals and families working together can make good things happen, and the need for USSAAC and our DRC.

We continually monitor for any disaster relief needs and are currently on alert with the wildfires in the western part of the United States.

The DRC is led by Liz Begley and Sarah Blackstone and includes USSAAC members Andrea Barton-Hulsey, Miriam Boesch, Lois Jean Brady, Tina Caswell, Amy Goldman, Mara Hernandez, Sharon Mankey, Wendy Quach, Mariesa Rang, Amy Sonntag and Carole Zangari.

Communication Matters



Communication Matters International AAC Conference 2022 – Register Now!

The Communication Matters [International AAC Conference](#) will take place at the University of Leeds from 11th – 13th September 2022.

Over the course of two and a half days, participants will enjoy a diverse programme of keynotes, plenaries, presentations, posters and talks from AAC supplier companies.

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The conference provides a unique forum to meet and exchange information with representatives from all disciplines associated with AAC, including AAC users, parents, personal assistants, professionals, and suppliers of AAC equipment. Communication Matters encourages and supports AAC users to attend.

Our Keynote Speakers are Richard Cave and Beth Moulam! Richard is a Speech and Language Therapist and PhD candidate at UCL. He currently works with the MND Association, providing training and practical support for communication technology and voice banking. Beth is a high-tech communication aid user who graduated from the University of York in Social Policy, and in 2021 she realised a lifelong dream to become a Paralympian, representing GB in Tokyo at boccia.

Residential accommodation will be in modern student residences, which is at the centre of the pedestrianised campus. The transport links to Leeds are very good, with a nearby airport and train station.

Registration is now open! So don't delay and book your place today by going to our conference [website](#) now. Book early to take advantage of the Early Bird discount which expires on 15 July!

If you have any questions, please email admin@communicationmatters.org.uk.



Save the Date – AAC Awards 2023

We are looking forward to welcoming you all to Leeds for the [AAC Awards in 2023](#), which will tie in with the city's celebrations of culture. The date is now set! Friday 24th March 2023. Please get the date in your diaries now!

We will be announcing the AAC Awards categories and more details soon, but in the meantime, have a think about anyone who has demonstrated excellence in the AAC community and who you might like to nominate. It could be an AAC user, a family member or carer, or a professional or team of professionals who have supported you or helped to achieve the unachievable!

We can't wait to celebrate all the successes!

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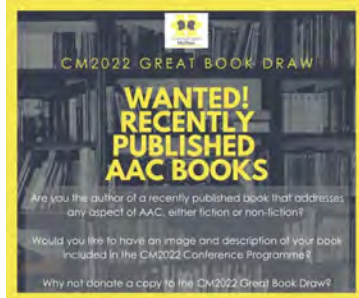
CM2022 Great Book Draw

Wanted: Recently Published Books

Are you the author of a recently published (or about to be published) book that addresses any aspect of AAC, either fiction or non-fiction? Would you like to have an image and description of your book included in the CM2022 Conference Programme?

Why not donate a copy to the CM2022 Great Book Draw?

Approximately 400 delegates will have the opportunity to sign up for the Great Book Draw which will be held during the International AAC Conference at the University of Leeds on 11-13 September.



If you are interested, please email admin@communicationmatters.org.uk.

Receive updates about our events!

Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). If you would like to be added to our mailing list please email admin@communicationmatters.org.uk.

An ode to AAC

"An ode to Augmentative and Alternative Communication" is a poem written by Sonakshi Rowal, Speech Language Pathologist at The Lexicon Rainbow Therapy and Child Development Centre, Pune.

Sonakshi's poem is included below:

An ode to Augmentative and Alternative Communication

AAC, as a student I often pondered, what it is, how could I use it without relent,
how could I make my kids communicate and connect!

Then reading, exploring, trying and trying is all I did,
only to learn AAC is a way of life,
All you have to do is lift the lid.

Core and fringe, high tech and low,
Teaching our kids vocab,
In us trust they bestow.

Hungry, thirsty, eat, please open the door,
Soon you'll see there's more to core.

Modelling and shaping with your child's AAC device,
Please remember it's your child's voice.

You think AAC is a hassle,
But when your child learns it you've won half the battle!

Play based AAC is just like everyday play,
Use speech, signs and visuals to display.

Keep my AAC device near me,
When you see me communicate only then you will agree.

I will use it all the time in my daily routine,
it isn't merely a screen.

AAC is not only for the non verbal,
It is to facilitate speech and make them more verbal,

Go ahead, take the plunge, trust me you won't regret;
You would be glad you used your mind's intellect.

Sonakshi Rawal Gundevia, 2021, pedispeechiemom
All rights reserved

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Breaking Barriers Congress



BBC Barcelona 2022

Assistive Technology and Augmentative Communication

Barcelona May 26th – 28th, 2022

The **Breaking Barriers Congress** was a meeting place for professionals, users, companies and institutions. It was the perfect opportunity for companies and institutions in the area to make themselves known and establish a direct link with their target audience.

This congress, organised by the [Fundación Romper Barreras](#), featured the best experts in each area and the latest advances in assistive technology. The topics covered ranged from augmentative and alternative communication to leisure and environmental control, among others. It brought together some 200 attendees, including professionals, families and users, as well as 20 speakers from all over the world, among them international speakers such as Ian Bean, Bethany Diener, Rachel Santiago, John Costello, Raphael Terrier, etc.

Also present were companies such as Irisbond, Qinera-BJ Adaptaciones, Tobii Dynavox and Smartbox.

AlfaSAAC



Since January 2022 [AlfaSAAC](#) -a Spanish non-profit organization devoted to AAC and Literacy for everyone- has launched a campaign called “**ImplicaAte y EduCAame**” (meaning “get involved and educate me”) focused on promoting literacy and communication rights for people with complex communication needs.

The campaign, supported by the Spanish Foreign Affairs Ministry, was aimed at families and professionals connected to people with complex communication needs and potential AAC users as well as social workers, pediatricians, family doctors and neurologists. It was also designed to be used in educational environments, associations and other organizations in the disability field.

The starting point for the campaign was an online webinar presented by **Dr. Caroline Musselwhite**, attended by near 200 people. The main goal was to talk to a wide Spanish-

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speaking audience about literacy and how to start on the teaching of reading and writing with students with complex communication needs. From AlfaSAAC came the need to raise awareness about the existence of the Bill of Communication Rights updated in 2016 by the National Joint Committee for the Communication Needs of Persons with Severe Disabilities (NJC) and the Literacy Bill of Rights (Yoder, Erickson and Koppenhaver, 1997) to make sure society guarantees them in family contexts, but also in instructional and medical environments.

The final product of the campaign is an illustrated poster of both rights in Spanish, free to download in [this link](#). We hope that any person interested in AAC and literacy for all, will want to share them in their media or find a spot in their office, school or work premises to display them and become useful in raising awareness on such an important issue.

Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha



The University of Castilla La Mancha, has launched during the academic year 2021-2022, the first edition of the postgraduate

course "[Specialist in AAC with technological support](#)". This is the first postgraduate degree in AAC focused exclusively on AAC with support in Spain.

This degree has the participation of Dr. Gloria Soto, and other expert teachers from our country, some of them with more than 30 years of experience as researchers, as well as teachers coming from the daily practice with users and their families.

This first edition was attended by 30 professionals from different regions, including teachers, speech therapists, psychologists and special education teachers.

The course was online, but this did not prevent the students from choosing to carry out their internships, working with users, their families and professionals, combining face-to-face and online practice.

The degree programme focused mainly on assessment and intervention in the application of technology-assisted AAC and literacy for people with complex communication needs. The students also were able to learn in depth about the different communication Apps available in Spanish, as well as the latest developments in accessibility support products. The next edition of the course will count on the collaboration of entities such as Assistiveware, Irisbond, Tobii Dynavox, Qinera-Bj Adaptaciones and Eneso, which will offer materials and training.

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ISAAC Denmark



ISAAC Denmark had the first in-person conference since 2019 on the 28th and 29th of March 2022.

We reached the same number of participants as before COVID: a little more than 200.

Everybody was of course happy to be able to network face to face again. But still there were digital presentations as well, one of them was a keynote from Pennsylvania, Janice Light. Something that made this even more special was that people from ISAAC Region 2 (Sweden, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Ukraine) were attending as webinar participants on Zoom.

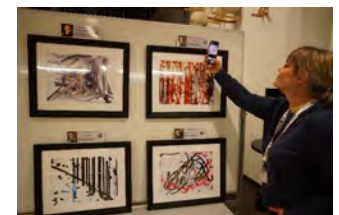


We were happy also to have speakers from other countries present at the conference as well: Anne-Merete Kleppenness from Norway and Juliet Goldbart from UK.



A special success at this 2022 conference was the AAC user meeting and the connected art exhibition.

At the AAC user meeting, Frank Dalhoff was speaking about a life with art: writing poems, and painting (and even here Norwegian AAC users followed the meeting on Zoom). The exhibition was well visited, and some were lucky to even sell art at the conference.



Some artists that could not be present at the conference had made video presentations of themselves and their art, available from QR codes

The conference ended with keynote speaker Sofie Berner Møller, poem writer, and AAC user.



Chapters

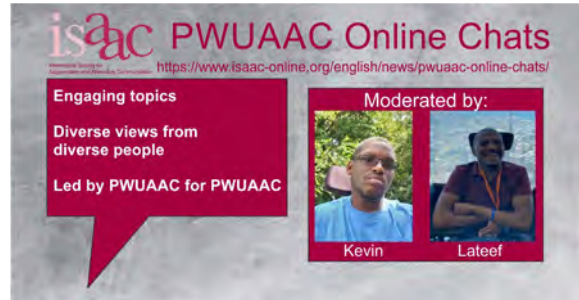


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PWUAAC Online Chats



Visit [PWUAAC Online Chats](https://www.isaac-online.org/english/news/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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