

June 2024

## Message from the ISAAC President

Tracy Shepherd

Feel the “Vibes of AAC”!

I love this theme, and I have felt these “Vibes” several times in the past month at gatherings of people who are passionate about AAC and are devoted to improving the lives of the people who rely on AAC either full or part time. It truly gives me goose bumps and warms my heart when I think and hear about the impact of AAC around the world.

Let me tell you about the Vibes I have felt...

1. I have a new staff member who has nothing to do with direct service delivery; she is part of our finance team. I typically send staff members to AAC clinics to get to know what service delivery looks like on the ground and to meet clinicians and clients who use AAC. I want staff to connect with the “why” of the work and to see the



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## Message from the ISAAC President ...continued



difference our work makes in people's lives. This staff member relayed a story to me after sharing about this visit to a clinic and what she learned there with her mother. Her mother told her, *"this is such important and meaningful work you are doing."* She described to me that her mother had never told her that about any other job she has held. These are the Vibes of AAC!

### 2. More Vibes...

At a provincial AAC Rounds event, I heard a new CEO of a children's treatment centre give an opening address. He claimed excitedly that the AAC program not only does incredible work but is also *"super cool!"* He described how the AAC team led him through some of the technology and demonstrated how it works to provide access to communication and impact lives. This was all new to him. The emotion in his words gave me shivers.

### 3. And this example is the epitome of AAC Vibes...

In May, I spent 2 days in the presence of greatness at the AAC Summit in

Washington, D.C., hosted by RERC

(<https://rerc-aac.psu.edu>) and

Communication First

(<https://communicationfirst.org>). There was so much to reflect on following those 2 days jammed packed with research, presentations, ideas, conversations, networking, and insights about where have we been as a field and where we are going.

My most notable takeaway from the AAC Summit was that AAC users had the floor. We know that putting people who use AAC at the centre of our work and our research is essential and this event put this in action like I have not seen before. Not only were half of the presenters people who use AAC, but the audience also constituted of many users of AAC. During the question periods and discussion groups, those of us who use speech and can take up the space, silently waited for AAC users to make their points in real time, without hushed side conversations, looking at phones, multitasking, or asking and coming back. **We just waited, all of us!** The silence in a room packed with people was heartwarming and is what everyone needs to learn to do when communicating with someone who is not using speech. I left this event not only with a full mind but also a full heart!

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## Message from the ISAAC President ...continued



I am sure you all have similar stories when the AAC Vibes were strong and at the next ISAAC Virtual Event we can all experience them together. Don't miss out on the Vibes of AAC Virtual Event happening in October to highlight AAC Awareness Month. It will be the preeminent AAC Conference for 2024, not to be missed. [Registration is open](#) and there is an early bird rate in effect. Speakers will include people who use AAC, researchers, practitioners, educators, families, sponsors, and more. There will be panels, discussions, and plenty of ways to get involved and participate. I don't want to name drop, but [here](#) is the list for you to take a look at on the website when you visit to register.

A special thank you to the team working on this event under the leadership of Michelle Phillipy and Franklin Smith.

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

We have representation on this committee from Canada, USA, Israel, Italy, Spain, Norway, and Singapore all working together to develop a strong, diverse, and exciting program.

Lastly, the Executive Board has announced an upcoming [2024 Special Meeting](#) of the ISAAC Council on Thursday, August 29th. This will be held virtually, and council members would have received an invitation and link to register.

I cannot end without thanking all the volunteers that make ISAAC possible, as well as Franklin Smith our Executive Director and the ISAAC office staff. It takes a village, and I am forever grateful to be a small part of the ISAAC world.

Thank you all!

[Tracy Shepherd](#)

ISAAC President

# From the Executive Director

Franklin Smith

Welcome to the June 2024 edition of The ISAAC Communicator.

## ISAAC Membership 2024

I am thrilled to announce another very positive membership year for all of ISAAC International. With nearly 1,700 members worldwide during 2024, ISAAC membership this year is certainly on a par with recent previous years. Among the notable additions to our global network of Chapters, in 2024 we officially welcomed ISAAC-Español! ¡Bienvenidos a todos nuestros seguidores de habla hispana de CAA!

This year's membership drive was also positively assisted by our partnership and collaboration with this year's [ATAAC conference](#) in Zagreb, Croatia, which is one of the largest European AT and AAC conferences, gathering world experts in assistive technology and AAC. Not only did every new member who joined ISAAC for the 2024 membership year receive a free registration for the virtual component of this year's ATAAC conference, but the referring ISAAC member also received a free registration!



Discount codes to claim the ATAAC free registration were sent out earlier this month via email. If you were expecting to receive one, but did not get an email, please contact me directly as soon as possible.

Finally, we here at the ISAAC International office are now hard at work on the 2024 edition of the ISAAC Membership Directory. We anticipate releasing this year's edition of the Directory during July 2024.

## AAC Awareness Month 2024 and "Vibes of AAC"

"Vibes of AAC" is the theme for this year's AAC Awareness Month, and ISAAC is thrilled to be presenting an all-virtual event this October, to coincide with AAC Awareness Month. With online presentations scheduled for October 29<sup>th</sup> and October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024, this event is shaping up to be both informative and exciting!

Information on presenters and online registration is available directly from the [ISAAC Event website](#). ISAAC members receive special discounts, so make sure to purchase your registration now, during our Early Bird sale! We anticipate releasing preliminary session and scheduling information in the coming few weeks as well.

As our President, Tracy Shepherd, so nicely noted in her comments in this issue of The ISAAC Communicator ([see Message from the](#)

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## From the Executive Director ...continued



[ISAAC President](#)), “Vibes of AAC” is a phrase that will likely hold different meanings, and elicit different reactions, from people around the world.

It would be very interesting, at this year’s ISAAC virtual event, to spend some time and hear from all our stakeholders about what this phrase means to them, and what impact it has on their lives and livelihoods.....

What does “Vibes of AAC” mean to me?

It never fails to impress me how dedicated all our members are, regardless of whether they are persons who use AAC, family members, professional practitioners, researchers, or companies that supply related products and services, in ensuring that all aspects of people’s lives are fully supported.

This dedication manifests itself in many different ways. Persons who use AAC getting together online every other week for an informal chat, listening to the many and different webinars that our USSAAC and ISAAC-Canada Chapters organize, seeing educators ensuring the registration of their students to our 2024 virtual event, or facilitating the many volunteers involved in all aspects of ISAAC are just some of the ways that people around the world are making a difference!

## Ongoing ISAAC International Financial and Operational Management

As is normal at this time of year, ISAAC International is undergoing its annual audit for the financial year that just ended on December 31st.

We continue to work collaboratively with our external bookkeeper and auditors, and we look forward to presenting and reviewing draft audited financial statements with the ISAAC Finance Committee, prior to presentation to the ISAAC Executive Board, which is a necessary step prior to the filing of the organization’s Canadian and US annual tax returns.

We also continue with our ongoing financial and operational management review, with the focus of ensuring ISAAC International’s ability to meet its vision, mandate, and goals in a manner that positively leverages its human and financial capital.

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

Regards and thanks,  
Franklin Smith

## AAC Around the World



### **Editors Note:**

*"AAC Around the World" is a new, permanent section of the ISAAC Communicator, which now replaces the CSWN newsletter. ISAAC welcomes articles contributed for this section from around the world, that focus on AAC and assistive technology.*

### About the PWUAAC Online Chats

Contributions by Kevin Williams, Patrick Regan, and Tristan Weirich

The ISAAC Chat for People Who Use AAC (PWUAAC) is a series of hour-long biweekly virtual gatherings organized and hosted by the ISAAC LEAD Committee. The gatherings are informal and focused on building a self-sustaining social community through conversations and friendships. The intent of the gatherings is to create a consistent virtual space to combat the issue of isolation among people who use AAC.

The chat series is open to all persons who use AAC regardless of their communication methods, skill level with their AAC system, or prior knowledge of the chosen topic. All attendees are encouraged to participate in the discussion at a level that is comfortable to them. Non-AAC users are welcome to attend the chats to provide support to those who need assistance with sharing their messages. Non-AAC users can also

share their thoughts on a topic, but priority is given to AAC users in the discussions.

The primary language of the chats is English, but there were gatherings where volunteers served as translators for non-English speaking users in other countries, and a fun time was had by all.

The LEAD Committee uses the chat series to provide people who use AAC opportunities for leadership by recruiting and scheduling people who attend each gathering consistently to be moderators throughout the year. Even if they're not moderating, regular attendees help enhance the conversation by encouraging others to speak and take genuine interests in what people share. They also assist the moderators by responding and reading out loud messages in the chat.

The moderator chooses the chat topic and leads the discussion. The Committee occasionally admits professionals to observe or share information about their research projects or efforts to support AAC users in their communities.

Moderating gives ownership over the gatherings to the participants where they feel confident to participate in other aspects of the organization as confidence in communication skills is the foundation of advocacy and leadership. Also, we attempt to be inclusive and

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## AAC Around the World ... continued



have conversations for all by encouraging all participants to moderate no matter their communication level. We enjoyed conversations as complex as identity and AAC to as common as what's good to put in a cup of hot chocolate. Through consistency and building friendships, participants really connect and learn from each other.

A few of the regulars of the chat are now participating in their local ISAAC chapter committees, LEAD Committee, and taking interest in leading other projects due to the confidence gained from attending the chats. This fulfills the mission of the LEAD Committee in helping people who use AAC become leaders.

Patrick Regan has been a regular chat attendee for some years now. He's also a member of the LEAD Committee and the President-Elect of the ISAAC Chapter in the United States, USSAAC. Here's what he says about his experience as a member of the chat:

*I started attending the PWUAAC Chats regularly in 2021. I had already been in a leadership position for several years in Bridging Communities Through Alternative Communication ("BCTAC"), an adult outreach program of The Bridge School. And I wanted to meet AAC users from around the world. Shortly after I started attending the*

*chats, Kevin invited me to join the LEAD Committee and become a chat moderator. I have been moderating chats for about 2 years now. Moderating is challenging and fun. The moderator invites and encourages the AAC users to respond to the discussion topic and modifies or repeats the topic question as needed. We have to keep track of the main conversation, the side conversations and Google Meet written chat, and also who is ready to respond to the chat topic and wrapping back around to those who have been composing their responses. And we respond to each person's answer. Often, we team up to help support and mentor new chat moderators.*

*As people are becoming more comfortable, the chats are becoming more lively and conversational. We are all actually talking to each other using our speech output devices, and not just answering questions posed to us. In that sense, it is similar to BCTAC's meetups. And I am happy that some of my BCTAC friends have joined the chats. The recent Haiku Poetry Slam is a good example of the outreach and community building focus of the chats. Several members of LEAD enjoy writing poetry, so we decided to invite people to share poems at one of the chats. Kevin suggested Haiku because it is a format that tends to be more accessible to AAC users, and it was National Poetry month in the U.S.*

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## AAC Around the World ... continued



*We had some new people show up. Everyone participated by reciting their own poems, and we had time to compose a group poem. It was very powerful and exciting.*

The LEAD Committee is looking to expand the chats in order to give more people opportunities to gain from chats through partnering with ISAAC chapters to start groups in different time zones and languages. Also, we want to create a resource of chats available to people who use AAC.

One of the participants in the Haiku Poetry Slam PWUAAC Online Chat was **Tristan Weirich** who has shared his experience with us here:

"My name is Tristan Weirich. I am 13 years old, and I am autistic. I use Proloquo2Go, and I type some and use word prediction.

What does AAC mean to me? AAC means to me that I can share my thoughts, feelings, wants, needs, and even jokes with anyone I want. I like advocating for myself, choosing my own goals, and telling jokes.

I am part of several AAC groups, most of which are online. I think having an online community is really important. I like going to online groups because I can learn new things this way, make new friends,

and can be at home. I am still a little nervous, but I am trying to be very brave. I can take a chance. I have the right to be part of my community. I have the right to my own friends and social life.



I really like ISAAC because they have AAC speakers and are led by AAC users. I like learning from other AAC users and how they communicate. It really helps me a lot.

When I went, it was for a Haiku Poetry Slam, and it was awesome! I prepared two poems beforehand and then we wrote one together. It was a lot of fun! I really like meeting new AAC users who communicate like I do!

I like being with other AAC users and I am hoping to find an AAC mentor eventually."

If you want to know more about the chats or have information about a chat to add to the resource please contact the chair of the LEAD Committee, Kevin Williams at [daretolead@prc-Salttillo.com](mailto:daretolead@prc-Salttillo.com) or visit the website to see the upcoming dates and times of the chat [here](#).

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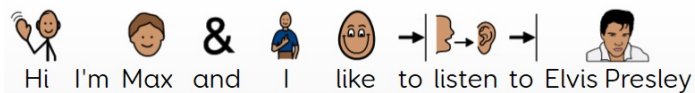


## AAC Around the World ... continued



### ISAAC Scholarship Cancún

By Max Price



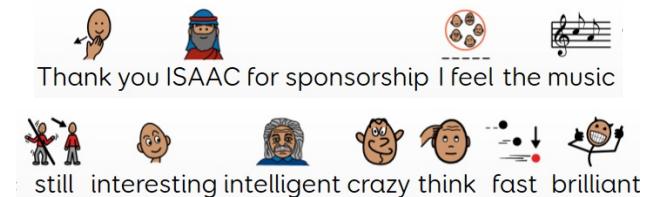
Disclaimer: Communication assistants have helped Max with this article by typing up some sections to elaborate on some of the direct communications from Max which are made up of messages Max made on his Tobii Dynavox. Photos included were chosen by Max.



Image: Max and communication assistant presenting Max's research project

In July 2023, Max Price attended and presented his research at the ISAAC Conference in Cancún, Mexico. He applied for and received a scholarship from ISAAC to

support him to do this. In the image below, Max used his Tobii Dynavox to express his gratitude.



His research project surveyed and analysed the barriers to communication between his classmates and himself as a nonverbal user of AAC. His Tobii Dynavox is controlled with his eyes through the use of infrared eye tracking technology. Max described using his device with his device.

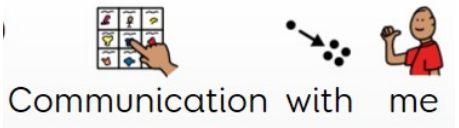


Max's communication assistants asked Max what he meant by these words. It's fancy because the technology is advanced but it's frustrating and difficult because it's hard to operate using his eyes which causes Max to accidentally select the wrong button or message which can cause confusion.

Max also examined some of the triumphs he and some of his peers had made over those barriers in order to communicate with one another despite the vast differences in communication methods.

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## AAC Around the World ... continued



In the image below, Max describes how he felt giving his presentation.



### Benefits of this scholarship

At the conference, Max attended presentations of important AAC research.



Max was able to share his experiences navigating and researching ableism in school on a global platform.



Max was able to travel to and experience a part of Mexico.



Max had the opportunity to do a little bit of exploring while on the Yucatan Peninsula and developed an interest in Mayan architecture. This included a visit to Chichén Itzá. Max describes his opinions of experiencing Mayan civilisation in image from his Tobii Dynavox below.



Below is a photo of Max and his family and support worker positioned adjacent to a stone statue of a serpent with the Pyramid of Kukulcan behind them. Max and his mum are seated in wheelchairs with the rest of the group standing behind.



## News



### Communication Matters



#### Communication Matters International AAC Conference 2024 – Register Now

The Communication Matters annual [International AAC Conference](#) will take place at the University of Leeds from 8-10<sup>th</sup> September 2024.

Over the course of two and a half days, participants will enjoy a diverse programme of presentations, posters and an extensive exhibition from AAC supplier companies.

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.

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.

You are very welcome to join us. Registration is now open! Book early to take advantage of the Early Bird discount which expires on 12<sup>th</sup> July. [See prices and book online here.](#)

Further information can be found on our website: <https://bit.ly/cm2024conf> or why not watch our [new conference video](#) to see what it's all about!

If you have any questions, please email [admin@communicationmatters.org.uk](mailto:admin@communicationmatters.org.uk).

#CM2024conf



#### Communication Matters Conference 2024 - 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 CM2024 Conference Programme?

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Why not donate a copy to the CM2024 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 8-10<sup>th</sup> September.

We are open to all books about AAC but this year we would particularly welcome books regarding neurodiversity, adults using AAC, and/or empowerment.

If you are interested, please email [admin@communicationmatters.org.uk](mailto:admin@communicationmatters.org.uk) as soon as possible.

### AAC Awards

We held our first ever biennial [AAC Awards](#) ceremony in 2019, it was then held online in 2021, and we were thrilled to be back in Leeds for a sparkling event in March 2023.



The ceremony celebrates all forms of communication, the people who use communication aids, the professionals and families that support them and the companies that provide them. We know there are many individuals, groups and companies who deserve to have their contribution to the world of AAC celebrated and we want to champion their achievements.

Take a look at our short [highlights video](#) from last year's awards. We are hoping to hold this event again in 2025, so watch this space!

### New for 2024 CM Communication Clubs



With funding from the National Lottery England, Communication Matters are delighted to launch our new Communication Clubs. The aim of the Communication Clubs is to enable AAC users to meet together for peer support and make connections with other AAC users. We can also help AAC users gain an accredited qualification.

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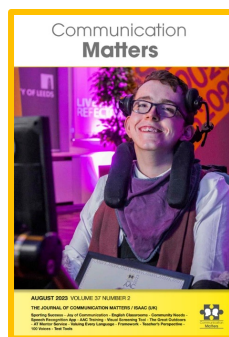


The Communication Clubs can take place in any venue or setting such as a school, college or in the local community. They can be in person or online. We are particularly interested in AAC users who have gained the Level 1 in Mentoring qualification to help co-facilitate these sessions either in person or remotely.

Communication Matters have created some useful resources and can provide support and guidance. For more information go to our website: [Communication Clubs](https://www.communicationmatters.org.uk).

### Communication Matters Journal

Have you thought about subscribing to our journal through your membership with ISAAC?



The Communication Matters Journal offers a multidisciplinary perspective on AAC. It is published three times a year in the UK, both in print and online. The Journal is a collection of articles by AAC users, parents and AAC practitioners – teachers, therapists, engineers, researchers and others – mostly from the UK. Each issue is usually around 40

pages, and typically has eight major articles. The articles are on a mixture of different topics, including both low and high-tech AAC, covering use by both children and adults. We actively welcome articles written by AAC users and their parents/families.

You can download some of the back issues of the CM Journal to see [what kind of articles we publish](#).

If you are interested in writing an article for the journal or advertising in the journal, please email [admin@communicationmatters.org.uk](mailto:admin@communicationmatters.org.uk).

If you would like to subscribe to the journal, please contact ISAAC international or your ISAAC chapter.

### Receive Updates from Communication Matters!

#### WELCOME TO COMMUNICATION MATTERS

We aim to increase awareness, understanding and knowledge of the needs of people who struggle to communicate.



Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Join our [AAC Forum](#) Google Group.

If you would like to be added to our mailing list, please email [admin@communicationmatters.org.uk](mailto:admin@communicationmatters.org.uk).

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### National Partnership to Advance Peer-Support Models for People Who Need and Use Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)



Contract awarded to OHSU UCEDD and CommunicationFIRST by AUCD, February 2024

The University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service (UCEDD) at Oregon Health & Science University ([the OHSU UCEDD](#)), in partnership with [CommunicationFIRST](#), was awarded a 9-month contract from AUCD to create a national plan to develop and advance peer-support models for augmentative and alternative communication (AAC).

The project is grounded in the concepts of (1) peer support; (2) self-advocacy and self-determination; (3) the AAC participation framework; (4) communication equity; (5) diversity, equity, and inclusion, including cultural and linguistic competence; and (6)

a community-based participatory research (CBPR) model.

The leadership team includes Dr. Melanie Fried-Oken (PI), Dr. Emily Quinn, endever\* corbin, and Janice Staehely from the OHSU UCEDD, and Tauna Szymanski and Bob Williams from CommunicationFIRST. The team's first task is to establish a national consortium and steering committee composed of people who have experience with a full range of AAC peer support activities in diverse settings, from private-practice service providers to self-advocacy and other disability organizations, from law centers and AAC manufacturers to university programs. It is expected that the consortium and steering committee will include about 50 people and be comprised of AAC users as well as other representatives from agencies and organizations. Members of the consortium, and project staff, will help achieve the project's five goals:

(1) conduct a national survey about currently used peer supports in the AAC community; (2) develop a protocol for review and analysis of peer support models, projects, approaches and activities within and outside the AAC field that are organized, at minimum, around 3 descriptors: person characteristics (who

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is included), program characteristics (what is done), program outcomes (why); (3) review and analyze AAC models/approaches/activities with the protocol and determine their best fit or contribution for a national AAC Peer Support model; (4) review and analyze related disciplines models/approaches/activities with the protocol and determine their best fit or contribution for a national AAC Peer Support model; and (5) generate initial findings, recommendations and a final report.

## International Communication Rights Alliance



The International Communication Rights Alliance ([ICRA](#)) was formed in 2020 from the initiative of ISAAC to operationalise the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (UNCRPD), specifically for people who use AAC. ICRA comprises people with communication difficulties, parents, service providers, researchers, and advocates.

The ICRA has given two presentations to the UNCRPD committee calling for more action regarding communication rights. ICRA will be giving a presentation to the CRPD Committee in August this year to share the findings of a study undertaken to look at what extent AAC is mentioned by the CRPD committee in their responses to reports of signatory countries. We found that AAC was only mentioned in about a quarter of the statements and that the definition of AAC needs to be made clearer in these statements.

We are currently calling for ISAAC members, particularly those who use AAC to join the ICRA committee and continue our work to raise awareness of, increase and improve policies, standards and practices to uphold communication rights. If you represent a State or National peak body or group advocating on communication rights, we would love to hear from you. If you are interested, please contact [meredith.prain@ableaustralia.org.au](mailto:meredith.prain@ableaustralia.org.au)

## ISAAC-India



ISAAC India Chapter was founded in April 2008 at Ali Yaver Jung National Institute for the Speech and Hearing Disabilities, Mumbai.

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The membership of the chapter has people using AAC, organizations, professionals, parents of people using AAC, disability activists, vendors and friends. Over the years, the chapter has conducted conferences, awareness programmes and trainings. Most of the training courses have been conducted by the organizations, keeping in mind their local needs. This has resulted in smaller two-tier cities and rural areas becoming aware of AAC and trying out low-tech interventions in their small villages or cities.

### Report of the activities from 2023–2024

On the 11th and 12th of January 2024, ISAAC India chapter conducted a national conference in Mysore. This was a collaborative effort of The Centre for AAC & Sign Language, Centre of Excellence, All India Institute of Speech & Hearing, Mysore and ISAAC India Chapter. The theme and the title of the conference was ***“Bridging the gap: Empowering diverse Communicators with recent trends in AAC.”***

The conference featured keynote lectures, presentations by researchers and industry professionals, panel discussions, and poster presentations.

On the first day of the conference the morning session started with the Keynote Lecture by

Ms. Bhavna Botta, President of ISAAC-India on the topic "My Journey with AAC." The afternoon session commenced with the Keynote Lecture titled "Case Studies on Recent Advancements in Eye-Tracking Technology" by Mr. David Goldberg, Assistive Technology Professional, Rehab Engineering Society of North America (RESNA), New Jersey, USA., followed by research presentations and an industry presentation on AAC software.



*Ms. Bhavna Botta, president ISAAC-India delivering keynote lecture*

The second day commenced with the Keynote Lecture titled "Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI) and AAC" by Dr. Vicki R. Casella, Executive Director, The Bridge School, California via online mode. This was followed by a second Keynote Session by Dr. Rajinder Koul Department Chair & Professor, Department of Speech Language and Hearing Sciences, University of Texas, Austin on the topic "Efficacy of AAC Intervention in Persons with Aphasia." These sessions were followed by scientific paper presentations and the morning session ended with a panel

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discussion on “challenges towards effective AAC use in India” with perspectives from an AAC user, a parent, an educator, a speech-language pathologist, and an AAC manufacturer.



*Panel discussion session on challenges towards effective AAC use in India*



*Participants*



*ISAAC-India Chapter office bearers and members at the conference*

The highlight of the conference was the participation of persons with disabilities, caregivers, assistive technology specialists, special educators, social workers, speech-language pathologists, audiologists and post graduate students of speech-language pathology, representatives from AAC industry and representatives of NGOs providing services for persons with disability.

## Other AAC events

Most of the larger cities of India where AAC has been used over the years carried out their usual high-quality work with people who use AAC. They conducted trainings, awareness programmes, and worked hands on with AAC users.

What is interesting to note is:

Bhavna Botta, is a Disability activist, AAC user, and also the current President of the ISAAC India chapter. She won a Public Interest Litigation in Chennai high court. This win now mandates the Chennai Corporation to follow universal design in the installations of bollards — AAC and activism!

Amar Seva Sangam, Ayikudy (ASSA) is a non-profit organization working with children and adults with disabilities from 1981, located in the rural area of Tamil Nadu, annually through its various programs like early intervention, special school, and Vocational training unit. They have introduced both low tech and high tech (AVAZ) to promote communication for children with autism and cerebral palsy. They have developed AAC awareness pamphlet in the local language.

Sankalp— Paediatric Rehabilitation Centre in Udaipur a small city in state of Rajasthan in India. They started as a small physiotherapy

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centre for children with special needs in 2010. Currently they have many projects like early intervention unit, learning centre, therapy departments, vision clinic, community-based rehabilitation, training programs for parents, students, and caregivers. As more than 70% of their children are non-verbal, the following efforts were undertaken to bring AAC to facilitate communication in them:

1. Once a week training on Alternative communication from Vidya Sagar, Chennai to implement low tech communication system as well
2. Use of high-tech AAC & AT like:
  - Avaz:
  - Slate
  - Switches

Despite being of a tech friendly generation, their ability to use high tech systems was very limited and challenging due to limited skills to develop constant vocabulary, updating systems, and sustaining conversation beyond needs.

The above two centres are representative of the work carried out in rural area and second-tier city.

The above is just a glimpse of all the work that is going on in the country. The Govt. of India has been supportive of AAC, and the Rehabilitation Council of India also offers short term courses as part of their CRE.

### Challenges

India is a large diverse country where numbers are large and resources few. In spite of some pathbreaking work that is being done in AAC by way of developing new indigenous technical aids, the trainings, and the hands-on workshops, a lot more needs to be done. For today and tomorrow, a comprehensive plan of ISAAC India outlines a strategic approach to promoting knowledge and expertise in AAC intervention. By developing training modules, hosting an annual conference, and publishing regular newsletters, we aim to create a supportive ecosystem for professionals and families to improve the lives of individuals with complex communication needs.



## Chapters



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

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

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

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

ISAAC-Español • *Coming soon* - [www.isaac-espanol.org](http://www.isaac-espanol.org)

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

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

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

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

ISAAC-NF • [www.isaac-nf.nl](http://www.isaac-nf.nl)

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

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

ISAAC-Singapore • [www.isaac-singapore.org/](http://www.isaac-singapore.org/)

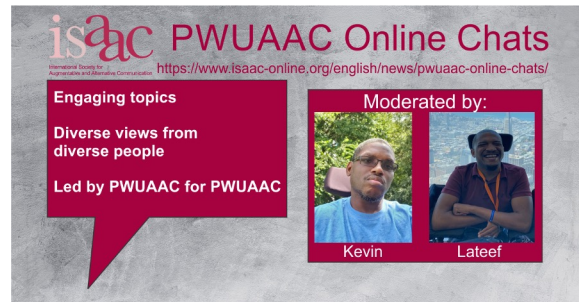
ISAAC-Sweden • [www.isaac-sverige.se](http://www.isaac-sverige.se)

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

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

ISAAC-US • [www.ussaac.org](http://www.ussaac.org)

## 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](#).

## Contact Us

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

## 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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