



December 2019

Introduction

The main goals of CSWN newsletters are to share what is happening in AAC around all continents and to promote networking. CSWN includes articles, resources, and additional information. The articles are about conferences and your personal experiences, with insights and information that can assist others on similar paths. Additional information includes future AAC conferences and events happening in your area. Resources are usually websites that you have come across and found very useful for your day-to-day activities in AAC. We are open to hearing your news! CSWN depends on you to read and submit, so how about we make CSWN “our” newsletter!

By Co-editors Nadia Browning (Chair of ISAAC Council) and Dorothy Fraser (Chair of ISAAC BUILD Committee)

The **CSWN Newsletter** is published twice each year by the International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC)
312 Dolomite Drive
Suite 216
Toronto, ON
M3J 2N2
Canada
Phone: 905-850-6848
Fax: 905-850-6852
Email: feedback@isaac-online.org
Website: www.isaac-online.org

The December 2019 issue and CSWN archives can be viewed on the ISAAC website at <https://www.isaac-online.org/english/news/cswn-newsletter/>

Table of Contents

Breaking the ICE Canada Conference.....	3
EnableKids is Developing Work in AAC in China: Innovating Intervention, Networking with Other Professionals, and Collaboration with Orphanage and Schools.....	8
AAC Awareness Was in Full Effect at Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia in October 2018!.....	13
ATAAC Conference, Zagreb Croatia 2019.....	16
Hovorím AAK, ik spreek OC (I speak AAC): AAC Unites Slovakia and the Netherlands	19
ISAAC 2020 Conference, Cancún, Mexico	27
News from Two of the Conference Co-Chairs.....	27
Conference News	31
Resource Section	32
Farewell Note	33

Breaking the ICE Canada Conference

by Tracy Shepherd and Jan Kraft

What's Right with this Picture?



Town Hall

That's right. People who use AAC are talking with people who use AAC!

“The Breaking the ICE conference inspires me because who knew there were so many people who need AAC?! Sometimes I feel like I have no place. This helps me know that I am not alone.”

– An attendee who uses AAC, 2013

“There's something about that conference. I'm either crying or laughing. I love to see everyone's sense of humour!! If Breaking the ICE was a geographical location, I would want us to live there!! When we are there, with that group of people, it feels like being home. Accepted, embraced, and celebrated!”

– A parent of an attendee who uses AAC, 2013

The Breaking the ICE (BTI) conference is a special gathering that happens every odd numbered year in Toronto, Canada. At this gathering everyone has a voice: visible and invisible barriers can be swept aside; friendships are formed and renewed. We learn about each other and also about ourselves each time we attend. This is a gathering where people who use AAC can meet with each other face to face and tell their stories in the own words and in their own time.

Some individuals who use AAC are members on the Breaking the ICE conference committee, along with some clinicians and other interested people. The co-chair is always a person who uses AAC (paired with a committee member). People who have taken on this role tell us it helps develop leadership skills and confidence. They also provide a model for younger or less experienced individuals who use AAC.

Whenever possible, individuals who use AAC are offered the opportunity to begin public speaking by introducing presenters and making short announcements.

“I was fortunate to be able to work with the kindest and most trustworthy people on the BTI committee who entrusted me to chair the most amazing and inspirational event. Therefore, I am humble to say that I managed to get over my doubts and accepted my part because I did something great for myself and for my own community!”

– Co-chair who uses AAC, 2011

The ninth BTI conference occurred in September 2019. The main presenters are always individuals who use AAC and this year’s theme was “Life Journeys.” We heard firsthand about struggles and frustrations but also about adventures and celebrations.

Zhade Thompson shared what she learned on her journey to Australia. Farrah Sattaur told us about her journey from high school to her current life working and volunteering in her community. Casey Morrison shared the struggles and successes he has experienced in his efforts to make his community more accessible for everyone.

The highlight of the conference is always a Town Hall, during which only people who use AAC are allowed to participate. (Those of us who use our vocal cords to communicate are just there to listen and learn and provide any support needed.) Town Hall is moderated by one or two individuals who use AAC. They provide questions to participants beforehand to get the conversation going and to keep it rolling.



The moderator for 2019 explains Town Hall procedures.

Often participants have created lengthy responses prior to Town Hall, but crosstalk and humorous banter occur as well. It is an opportunity to express humour and disclose your personality:

“I remember this one time I was there and I got everybody else to change their voice to whisper Wendy's and what was funny about that was a man hated that voice.”

– Conference attendee who uses AAC

Here are some tips to share with participants and volunteers if you want to create your own Town Hall event:

- Everyone gets a turn.
- Consider ahead of time what you want to say during AAC Town Hall.
- Get some things ready to say before you come or while you are waiting.
- Prepare to tell everyone your name.
- Make sure you are wearing your name tag.
- It is a good idea to have a note about how you communicate.
- Take note of where the people with the microphones are in the room.
- Get the attention of a person with a microphone when you are ready to talk.
- Tell the person with the microphone how you communicate or show them your note.
- The person with the microphone will tell you when it is your turn.
- If you have a device, show the person with the microphone where the speaker is and turn up the volume when it is your turn to talk.
- If you need help, ask a volunteer.

During the conference, individuals who use AAC have the rare opportunity to spend time face-to-face with each other. There is time to form and consolidate friendships between presentations and over meal breaks. Throughout the conference young, less experienced individuals who use AAC are listening and learning from highly competent communicators who also use AAC. This is a giving community and anyone using AAC can be assured they will be heard because there will be support if communication breakdown occurs. Family members and other individuals have the opportunity to see and interact with highly competent communicators who use AAC. We are all learning to listen better to people who use AAC.



Chatting during a break.

Best of all, the Breaking the ICE conference gives people who use AAC a chance to inspire all, and a chance to be inspired by each other!

One participant spontaneously played a moving song to express her feelings during our memorial service for past participants who are no longer with us.



You can find more photos of our 2019 conference at Breaking the ICE Canada Conference on Facebook.

For more information on how to start your own Breaking the ICE conference see the below **“Core values of the Breaking the ICE Canada Conference.”**

Core values of the Breaking the ICE Canada Conference:

The **Breaking the ICE Canada** Conference is an event created by and for individuals who use AAC and their families.

This conference is designed to bring together the community of people who use AAC to share ideas, learn from each other and create new friendships, thus building Independence, Community and Empowerment.

What we have learned over the last 9 conferences that has contributed to making the conference a success:

- It provides opportunities for Independence and growth as regular participants are supported to be involved in different aspects of the Conference (e.g. being involved in program development, introducing a presenter, presenting a session on a panel, presenting individually, co-chairing the Conference)

- The Community of People who use AAC come together in the Town Hall. This component is integral to the Conference because everyone who uses AAC has a voice. Other people can come and listen, but they cannot join in the sharing. In this way a group of people who are often marginalized have a chance to share ideas, make connections and say what is on their mind
- Empowerment is addressed by recognizing and celebrating the lived experience of people who use AAC. They share their stories, opinions and experience through presentations and the Conference respects the efforts and skills of our presenters by providing equitable payment in the form of honorariums and expenses.
- AAC users and their families / allies are in the majority at the Conference. Professionals and students are also encouraged to come and learn in this unique context. What better way to learn than from the actual experts: people who use AAC to communicate?
- We support opportunities for mentoring from those who have more experience with AAC. This is often the only time younger AAC users and their parents / allies will see and interact with others who use AAC and have shared experiences. This also supports Connecting and Community Building
- There has always been an evaluative component (post-conference surveys and focus groups) to ensure the Conference meets the needs and interests of the AAC users. After all, this event is intended to meet THEIR needs so who better to let us know what those needs are?
- The conference is structured to take the needs of people with complex communication needs into account.

Some examples are:

- providing longer breaks for personal care needs,
- providing food that is soft and easily eaten
- considering accessible facilities and accommodation and
- building in extra time for presentations and breaks than may be typical at other Conferences. Because AAC is a slower method of communication; creating and maintaining friendships and a sense of community will need more time.

We hope our successes at the Breaking the ICE conference in Toronto will inspire you and your friends to “break the ice” in your own communities.

EnableKids is Developing Work in AAC in China: Innovating Intervention, Networking with Other Professionals, and Collaboration with Orphanage and Schools

By Yu Liang (Kelly) and Nadia Browning

Yu Liang (Kelly), and her working partner, Lixia Jia (Sofia) founded the Beijing EnableKids Child Development Center (EnableKids) in 2018. Their main goal is to provide the best care for their clients.





In June 2019, they had the opportunity to host the “AAC by the Bay” in Beijing for the first time in this country. It was a total success, with 35 participants.



From this conference many great connections developed. One was with the orphanage in the east of Beijing, called *Living Tree*. It has been functioning since 2002. To date, there are 23 children with multiple disabilities living full time in the *Living Tree*. Currently these children have their personal care and basic needs attended. The organizers identified communication as the main factor to promote interaction with staff and other children. Based on the needs identified and the support from the organizers, the team of EnableKids started working together. First step has been to learn about each child and their environment in search for communicating opportunities. This work has just started!



Following “AAC By the Bay” in Beijing, Nadia (Occupational Therapist and Chair of ISAAC Council) stayed an additional 10 days working with Kelly and Chloe, clinician at EnableKids.

During this time, the group met with the parents and learned about the child. The goal was to provide strategies on implementing AAC.



At work and outside of work, we had fun. The rich culture of Beijing and the people make you want to come back.



EnableKids has also been opening new frontiers in China.

One way is by working closely with families and teachers from regular school who has students with special needs. They cooperated by meeting face-to-face or long-distance online consultation. Kelly is open to different modalities or networking. EnableKids is also building connections with doctors, other therapists and technicians of AT companies.

Another intervention strategy that Kelly has adopted is of working with small groups of children. The conventional therapies in China is done individually. EnableKids believes that children with complex communication needs can also benefit from group activities which allow children to interact and communicate with each other. Furthermore, they believe supporting children in using AAC system in a small classroom setting might be helpful for the future transition to the inclusive education.



Establishing connections and working together to support children with special needs is an important mission of EnableKids.

For more details, please contact:

Yu Liang (Kelly), liangyu_kelly@aliyun.com or

Nadia Browning, nadiabrowning@gmail.com

AAC Awareness Was in Full Effect at Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia in October 2018!

By Tracy Shepherd



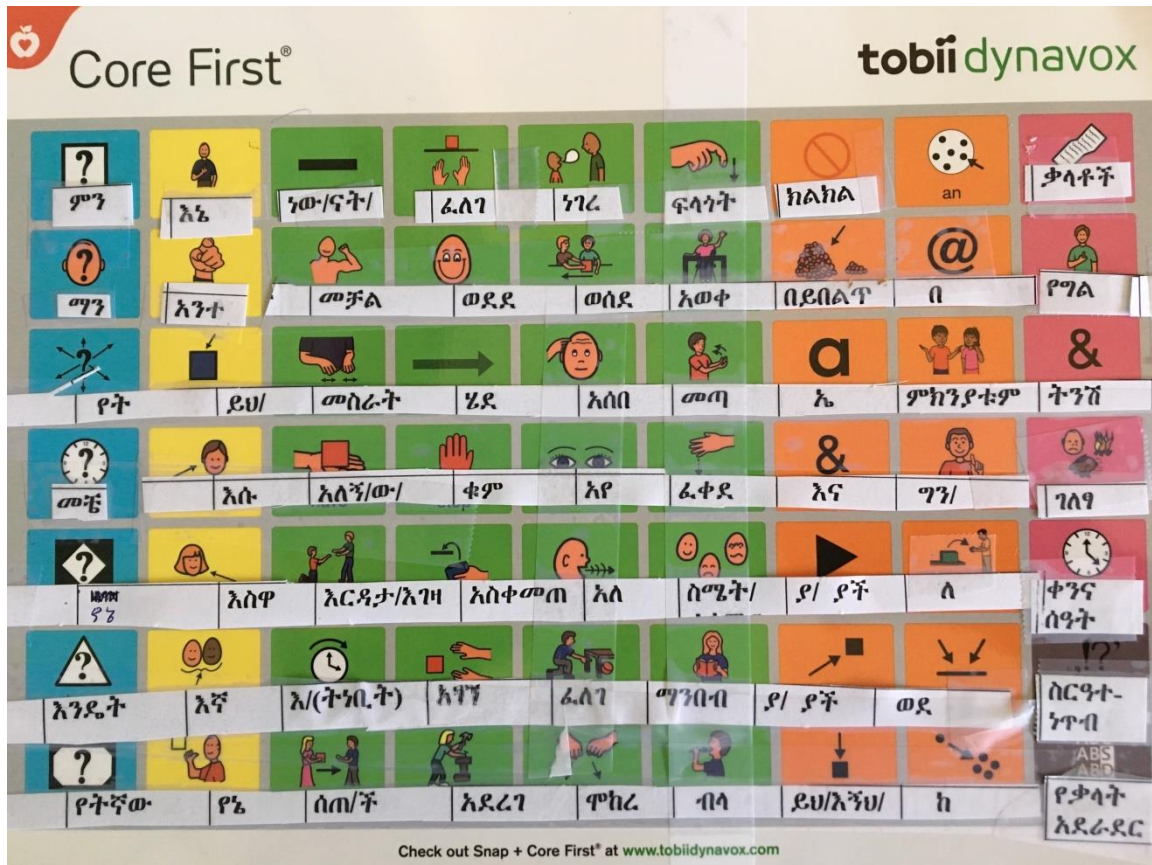
Speech Language Pathology in Ethiopia is on the cusp of a significant breakthrough: moving from two qualified speech therapists in a country of 105 million, to 16 trained Ethiopian speech therapists graduating from Addis Ababa University in 2019 for the first time.

In 2017 Addis Ababa University (AAU), Special Needs Department, in the Faculty of Education joined with Transforming Faces and the Toronto Addis Ababa Academic Collaboration (TAAAC) to help train the first 2 cohorts of speech therapists. TAAAC invited the Department of Speech Language Pathology at University of Toronto to partner with them in supporting their speech language therapy undergraduate program.

I was fortunate enough to be asked to teach and share my passion for AAC with these students. Students learned about AAC Assessment, Vocabulary, Communication Displays and Devices, Literacy, Adults, Autism and Partner Strategies. They enthusiastically explored no-tech and low-tech strategies and discussed what could be useful in Ethiopia.



Students translated core boards into Amharic for use within the clinical component of the program.



We explored the pros and cons of high tech and thought about creative ways we could start to develop this specialty area in the future. In addition, they were provided with some clinical experience with the beginning implementation stages of using AAC within an Autism program there. What a tremendous opportunity it was to begin to think together about what AAC could look like in Ethiopia. As these students graduate and begin to work within the country they have kept in touch and we have been able to continue the learning and sharing. It's the beginning of an AAC journey!

The future plans for this program are to open a Masters in Speech Therapy, open to all who have a clinical background. It will be jointly held under the College of Education and the College of Health Science AAU – with ongoing teaching from University of Toronto and the generous support of Transforming Faces.

For more information about TAAAC, visit the website <https://taaac.com/>.

ATAAC Conference, Zagreb Croatia 2019

<https://www.ataac.eu/>

This October 15-17, Zagreb was once again the home of the International Conference on Assistive Technology and Augmentative and Alternative Communication.



Who were the participants?

With more than 2,100 participants from all over the world, this year's ATAAC Zagreb lived up to its title of the world's fastest growing ATAAC conference.

Therapists, people with disabilities, families, students, engineers, managers, teachers - people of different backgrounds gathered to listen to more than 30 speakers talking about assistive technology and AAC.

There definitely was a lot to learn from experts such as Joy Smiley Zabala, Jennifer Buxton, Meghan O'Brien, Beata Batorowitz, Alina Smyczek, and Aldona Mysakowska Adamczyk. All of the speakers offered a lot of practical advice for anyone looking to improve their work with people with different disabilities.

Were there any opportunities to get hands on experience?

Yes, of course! Every day of the conference visitors could take part in **Workshops**. Small groups of participants led by the experts worked on specific tasks such as working in new software or trying out a new method. Everybody who joined had opportunity to take what they learned in lectures and apply it in real situations, as well as to ask questions they might have.

Did visitors get to try some devices?

This year's **Exhibition area** was thriving with cutting-edge technology. Visitors were able to come and try out exciting new devices like mouth-operated computer mouse, eye-gaze computer control and many more. One of the most interesting parts of the Exhibition area was the Playground – a place where participants could see examples of how to use devices for various activities.

What about discussions and networking?

Panel discussions and **poster presentation** were go-to places for anyone who wanted to exchange experiences. Direct interaction between parents and experts presented many opportunities to come up with solutions for challenges they encounter in working with people with disabilities.

What about those who couldn't be in Zagreb in October 15-17?

Luckily, there was a Watch Online option for all those who weren't able to make it to Zagreb. People from more than 50 countries worldwide attended online and they had two weeks to watch and rewatch all of the lectures at their own pace.

Who made this happen?

ATAAC Zagreb 2019 was organised by E-Glas, Faculty of Engineering, University of Rijeka and Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation, University of Zagreb and was held under the patronage of the President of Croatia Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, The Ministry of Health and The Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Croatia. Last, but definitely not least are volunteers whose contribution makes the tick of the ATAAC tock (to run like clockwork!)



What about ATAAC 2020?

Next ATAAC will take place in Zagreb in October 2020. The application form and schedule will be available in early 2020 at www.ataac.eu.

If you would be interested to participate as a speaker, feel free to apply via this form: www.bit.ly/speakers2020

Hovorím AAK, ik spreek OC (I Speak AAC): AAC Unites Slovakia and the Netherlands

By Martina Kukumbergová, Monika Šulcová, Stijn Deckers

A very brief meeting at the ECER AAC conference hosted in Bucharest, Romania, July 2017, led to an exchange programme and friendship in AAC two years later:

Slovakia meets the Netherlands

The ECER AAC conference is held biennially, ECER stands for Eastern and Central European Region. At the 2017 conference In Bucharest it was decided that the next ECER AAC conference in 2019 would be hosted in Bratislava, Slovakia, and the two organisers of the conference already asked around for presenters willing to come to Bratislava.

In July 2019 Martina Kukumbergová (speech language pathologist) and Monika Šulcová (teacher assistant at a school for special education) organised a brilliant AAC conference, under the flag of their own little AAC organisation Komunikujme Spolu n.o. (i.e. Communicate Together) in collaboration with the Department of Communication Disorders of Comenius University in Bratislava. Attending the conference were many international speakers and listeners, including 2 presenters from the Netherlands – Mascha Legel (visual anthropologist and founder of the AAC method Film as Observable Communication) and Dr. Stijn Deckers (educational psychologist and president of ISAAC-NF chapter)



Attendees at the ECER AAC conference, Bratislava, July 2019.

On one of the last nights of the conference, with the pleasant company of Slovak beers, Martina, Monika, Mascha and Stijn discussed closer collaboration. The idea arose to organise a little exchange programme: a visit first to the Netherlands to look around a couple of schools for special education and AAC centres and later a second visit to Slovakia.

Just a week after the conference it was already arranged, Martina and Monika would come to the Netherlands in the AAC Awareness Month October.

They visited the Netherlands from October 4th until 11th.



Martina and Monika: "We set up an exchange trip to see how AAC is incorporated in Special Schools and AAC Centers in the Netherlands and Slovakia. We planned to visit the Netherlands in October 2019. Stijn arranged an amazing program for us. Within one full week we visited schools for special education, met professionals and travelled around the country. Visiting Stichting Milo was very important for us. We spent the whole day there. We had a chance to join the KLIN© therapy and meet and talk to a very kind and smart man - professor Hans von Balkom. We all four discussed and compared the situation happening in AAC in Universities and Special Schools in our countries. It was very much alike. Sadly we must agree that we really miss deeper AAC lectures at University in Slovakia. Well, time flew quickly in Stichting Milo and we left it in the late afternoon."

On the first day we visited the film studio of Cam on Wheels with Mascha Legel. *Cam on Wheels* is a film production studio for teens with and without disabilities, some of them use AAC, to learn how to film, edit and tell stories.

We visited two schools for special education, the Dr. A. van Voorthuysen School in Rotterdam and the Ulingshof in Venlo, a school also connected to a rehabilitation center.

In Rotterdam we had a very nice tour through the school, could see in all classes and we had a presentation from the speech therapist who told what they do with language and communication development of their children.

In Venlo we saw how they integrate AAC in the classroom. Most of the children had their own AAC devices and the teacher used a large (A0 format) poster of a communication board based on core vocabulary to model and aid her own speech. The communication board was made of the Score vocabulary, build in MindExpress by Jabbla in Belgium. After the morning in the class we had a tour through the school and rehabilitation center and a longer talk with speech language pathologist Monique Linssen, also a board member of ISAAC-NF Chapter.

Martina: "All the visits and talks we had during the whole week were valuable and inspiring. We felt satisfaction, that the AAC services we provide are more or less the same. We borrowed many valuable ideas from this trip and already started implementing them in the following weeks. Marcel and Jasper from KMD introduced us to the whole process of developing and manufacturing a speech generating device. Starting with the tiniest technology, through the

hardware and its mounting possibilities and ending with lifetime educating in technology use of their devices.

“Thank you, Cam on Wheels, for showing us how AAC users can use video recording and how professional their work can be. This is something we would like to focus on too. After one week in Netherlands we came home charged with new energy and ideas for our work.”

We also visited Stichting Milo, an AAC center providing services throughout the whole of the Netherlands, founded by professor in AAC dr. Hans van Balkom.

Martina and Monika joined the therapy group during the morning and were part of the morning program. In the afternoon a couple of presentations were given by Hans and Stijn about Milo and their programs. Martina and Monika presented about their own school and their work in AAC in Slovakia, for therapists and psychologists at Milo. We also visited KMD, a manufacturer and distributor of AAC devices. We had a very lovely talk about their products and got a grand tour behind the scenes, and were shown how they handmake every single item, from switch to mount on a wheelchair. KMD was also very kind in donating a mounting device and couple of low-tech AAC devices for use in Slovakia.



Visit to Stichting Milo, Schijndel, and meeting with Prof. Dr. Hans van Balkom.

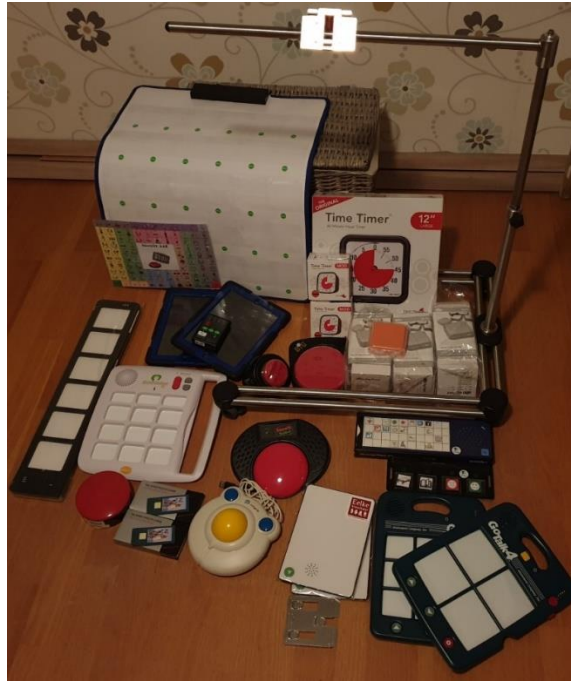


Visit to KMD in Duiven, the Netherlands, with a tour from Marcel Cup (director) and Jasper. KMD recently also delivered an eye-gaze speech generating device to a girl with Rett Syndrome in Slovakia.

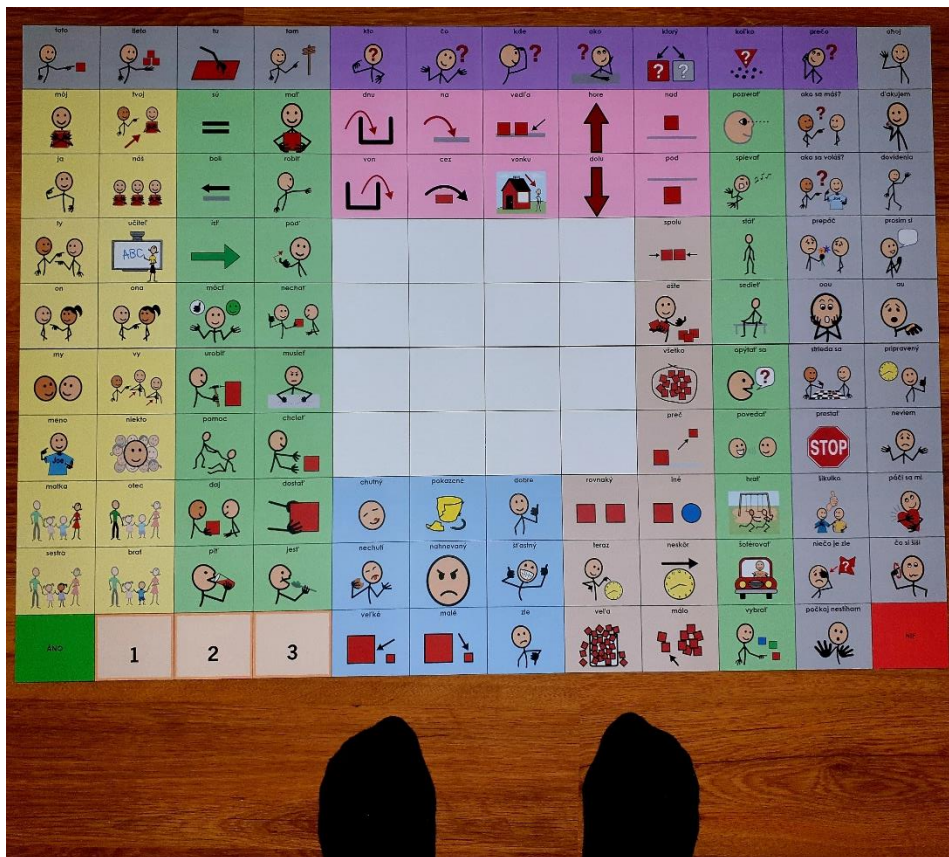
About a month after Martina and Monika’s visit to the Netherlands, Stijn visited Slovakia. With the help of friends, colleagues and family, and with generous donations from ISAAC-NF (the Dutch Chapter of ISAAC), KMD, Commap, rdgKompagne / Eelke Verschuur – all are distributors of AAC devices in the Netherlands – Stijn could bring two suitcases with AAC devices for use at school and Kommunikujme Spolu. In collaboration, Martina and Stijn worked on a Slovak translation and adaptation of the Score communication board based on Slovak core vocabulary and additional quick sentences that already were used often at Martina and Monika’s school Spojená škola Dúbravská cesta in Bratislava.



Martina and Monika: *“Stijn came to Bratislava one month later, in November. He brought a big suitcase full of AAC aids and devices, he brought t-shirts with communication boards printed on them and lots of other things. He was like Santa Claus coming a month earlier before Christmas, but he carried a suitcase with AAC things. We very much appreciated what he had done for us. There was a lot of work behind it. I guess and know this friendship and professional relationship will last for the next years – as we could see within the older AAC generation of professionals present at ECER AAC conferences all those years.”*



Donations from the Netherlands.



Example of Slovak core communication board, based on Score. The white square in the middle can be used for activity or topic specific vocabulary, for example with Velcro.

On Monday, Tuesday and Friday a visit to their school was planned.

Stijn: *“To be honest, I was very impressed by all the work Martina and Monika already had been doing in AAC at their school. I found it very inspiring to see their passion for their work, for their children and how they integrated mainly low tech AAC and some iPad based speech devices with Go Talk app in their classrooms. Children were already very used to communicating via AAC. Although Slovak language still remains a mystery to me, I was really able to get in contact and actually have little conversations with the children using my own core vocabulary board and the children’s devices. AAC is universal, of course with some cultural and language adaptations. I was very surprised to walk into classrooms on Friday and already find the large communication boards attached to the walls in front of the classroom. This shows the enthusiasm at their school, such an eagerness to do the best for their children. It should be like this at all schools, but I don’t see this regularly, also not in the Netherlands. Before I visited Slovakia, I already had a lot of respect for the knowledge Martina and Monika showed and all the effort they put into organising the ECER AAC conference in July, but after this week I also have a lot of respect for their passion and energy. This trip was such an inspiration for me!”*

After school in the afternoon we also visited several therapy or day care centers for children with disabilities in Bratislava. We visited Gardenia Center, Baobab center and K center. All of the centers already making use of some forms of AAC. We had very inspirational talks and brainstorms at each of these centers and the very enthusiastic staff of these centers passionately talked about their work with the children.



Stijn: *“Gardenia and Baobab were fantastic, beautiful accommodations, a lot of equipment and you could really see the love for their work and their children from everybody I talked to. They also integrated smell as a form of AAC. K center was something special. It is a music therapy center for people with disabilities and I was really amazed by the work they did, for children with epilepsy, but also for example for people with autism. A perfect holistic approach!”*

On Wednesday a visit was planned to the Department of Communication Disorders at the Comenius University Bratislava. Stijn gave a lecture on AAC for students in the Master program for Speech Language Pathology and focussed on two topics: evidence-based selection of vocabulary in AAC systems and the KLIN© method used as an immersive therapy for communication and language development at Stichting Milo. KLIN© stands for Kinderen Leren Initiatieven Nemen in Communicatie, or Kids Learning to take Initiatives in Communication, by the use of AAC, aided language stimulation and anchored approaches. After the lecture there was a meeting with prof. paeddr. Zsolt Csefalvay to further talk about the curriculum and discussing possibilities for further collaboration in the future between Comenius University Bratislava and Radboud University Nijmegen in the Netherlands.



Meeting with Prof. Dr. Zolt Csefalvay from Comenius University Bratislava.

On Thursday we went on a tour “deeper into Slovakia” with more staff members, including the headmaster, to visit two schools and one adjacent rehabilitation center. In the early morning we visited Spojená škola Topolčany, located in a beautiful building, where we started with a history of AAC use at their school. Next we went on a tour to visit some of the classes and we could briefly join an AAC therapy session with the speech language pathologist. Later we drove to Nová Baňa, to visit the special school (Spojená škola Nová Baňa) and the rehabilitation center. As is the story for all site visits: people are very open, friendly and really want to show all the good work they are doing.



An example of how AAC was already used at Spojená škola, Dúbravská cesta, Bratislava. One of the teachers made this for interactive story book reading.



Martina explaining core vocabulary and the use of the communication boards to the colleagues from Spojená škola Topolčany.



Martina, Monika, and Stijn with part of the team at Spojená škola, Dúbravská cesta, Bratislava.

2. The family together with the network of therapists form the main gear to provide our children with the necessary tools to become independent communicators.



3. The great opportunity to disseminate to Spanish-speaking countries this great tool that is AAC.



Thanks to AAC, my daughter has a voice, representing a radical change in the way we communicate. We have learned to listen to her. Let's spread the word, let's disseminate AAC, let's give people with complex communication needs opportunities to learn; to be able to express their thoughts, needs, desires, and ideas; and to participate in the world around them. Together, let us make this Conference a unique and unforgettable experience for all AAC users.

I look forward to seeing you in Cancún, to share, learn and connect.

2. *By Gaby Mangino, Conference Co-Chair*

I'm Gaby Mangino. I have a major in business administration and have two children: Daniela, she is 12, and Diego, who is 11 years old and is an AAC user as he has cerebral palsy.



For 19 years, I've been working as a freelance in a market research company where I have projects that I can do from home, so it allows me to support Diego in all his needs and take him to his therapies.

Since my son was a baby, he started going to CATIC, a therapy center in Mexico City with a special education program focused on communication. There, I was taught about the importance of communication, and I have seen through the years that it has gained national and international recognition, has growth. After some years of taking Diego to CATIC, I was invited to be part of parents' group in which we organized some events for the students and courses and workshops for parents, but the work started growing, we began to raise funds to bring recognized therapists to Mexico to evaluate the children and give courses, have organized camps, and that way we made a great team!



Gabriela Berlanga and Marcela Manzur, owners of CATIC, and Wendy Moreno and me, mothers of CATIC's pupils.

When CATIC asked me if I wanted to be a co-chair of the ISAAC's Conference 2020 in Cancún, my first answer was a "yes, of course!" I was aware that it would require additional work, but it lifted my self-esteem simply because it meant that I had done a good job, they trusted me, and, above all, they believed that I was capable of doing it. It was a new challenge to get out of my comfort zone where everything was already settled. I am no longer just Daniela and Diego's mother. I am also Gabriela Mangino, a professional who has the great responsibility for a successful international conference.

I love that everything I have learned with my son, I apply during the organization of the conference, at all times I think about his needs, how I would do it and what would be the easiest if my son were in that place or in that situation and then I think this is very useful for AAC users to feel more comfortable.

During all years at CATIC, I have learned about AAC and other topics related to it. Also, I learned about ISAAC (International Society of Augmentative and Alternative Communication) and noticed that AAC is very common in other countries but in Mexico is hardly known, so it is a challenge to get to know it all around the country.

It has not been easy. The organization of the conference has involved work and I am sure that as the date approaches, the work will be much greater, but I do it with pleasure. Besides everything, it has allowed me to know more about AAC and above all, to get to know successful adult users who inspire me to keep my efforts in order to improve Diego's communication.

Conference News

The poster features a vibrant background of a tropical beach with a blue sky, turquoise water, and golden sand. Palm fronds are visible on the right side. At the top center is a colorful logo consisting of several overlapping circles in shades of purple, red, orange, yellow, and green. Inside the logo, the text reads: "ISAAC 2020", "CANCÚN", "MEXICO", "COMMUNICATION BEYOND BORDERS", and "COMUNICACION SIN FRONTERAS".

ISAAC is excited to announce that **ISAAC 2020**, the 19th Biennial Conference of the International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication, will be held at the Cancún International Convention Centre (ICC) in beautiful **CANCÚN**, adjoining the Riviera Maya on México's Caribbean coast.

AUGUST 1-2
AAC Camp, Pre-Conference Workshops, Executive and Council Meetings

AUGUST 3-6
Main Conference at the Cancún ICC, México

Surrounded by Mayan culture and with easy access to beautiful beaches, tours, shops and restaurants of both Cancún and the Riviera Maya, the ISAAC conference will feature AAC events and perspectives; cutting edge research and clinical innovations; workshops, seminars, exhibits, social events, and entertainment, all in a unique cultural setting.

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

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

isaac
International Society for
Augmentative and Alternative Communication

www.isaac-online.org

Link for more details about the conference,
including registration and grant application forms:
<https://www.isaac-online.org/english/conference-2020>

Resource Section

From Australia

- <http://darrylsellwood.com/?p=998>

Quote from Darryl Sellwood:

“If you have even started a conversation with me, or with someone else who has a communication difficult, and wondered how to best keep the conversation going without feeling awkward in understanding what is being said, this video is for you. I am pretty proud to have the opportunity to be a part of one of the project by JFA Purple Orange, in Adelaide, South Australia.”

From Canada

- <https://www.aphasia.ca/communicative-access-sca/>
- http://www.cayabc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/AAC_Aphasia_CAYA.pdf
- <https://cpb-ca-c1.wpmucdn.com/learningnetwork.setbc.org/dist/f/577/files/2017/11/AAC-in-the-Classroom-1c9wzpu.pdf>

From USA

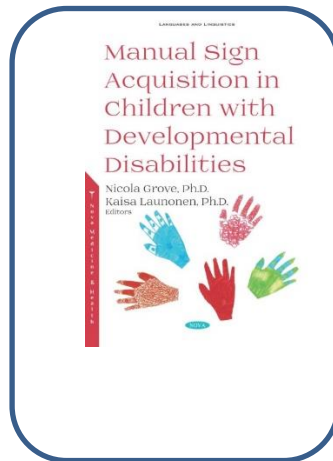
- https://www.asha.org/PRPSpecificTopic.aspx?folderid=8589942773§ion=Key_Issues

From UK

- The importance of modelling language on a communication aid is explained simply in this two and a half minute video by Chris Bugaj:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fIFNMky22-U&feature=youtu.be>



- Manual sign acquisition in children with developmental disabilities. Nova Science Publishers.



Quote from publishers Nova Science:

“This book provides an overview of forty years of research and practice by recognised experts, from a developmental perspective. Uniquely, the book includes contributions on both sign languages and sign systems, linking the two fields of Deaf studies and Augmentative and Alternative Communication which have historically been seen as separate. This text is the most authoritative single text to date on the topic, providing an invaluable resource for speech pathologists, researchers, psychologists and educators.”

Farewell Note

Thank you to everyone who contributed information and all of you who read CSWN, our global newsletter! Feel free to comment and connect.

Our next edition will be published in May 2020. We would love to hear your news. Please submit your articles and/or news by 1st April to:
nadiabrowning@gmail.com and dotfraser2@gmail.com

We look forward to hearing from you.

Wishing you all Happy Holidays,

Nadia and Dorothy