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Interface and CAAC Newsletter

December 2017

**Centre for Augmentative and
Alternative Communication
(CAAC)**

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**Centre for Augmentative
and Alternative
Communication**

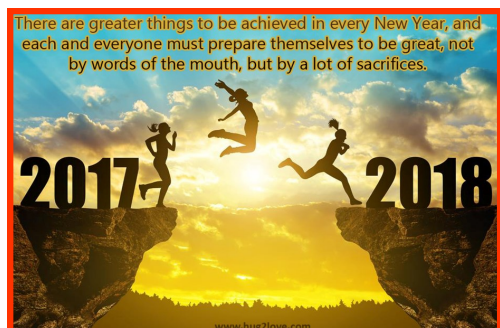
CREATING NEW OPPORTUNITIES

National Newsletter

New Year's resolutions?



New Year's resolutions are the perfect chance for all those who have failed to start making the changes that they said they would make next week, next month, or perhaps later in the year. New Year's resolutions also give you the opportunity to plan for the year ahead because "if you fail to plan—you plan to fail".



With the end of 2017 in sight and the New Year around the corner, we tend to look back and re-evaluate our New Year's resolutions based on our life choices of the past year. Here at the Centre for AAC we also did some retrospection to determine if we met our goals and aims for 2017. We focus on the year's highlights and low lights to determine how we could improve our work. Questions were asked, such as: Did we manage to support our students successfully in their studies? If not, what could we do differently next year? Did we (students and staff) do research important for our context to make a difference in the lives of others? Did we sufficiently disseminate our research and work locally and internationally to a wider audi-

ence (to academics and other interested parties)? Did the FOFA empowerment programme for young adults make a difference to the youth who were involved?

It is therefore great to confirm that 2017 was once again a good year for the Centre for AAC. Staff members were involved in ground-work research; they travelled to various places in South Africa (e.g., Acornhoek, Johannesburg, Tsuani); and globally, (e.g., India, Kenya, Lesotho, Namibia and Sweden to mention a few) to share their knowledge with other academics and interested parties (e.g., parents of children with disabilities). Apart from staff visits, international visitors visited the Centre and shared their knowledge through workshops, discussions with staff and students—thus building the field of AAC and ECI. In this newsletter, we will share with you some of these interesting events and stories that happened in the past few months of 2017.

The staff of the Centre for AAC already planned and committed themselves to continue making a difference in the lives of others—especially persons with disabilities—in the New Year.

Dr Ensa Johnson
Editor
Centre for AAC



**May you have a blessed holiday
season and a prosperous
New Year!**

Prof. Juan Bornman and staff
Centre for AAC

Interface promotes communication for people with little or no functional speech by supplementing existing communication with gestures, communication boards and assistive technology (thus, augmentative and alternative communication)

CAAC News

Staff visits

Centre for AAC team visits Lesotho – the Kingdom in the Sky



Lesotho might be a tiny landlocked country, nestled between the Drakensberg and Maloti mountain ranges but it is a country with a big heart. It is entirely surrounded by South Africa, and from 25 – 27 March, four staff members from the Centre for AAC were nestled between these very same mountains. Advocate Bokang Martin Mohanoe from the Centre for Constitutional and Human Rights Watch invited the Centre for AAC staff to Maseru to present a workshop titled, “No Parents, No Progress”, “ Ntle le batsoali , Ha ho tsoelo pele” to parents with children with disabilities.

During the two day visit, the Centre for AAC team, **Prof. Bornman**, **Dr. Johnson**, **Ms. Morwane** and **Mrs White** also had a



meeting with the Advocacy Team for Inclusion (ATI), Dr. Lefoka, Dr. Leshota, Dr. Maseho, Khosi Rejake and Hlonie Mohasi, at the National University of Lesotho (NUL) with its picturesque sandstone buildings in Roma to explore possible future research and training collaboration.

The disability workshop was sponsored by (the then former) prime minister of Lesotho's wife, Mme Liabiloe Ramoholi, who wanted to raise general disability awareness for parents and the communities in Lesotho. The CAAC team presented the workshop to more than 200 politicians, parliamentarians and parents and other caregivers of children with disabilities and the feedback received was positive.



We look forward to the future collaboration that will emerge from this visit to Lesotho.

Juan Bornman, Robyn White & Refilwe Morwane
Centre for AAC

Prof. Bornman's second visit to Kenya in 2017



Prof. Bornman visited Kenya again for the second time this year in June 2017 to discuss future research. Here she is with the PAGEL (Partnerships for the Health Sector in Developing Countries) research team with representatives from Kenya, Uganda, Germany and South Africa on route to visit two hospitals in Nairobi: Kenyatta National Hospital and Gertrudes' Children's Hospital.

Prof. Juan Bornman
Centre for AAC

CAAC Staff visits to Sweden



Prof. Juan Bornman, Dr Alecia Samuels and Dr Liezl Schlebusch (post-doctoral fellow at the CAAC) visited the CHILD programme, Jönköping University in Sweden to participate in the **Working Conference for Researchers: Engagement in Young Children** held from the 16th-17th November. Prof. Bornman gave a talk entitled “Children's rights: Engagement in the criminal justice system” at the conference. In addition, the three CAAC staff members also participated on the 18th of November in research discussions with international collaborators from Sweden, Portugal, Taiwan and Australia in a NRF-STINT aligned research project focused on the development and validation of a picture based tool for children to measure their own participation. **Prof. Shakila Dada** will also visit Jönköping University in December 2017 for further discussions as part of this grant.

In the photo is **Prof. Bornman** (middle) with (from left) Proff Jesper Boesen & Mats Granlund (Jönköping University, Sweden), Ana Isabel Pinto (University of Porto, Portugal) and Dale Farran (Vanderbilt University, USA) presenting at the 1 day Engagement Seminar presented by HLK and the CHILD group to Masters students and pre-graduate students today.

Prof. Juan Bornman & Dr Alecia Samuels
Centre for AAC



CAAC News (cont.)

Staff visits

Prof. Dada visits India



Kolkata – a city of contrasts

Kolkata is the second largest city in India situated in West Bengal. Kolkata for most visitors conjures up images of human suffering and poverty. This is a partial picture of this vibrant city. It is a city of contrasts, not unlike South Africa, noble and squalid; historic and futuristic simultaneously. Kolkata is considered India's artistic, cultural and intellectual capital and has been associated with five Nobel Laureates including Amartya Sen (Economics), Mother Theresa and Rabindranath Tagore. Rabindranath Tagore was the first non-European awarded the Nobel Laureate (Literature) for his book *Ganjali*. His poetry and teachings still echo in the current education system encouraging active personhood contained in his words "You can't cross the sea merely by standing and staring at the water". These active philosophies may be partially attributable to Kolkata boasting an overall literacy rate of 87.14%.

Prof. Shakila Dada visited Professor Santoshi Halder at the University of Calcutta, India. This was part of a funded research project by the National Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences (NIHSS) and Indian Council for Social Science Research (ICSSR). The research project focussed on children with disabilities in the respective countries. As part of the visit **Prof. Dada** presented a seminar entitled "Participa-



Prof. Dada visiting the Indian Institute for CP

tion: Including voices of vulnerable groups" to post graduate students and staff at the University of Calcutta. She also visited Amrit Somani Memorial Centre, a Centre focussed on interventions for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders. Finally, she spend a full day at the Indian Institute for Cerebral Palsy (IICP). The IICP is a centre that focusses on children with cerebral palsy including those who require AAC. It contains an inclusive school, parent training as well as a vocational training focus. Their models of service delivery are innovative and they have been at the forefront of developing appropriate AAC systems for their context.

Prof. Shakila Dada
Centre for AAC

Prof. Bornman and Dr Tönsing visit Namibia



Prof. Juan Bornman and **Dr Kerstin Tönsing** presented two training workshops to the Namibian Speech Language Hearing Association in May and October 2017 respectively. The first workshop provided participants with an overview of AAC assessment and intervention, while the second focussed on AAC interventions for adults with acquired neurological difficulties. Participants enjoyed the practical and applied nature of the workshops and indicated that the skills acquired would stand them in good stead to provide better services to adults and children in need of AAC.

Dr Kerstin Tönsing
Centre for AAC

Staff achievements



Miss Refilwe Morwane — Fellow for Tuks Young Research Leader Programme (TYRLP); receives prestigious scholarship

Miss Refilwe Morwane was this year chosen as a Fellow for the Tuks Young Research Leader Programme (TYRLP) (2017).

The TYRLP is an initiative of Future Africa and the University of Pretoria (UP) and aims to grow early career academics at the University of Pretoria in the areas of thought leadership, team development, engagement and collaboration, with the intention of enabling them to solve the complex issues that face society. The programme aims to form a community within the University of the like-minded young researchers who possess qualities that will contribute to UP becoming and leading as a research intensive University. The delegates were introduced to various techniques and strategies essential for future leaders who will work in collaboration with various researchers all over Africa and the World. Prof. Tinyiko engaged the young researchers and shared experiences and lessons as a researcher.

Miss Refilwe Morwane
Centre for AAC

Miss Morwane was also the recipient of a National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences (NIHSS) scholarship to continue with her PhD studies.

Congratulations, Refilwe!

Dr Kerstin Tönsing runner-up of Teaching Excellence Award

We are so proud of Dr Kerstin Tönsing who was recently awarded the shared second place for the Teaching Excellence Award of the Faculty of Humanities.

Great achievement, Kerstin!

Research publications



The students and staff at the Centre for AAC were very busy contributing to publications in the past year. Following, a list of the most recent publications. Please contact the various authors should you be interested in a copy of the articles:

Published articles

Adolfsson, M., **Johnson, E.**, & Nilsson, S. (2017). Pain management for children with cerebral palsy in school settings in two cultures: action and reaction approaches. *Disability and Rehabilitation, Early online* (November), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09638288.2017.1327987>

Bornman, J. (2017). Preventing abuse and providing access to justice for individuals with complex communication needs: the role of augmentative and alternative communication. *Seminars in Speech and Language, 38*(4), 321–331. doi:10.1055/s-0037-1604279

Bryen, D. N., Bornman, J., Morris, J., Moolman, E., & Sweatman, F. M. Summer 2017). Use of mobile technology by adults who use AAC: Voices from two countries. *Assistive Technology Outcomes and Benefits (ATOB), 11*, pp 66-81. Available online: www.atia.org/atob

Dada, S., Murphy, Y., & Tönsing, K. (2017). Augmentative and alternative communication practices: a descriptive study of the perceptions of South African speech-language therapists. *AAC: Augmentative and Alternative Communication, 33*(4), 189–200. doi:10.1080/07434618.2017.1375979

De Clercq, H., Naudé, A., & Bornman, J. (2017). Investigating nystagmus in patients with traumatic brain injury: a systematic review (1996 - 2016). *South African Medical Journal, 107*(11), 957–964. doi:10.7196/SAMJ.2017.v107i11.12472

Johnson, E., Bornman, J., & Tönsing, K. M. (2017). Model for vocabulary selection of sensitive topics: an example from pain-related vocabulary. *Seminars in Speech and Language, 38*, 276–285. doi:10.1055/s-0037-1604275

Kyarkanaye, T., Dada, S., & Samuels, A. E. (2017). Collaboration in Early Childhood Intervention Services in Gauteng: Caregiver Perspectives. *Infants & Young Children, 30*(3), 238-254. doi:10.1097/IYC.0000000000000095

Naude, A.M. & Bornman, J. (2017). Etiese sensitiviteit van praktiserende oudioloë {Ethical sensitivity of practicing audiologists} *Tydskrif vir Geesteswetenskappe {Journal for Humanities}, 57* (2-2), 501 - 520. doi: 10.17159/2224-7912/2017/v57n2-2a2

Oosthuizen, I., Dada, S., Bornman, J., & Koul, R. (2017). Message Banking: Comparing perceptions of people with MND, significant others and speech therapists. *International Journal of Speech-Language Pathology, Early online*, doi:10.1080/17549507.2017.1356377

Van Niekerk, K., Dada, S., Tönsing, K.M., Boshoff, K. (2017). Factors perceived by rehabilitation professionals to influence the provision of assistive technology to children: a systematic review. *Physical & Occupational Therapy in Pediatrics, Early Online*, doi:10.1080/01942638.2017.1337661

Book chapters

Bornman, J. (2017). Developing Inclusive literacy practices in South African Schools. In M. Milton (Ed). *Inclusive Principles and practices in Literacy Education*. Bingley, UK: Emerald Publishing

Bornman, J. (2017). Human rights of children with disability: Exploring the role of the ICF-CY. In Castro, S. & Palikara, O. *An Emerging Approach for Education and Care: implementing a world-wide classification of functioning and disability*. London: Routledge

Dada, S., Kathard, H., Tönsing, K.M., & Harty, M. (2017). Severe communication disabilities in South Africa: challengers and enablers. In S. Halder & S.C. Assaf (Eds.), *Global disability and inclusion* (pp. 169-193). Cham, Switzerland: Springer International.

Kerstin Tönsing
Centre for AAC

Online media and newspapers

Dr. Alecia Samuels from the CAAC was recently quoted in the Cape Argus about her PhD research on teenage parenting. Her PhD study was titled "The coparenting arrangements and relationship quality of teenage mothers and their coparents: a reflexive case study of a low-income community". Here is the link to the Cape Argus article:

<https://www.iol.co.za/capeargus/news/a-third-of-sa-women-have-children-before-20-10905260>

The CAAC was featured in The Saturday Star Newspaper in August and September. The first piece was written by **Robyn White**, a lecturer and PhD student at the CAAC, discussing the important research studies and work the CAAC is doing to assist individuals with communication disabilities who have been victims of crime and their rights to access the criminal justice system. The piece highlighted the low-technology communication boards that the CAAC has designed, which were an outcome of research studies done by the CAAC, the first one for disclosing the abuse (Bornman, Bryen, Kershaw & Ledwaba, 2011) and the second, Testifying in court (White, Bornman and Johnson, 2015) which could be useful resources for the victims, their families and the legal professionals.

<https://www.pressreader.com/south-africa/saturday-star/20170826/281762744384570>

The second piece was written by **Prof. Bornman** discussing the Life Healthcare Esidimeni crisis and how the 100 individuals who died unnecessarily would have been candidates for AAC and could of benefited from using AAC.

<https://www.iol.co.za/news/opinion/they-died-because-no-one-heard-them-11241165>

CAAC news (cont.)

Conferences

Since our previous Newsletter, various staff members from the Centre for AAC presented at conferences. Following are some of the presentations not mentioned elsewhere in this issue:

Mrs. Robyn White presented on 8th June at the **9th Child Trauma Conference** (theme of the conference 'Little Voices Count'), Durban. Mrs White spoke about "Access to justice" for the child with a communication disability.

Prof. Juan Bornman and **Dr Alecia Samuels** presented a workshop on "Family-centered AAC intervention" at the **Family Centered Early Childhood Intervention Africa Conference** in Johannesburg in June 2017. The workshop included participants from Iran, Uganda, the Netherlands, USA, Zimbabwe, Namibia and last but definitely not the least South Africa!

Prof. Juan Bornman presented at the **2017 Autism Spectrum Disorder Symposium**, on the 30 June 2017 the theme being "Connect: Affecting Change" at North West University. Her presentation was titled, "How I think, feel and do, compared to how I thought, felt and did: Exploring the attitudes of typically developing adolescents towards their sibling with ASD". The presentation was based on the recent article published, "The attitudes of typically developing adolescents towards their sibling with autism spectrum disorder" authored by **Christine van der Merwe, Juan Bornman, Dana Donohue & Michal Harty**.

Mrs Robyn White was chosen to present her research at the **8th Annual Young Scientist Conference** in Johannesburg, South Africa on the 19th July 2017. Her poster presentation was titled, "Access to Justice: Giving a voice to the voiceless using communication technology".



Mrs. Robyn White, Prof Juan Bornman and **Dr. Ensa Johnson** presented at the **Criminological and Victimological Society of Southern Africa (CRIMSA) International Biennial Conference**, Johannesburg on 4th August 2017. They presented on "From silence to justice : Implications for persons with communication disabilities accessing the criminal justice system". The conference theme was "Regulating crime & victimizations in an age of mobility, mass movement, migration & governance at a distance"

The **plenary session** at the **18th Annual National Child Abuse Conference** (8th August 2017) was presented by **Mrs. Robyn White, Prof Juan Bornman** and **Dr. Ensa Johnson**. The theme of the conference was "Towards Multi-Disciplinary expertise in handling child abuse". Their presentation focused on children with communication disabilities who have been victims of sexual abuse and their rights to accessing the criminal justice system.

nal justice system.

In September **Prof. Shakila Dada** and **Dr. Kerstin Tönsing** presented at the **Communication Matters National AAC Conference** at the University of Leeds in England. Prof. Dada's presentation was titled, "The effectiveness of varying levels of augmented input on the receptive language of children who require AAC" and the title of Dr. Tönsing's presentation was "AAC implementation for multilingual persons".



The **Rural Health Conference 2017** in October brought together doctors, nurses and allied health workers in Taung in the North West Province of South Africa. The theme of the conference was exploring innovative solutions for rural health.

Prof. Shakila Dada from the CAAC was a **keynote speaker** and her presentation focused on "Participation - is being present enough?" The presentation explored innovative strategies to ensure participation of vulnerable persons in the health care context.

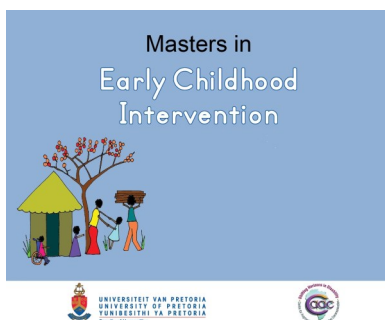
Staff from the Centre for AAC also attended the **5th Annual Disability Rights in Africa Conference**. The conference theme was 'Domesticating the CRPD in the African Region: A focus on access to justice an legal capacity'. **Mrs Robyn White** co-presented with Dianah Msipa, an expert Disability Rights Consultant from Zimbabwe, their presentation was titled, "Implementing Article 13 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in South Africa: Accommodations for people with communication disabilities". **Dr. Kerstin Tönsing** from the CAAC was asked to be the moderator of the session. The CAAC also had a poster presentation accepted titled, "Access to Justice for individuals with complex communication needs: The role of AAC". **Miss**

Refilwe Morwane and **Mrs Robyn White** also hosted a workshop at the 5th Annual Disability Rights in Africa Conference to delegates from all over Africa. The workshop was titled "Communication accommodations in the criminal justice system". The workshop included discussions and practical activities in AAC tools available for those without a voice as well as using abuse boards developed by the Centre for reporting crimes. The delegates were provided with basic and low tech boards to go back and try out in their respective countries. There was a climate of excitement as many delegates reported the usefulness of such a workshop.



Mrs Robyn White; Miss Refilwe Morwane
Centre for AAC

MECI programme video



Watch this great video produced by the University of Pretoria about the CAAC's Masters programme in Early Childhood Intervention and how the CAAC is implementing the blending learning approach.

"We go beyond the traditional classroom to see how Hybrid Learning enhances a UP student's way of studying to ensure a balanced means of learning", **Dr Alecia Samuels**, Programme Manager for the MECI, shares some insight into how the CAAC utilizes technology to assist students to strike that perfect balance between the traditional classroom learning vs digital learning.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B43S7ngYT3M>

Visitors to CAAC



Prof. Brenda Louw, USA

Prof. Brenda Louw visited the CAAC on the 23 May 2017, who is the Head of Department of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology at East Tennessee State University, USA. Prof. Louw presented a workshop titled, "Cleft Lip / Palate: Best Practice and Recent Developments". She spoke about the Person Centred Approach to assessment and intervention with children with cleft lip/palate and young adults with cleft lip/palate and the transition of care.

Robyn White
Centre for AAC

Prof. Erna Alant (USA) receives Neville Cohen Award

Prof. Erna Alant, the founder of the Centre of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (CAAC) at the University of Pretoria, received the Neville Cohen Award for 2017. Prof. Alant received this award for her outstanding contribution in the field of AAC & severe disability. Her memorial lecture was titled, "Mean-making in interpersonal interactions: Moving beyond exchanging messages in interaction". More than 60 of Prof. Alant's students and former col-



Prof. Uys presenting the award to Prof. Alant

leagues attended the memorable memorial lecture.

Prof. Alant is currently a Professor and Otting Chair in Special Education at Indiana University, Bloomington, USA and additionally an extraordinary professor in the Centre for AAC, University of Pretoria. It was an honour for the CAAC to award Prof. Alant this prestigious award she so rightly deserves!

Robyn White
Centre for AAC

Prof. Cathy Binger (USA)



Prof. Cathy Binger from the University of New Mexico visited the Centre for AAC from 21-30 September 2017. Prof. Binger is an internationally well-known researcher in the field of AAC, with special focus on fostering language development in children in need of AAC. She presented two workshops – one aimed at postgraduate students and early career researchers entitled 'Letting Our Research Questions Drive Our Research Methods,' and another for researchers and practitioners in the field of AAC, entitled 'Using a Language Development Model to Guide AAC Decisions'. Prof. Binger also consulted extensively with postgraduate students and gave input on their research projects. In addition, she paid visits to some schools for learners with special educational needs and the Department of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology at University of Health Sciences. Students, staff and practitioners benefitted from Prof. Binger's expert input both on research methodology and also on critical questions and issues in the field of AAC. The stimulating and thought-provoking workshops and discussions challenged us to think critically about research and practice, and to remain reflective of our untested assumptions. We are most grateful to Prof. Binger for her time and willingness to share her expertise.

Kerstin Tönsing
Centre for AAC



Dr Juliet Goldbart (left) & Dr Janice Murry, UK



On Friday the 6th October the CAAC were honoured to have Dr. Juliet Goldbart and Dr. Janice Murray from Manchester Metropolitan University in the United Kingdom present a seminar. Dr. Goldbart presented on "Communication Development: From Contingency Awareness to Intentional Communication" and Dr. Murray presented on, "Client participation in AAC intervention and research: rhetoric and reality".

Robyn White
Centre for AAC

Visitors to CAAC (cont)



Prof. Santoshi Halder, India

Prof. Santoshi Halder from the Department of Education, University of Calcutta in India, was able to visit the CAAC, as part of the joint funding by the National Institute for Humanities and Social Science (NIHSS) and Indian Council for Social Science Research (ICSSR). This funding was jointly awarded to Prof. Halder and **Prof. Shakila Dada** from the CAAC and the focus was to build joint research capacity and bilateral engagements focusing on children with disabilities. Prof. Halder visited various institutions during her visit to South Africa including, Faculty of Education (University of Pretoria), Department of Inclusive Education (UNISA), UNICA School, as well as various departments at the University of Cape Town. She also presented a seminar at the CAAC entitled "Disability and Inclusion: Snapshots from Research in India".

Prof. Shakila Dada,
Centre for AAC

Prof Karina Huus, Prof Mats Granlund and colleagues, Sweden

During middle October, the CAAC had an exciting, eventful week. The National Research Foundation and Swedish Foundation for International Cooperation in Research and Higher Education (STINT) Science and Technology Research Collaboration funded the second year of the project with **Prof. Shakila Dada** (CAAC, University of Pretoria) and Prof. Karina Huus (CHILD group, Jönköping University) as the Principal Investigators in their respective countries. This culminated in a follow up visit by the Swedish doctoral students, staff and a post-doctoral fellow.



The South African & Swedish Doctoral students and researchers had a week-long interactive seminar with a specific participation of children with disabilities. They also visited Dr Sadna Balton at The Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital to understand the context of health care. The Swedish post-doctoral fellow Dr Patrick Arvidsson will be staying on for 3 months as part of this project. We have also had online discussions between first year Masters in the Early Childhood Intervention program in SA and the second year Interventions in Childhood Masters students in Sweden spearheaded by **Dr. Alecia Samuels**.

Prof. Shakila Dada,
Centre for AAC

Student news

Spring graduation



We want to send a heartfelt congratulations to our two Masters in AAC students who graduated in September at the UP Spring Graduation - Nicola Sowah and Tshepiso Osemwenkhae. We are so proud, well done to you both!



Robyn White
Centre for AAC

Student achievements

Dr Thilen Kyarkanaye



Dr Thilen Kyarkanaye, a PhD alumni of the CAAC was awarded the CEO's Individual Service Excellence Award at Kalafong Provincial Tertiary Hospital. This award recognized her involvement and contributions to the hospital. She conducted an employee satisfaction survey, where the data from 502 questionnaires was captured into the SPSS V23 software package, descriptive and inferential statistical tests were conducted, and the results were analysed, interpreted and presented at various forums. Dr Kyarkanaye attributed these skills in data capturing and analysis to her PhD journey. She further expressed her gratitude to her mentors at the CAAC for affording her the opportunities. **"Not only did I enjoy a wonderful - not to exclude challenging - experience during my PhD; the knowledge, opportunities, and experience that I have gained have also indirectly opened doors for me in other facets of my life!"** (T Kyarkanaye)

Prof. Shakila Dada
Centre for AAC

Dr Liezl Schlebusch

Congratulations to Dr. Liezl Schlebusch, a postdoctoral researcher and a former PHD Student at the CAAC, who was one of the recipients of the International Society for Autism Research (INSAR)/Autism Speaks Emerging Researcher Awards which she received at the Regional International Meeting for Autism Research (IMFAR) Conference in Stellenbosch. She presented aspects of her PhD that focused on the family quality of life of South African families who are raising children with autism and also attended a day-long development workshop for emerging researchers hosted by international journal editors in the field. Well done, Dr. Schlebusch!

Prof Shakila Dada
Centre for AAC

(Please see p 13 of this newsletter for an easy to read summary of Dr Schlebusch's PhD study—Red.)



Mandela Day

Being able to identify, label and communicate about



emotions is an important skill for young children. It lays the foundation for developing social skills, navigating relationships and becoming healthy and happy adults.

Our MA (AAC) students gave 67 minutes of their time this year to make visual support material to help young children with disabilities learn about and communicate their emotions. The students' creativity was evident in the storybooks, emotion puzzles, picture symbols and the emotion 'traffic lights' (used to help children monitor and regulate their emotions) produced. The material was donated to Chrysalis Preschool for children aged 3-6 years with special needs. The preschool identified such materials as one of their needs.



Kerstin Tönsing
Centre for AAC

Faculty of Humanities Postgraduate Conference

This year, two PhD students from the Centre for AAC presented a part of their PhD study at the annual Faculty of Humanities Postgraduate Conference. Inneke Greyvenstein presented the interesting results from her study on "Higher order emotion identification: comparing children with blindness to typically developing peers". Inneke has passed her oral defense of her thesis since the presentation – Congratulations Inneke!



Karin van Niekerk presented her study looking into the "Perspectives of rehabilitation professionals on assistive technology provision to young children with disabilities in South Africa", where she shared the results of her online focus groups with the audience.

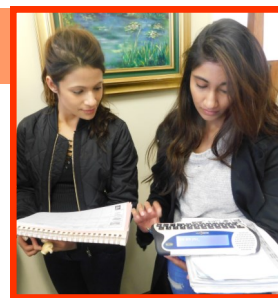
Prof. Juan Bornman and Dr. Kersitn Tönsing from the Centre for AAC each moderated a session related to Health and Society at the conference.

Postgraduate students enrolled in the Faculty are encouraged to present at this conference next year as it provides a lovely opportunity to share your work.

Karin van Niekerk
Centre for AAC

KMP Practical

The third year students of the Department of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology ended off their module on AAC with a practical session on 25 August where they had the opportunity to put theory into practice and to try out the various speech generating devices that individuals with little or no functional speech use to either augment their speech, or as an alternative mode of communication. Carla van Nieuwenhuizen and Zainab Omar, two ladies who use AAC on a daily basis, inspired the students with their stories of perseverance, hope and courage. Desirae Pillay, an assistive technology advisor from Inclusive Solutions, told the students about some of the latest technology that help people communicate and improve the quality of their lives, and also demonstrated the latest eye tracking technology.



Students and staff of the CAAC once again realised the power of being able to communicate.

Enid Moolman
Centre for AAC

User Forum

Fofa 2017 – Making connections

Relationships – human connection – make the world go round. For people with severe communication difficulties, making these connections is not always easy. Discrimination, stigma, and false perceptions by society often make it difficult for them to be seen, to be heard, and to have a chance to 'just say hi.'

On 1 September (coinciding with UP's Anti-Discrimination Week and Casual Day), the Piazza of the University of Pretoria was abuzz with interactions, as this year's Fofa Communication Empowerment Programme participants stepped out to connect with the campus community. 'Talk-Without-A-Voice' was the slogan of this awareness campaign.

For many students and staff this was the first time they interacted with someone using other methods of communication, such as iPads, laptops, and tablets that make typed text audible through synthetic speech processors. It may also have been the first time they were confronted with questions such as – 'Would you date someone with a disability?' or 'Do you park in parking bays designated to people with mobility needs?' Lively interactions, laughter and comments such as 'This has been life-changing.' 'I have a different view of people with disabilities now' showed that a speech barrier can be overcome to make meaningful connections, share a moment, and enjoy each other's humanity.

Each year, young adults with severe communication disabilities from all over South Africa are invited to attend the Fofa Communication Empowerment Training Programme at the Centre for AAC. Fofa is the Sesotho word for 'to fly' or 'to soar'. Participants and facilitators engage in a week of workshops, training and brainstorming around becoming empowered and contributing members of society, and stepping out as

change agents into a world that is often quite hostile to those who have different abilities. The programme is loosely based on the Augmentative Communication and Empowerment Supports

(ACES) programme, developed by Prof Diane Bryen, at Temple University in Philadelphia, USA (Bryen, Sleseransky & Baker, 1995).

This year six young adults with communication disabilities, four returning participants of the programme and two mentors who were graduates from the programme, attended the week on campus. Eazy Mthombeni, a young man with cerebral palsy who uses a tablet to communicate, was so inspired by being challenged about his life goals at the Fofa week last year that he made contacts with a recruitment company, trained with them for two weeks (which meant catching a bus at 4:30AM every morning) and is now a proud employee of Truworths. His perseverance and passion is truly remarkable.

This year's Fofa week included activities such as toastmaster's training by Mr Ian Flint from Toastmaster's South Africa, a Campus Tour presented by students from the Department of Historical and Heritage Studies, and training on Crowd-funding and fundraising. Students from House Humanities assisted the participants to prepare for the 'Making Connections' event

held on 1 September. Students from the Rag committee of Huis Maroela, together with graphic designers Olivia and Suzanne Loots assisted the participants to paint the "Graffiti Wall" with catchy slogans aimed at breaking the stigma around disability. Three UP students with disability also shared their experiences of studying at UP with the participants, and it was clear that their stories resonated with the young adults.

The CAAC would like to express their heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed to the programme this year, and also to all those who stepped out to make a new connection. May your and our lives be the richer for it.

Dr Kerstin Tönsing
FOFA programme manager
Centre for AAC



Fofa 2017 – Eazy Mthombeni

When you plan an event such as Fofa, you never know what impact it may have on the participants. Following is a thank you letter received from Eazy Mthombeni, one of the Fofa participants:

“Fofa changed the way I see life. It give me the hope to not give up.”



Eazy Mthombeni

“After I had complete my Matric in 2015 my world was up & down. I want to go look for a job but I was afraid that people will not understand me. There was many thought going on in my mind. Things like “how am I going to communicate with the people? I want to throw the towel in because none believe that I can get the job.

I received an invitation to Fofa in June 2016. I had no idea what Fofa was about but I was looking forward to it. The time I get to University of Pretoria meeting other people with disabilities who make use of AAC make me realise that I'm not the only person who have speech problem. One of them the staff member by the name of Robyn White assisted me for whole week. What a wonderful, lovely person. She helped me to set goals on how to get a job.



I enjoyed the week so much but it pass too soon. Before I know it its was time to come back home.

After the Fofa week I was motivated to go out in the world & fellow my dreams making it reality. I send some CVs to different companies. I went for some interviews but I didn't passed it. I never throw up the tower. Until I found the company called Harambee. They helped me to get a job at Truworths. They gave me training for a week. After I get my job people was shocked & surprised to see a person with disability working normal job without assistant from any one.



This year when I got invitation to join FOFA again I was more than happy to do it cos I knew I going to learn something & come back more inspired & motivated. I looked at the theme “making connection” I knew my life will never be the same again.


The business people saying **“it's not what you know that help reached your destiny but whom you know”**. The more connection I have the better is my chance to reach my destiny. Now I'm focus on to get permanent job with basis salary so that I can build proper house for my family.

“I thank for FOFA encouraged me to never give up but to continue fellow my dream until I make it reality. I'll always be great full & looking forward for FOFA. May it reach other people with disabilities who use AAC.”



AAC Awareness Month

The Centre for AAC celebrated AAC Awareness month in October. The goal was to raise awareness of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) and to inform the South African public about the many different ways in which people with communication disabilities communicate using different AAC techniques and strategies.

The CAAC throughout the month of October shared AAC awareness videos online via the Centre's Facebook page. The videos were produced by the 3rd year Visual Art students at the University of the Pretoria in South Africa. 

Here are the links to the videos shared:

"Just because you can't speak, does not mean you have nothing to say."

Video produced by Anya Crous and Emilie du Trevou. <https://www.facebook.com/centreforaac/videos/1363719000414684/>

"Talk to me and see what I see!"

Video produced by Nicci Lombard and Kara Verster. <https://www.facebook.com/centreforaac/videos/1369504706502780/>

"Those without a voice are being heard, and dreams are becoming a reality"

Video produced by Ingrid Millwood and Anike Stander. <https://www.facebook.com/centreforaac/videos/1381615978624986/>

"Be patient, listen and let the communication begin!"

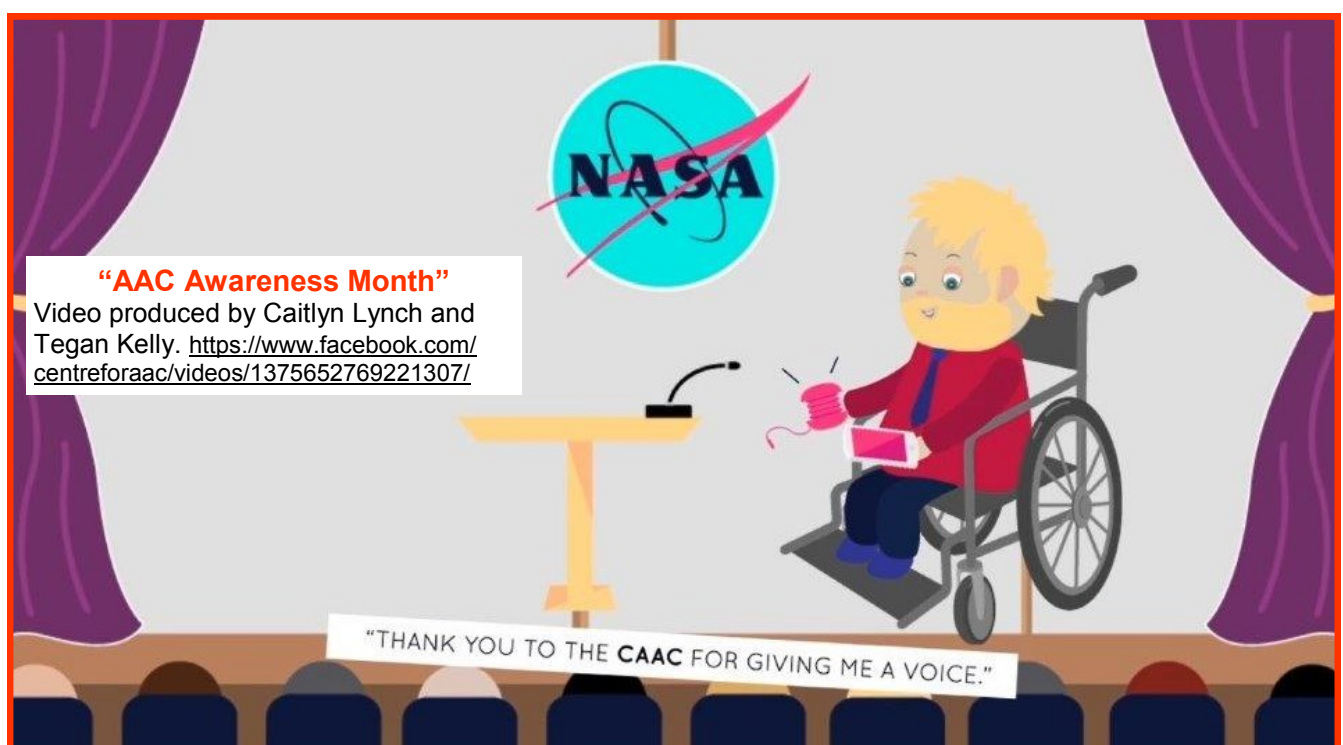
Video produced by Sacha Saddul and Natalya Yannikarkis. <https://www.facebook.com/centreforaac/videos/1388108624642388/>

"AAC Awareness"

Video produced by Stian van Wyk and Gideon du Plessis. <https://www.facebook.com/centreforaac/videos/1341207872665797/>

The CAAC would like to take this opportunity to thank every 3rd year Visual Art student who dedicated their talents, time and effort in producing these amazing AAC awareness videos!

Furthermore, Constance Ntuli, a person who uses AAC, disability advocate and a staff member at the CAAC organised an impromptu line dance with students at the University of Pretoria on the 27th October (see photo) to raise awareness about AAC.



1
Easy-to-read
version of

South African families raising children with Autism Spectrum Disorder: Relationship between family routines, cognitive appraisal and family quality of life



By Dr. Liezl Schlebusch

Post-doctoral researcher & Lecturer

liezl.schlebusch@up.ac.za

Supervised by Dr. Alecia Samuels and Prof. Shakila Dada
Centre for Augmentative & Alternative Communication
University of Pretoria

What did we aim to find out?

Much of what we know about families raising children with autism comes from research that has been conducted in other countries. Therefore, we wanted to find out more about the perspectives of South African families who are raising young children with autism.

We know that all families everywhere in the world have family routines – those things that they do together every day, such as preparing and eating a meal together or getting a child ready for bed. Earlier research found that regular family routines are important for the well-being and coping of families. However, we also know that for families raising a child with autism, managing daily family routines may be particularly troublesome. This left us with a few questions...

We conducted a research study in 2015 to explore this. We believe that by knowing the answers to these questions, we can help service providers to understand and support families who are raising children with autism.



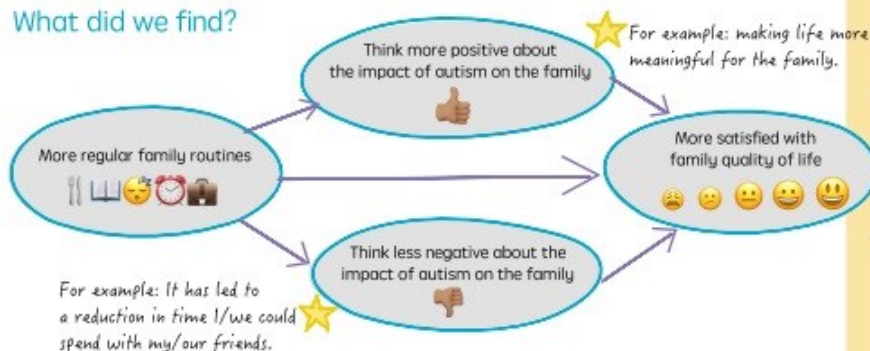
- Do families who have more regular family routines think about the impact of raising a child with autism as more positive and less negative? (this is what we call 'cognitive appraisal') 👍👎
- Do families who have more regular family routines feel happier about their family's well-being? (this is what we call 'family quality of life') 😊😐😞😭

How did we do the study?



We asked 35 public and private autism schools and centers (located throughout the five municipal districts of **Gauteng**) to help us find families that are raising children with autism. The children had to be younger than 9 years old. **One hundred and eighty families** completed a questionnaire about their family routines, how they feel about the impact of autism on the family, and how satisfied they felt about their family quality of life. The data collected from these families allowed us to use statistical tests to answer our questions.

What did we find?



We found that families who have more regular family routines (what we call a 'rhythmic' family life) were generally more satisfied with their family's quality of life. Families with more regular family routines also thought more positive (and less negative) about the impact of raising a child with autism, which in turn, made them feel happier about their family quality of life.

What can we learn from all this?

- ✓ It is important for service providers to **get to know families** and what they do on a daily basis. Conversations about the family's routines can identify areas of family strengths (for example family routines that are going well) and areas of family needs and concerns (for example family routines that are difficult to create and maintain).
- ✓ Interventions that focus on **creating and maintaining regular family routines** can potentially help to enhance the quality of life of the family.
- ✓ Any supportive intervention to help a child with autism should **facilitate the family's sense of competence and confidence in managing their daily lives**, and not interfere with the existing resources and capabilities that they require to maintain their family routines.

Acknowledgements

A special word of thanks goes to the participating families and organisations who kindly devoted their time to participate in this study.

Want to know more?

This easy-to-read version was created from the article called 'South African families raising children with autism spectrum disorders: relationship between family routines, cognitive appraisal and family quality of life' that was published in 2016 in the *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research* (doi: 10.1111/jir.12292).

The published article was based on **Liezl's PhD study** - completed at the University of Pretoria. We created this simplified version to share what we have learned with service providers and families raising children with autism. Please contact Liezl if you are interested in the full version of the article - liezl.schlebusch@up.ac.za OR liezl@treesofhope.co.za

Suggested citation: L Schlebusch (2017), Easy-to-read version of Family quality of life of South African families raising children with autism spectrum disorder, University of Pretoria.



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Faculty of Humanities

Interface Branch

News from KZN



Interface KZN has had an exciting and very busy year, with new projects and new staff.

We are excited to welcome Casey Bieldt, AAC Practitioner, to our team. Casey has been involved with our Valley of 1000 Hills AAC Outreach Project for the past year, and was one of 20 applicants selected from 4915 to be a part of the Vodacom Change the World initiative. As a successful applicant, Vodacom will subsidise Casey's salary for one year. Casey and Meg Whitelaw attended the Vodacom Change the World Induction in Johannesburg in October. This event was organised for the successful volunteers and consisted of training in various avenues for marketing, Public relations, general management of projects and the expectations that Vodacom has of the Volunteer that they are supporting. Another very exciting aspect of this sponsorship is that Vodacom is also willing to support campaigns and launches that we may have at Interface during the year.



**Change
the World**

Interface was selected to participate in The Vega College Marketing Challenge and we were one of the successful organisations. This means that the marketing students used us as a project and have focused on re-branding our look. In addition, Zainab Mitha, a Graphic Design Honours student from Vega College elected Interface KZN for her internship. This means we have been blessed not only with the creative re-branding provided by the students, but that Zainab has been volunteering her time for the past month to work on implementing the design work suggested by the brand challenge teams, including our logo, website, vehicle design, to name but a few.

The Sibaya Community Trust have funded a vehicle and have also contributed funds towards the Valley of 1000 Hills AAC Outreach Project. Official handover of the VW Caddy will take place once the vehicle branding has been completed, but this addition is going to be invaluable. The **Valley of 1000 Hills AAC Outreach Project** has progressed significantly thanks to funding and the commitment and resolve of our team: Meg, Casey and Delani, who continue to break new ground in the Valley 1000 Hills. We have found the community and the parents/caregivers very supportive, and this has contributed to the project's success. Following assessment, the children are provided with AAC systems and strategies best suited to their individual needs. A structured Communication Circle affords them the opportunity to socialize while honing their communication skills using their AAC systems. A supportive and participative environment for the parents/caregivers also forms part of this project.

The **Young Adult Communication Group** has had a busy year. Jocelyn, our sessional AAC Practitioner, continues to oversee the group with the help of mentors Dan and France. In September, Dan organised an event at the Durban beach front named "Tins Down aka #tinsmustfall". Dan sourced sponsorship for the group to hire quad cycles. The concept behind the event was to promote activity rather than 'sitting with a tin to collect money'. The group rode along the promenade with posters #tinsmustfall and handed out leaflets to the public. Dan is passionate about advocacy and awareness raising about disability issues and wishes to hone his skill in this area.



Following up from the work that the group did with Erna Nel, Psychologist, Sindiswa went to work with Erna this month on her pilot and also attended a full training block. This was part of Erna's PhD study in which she is developing training modules for the SAPS to learn about interacting with and taking statements from people who have difficulty using speech and who use AAC. (Erna is a PhD student at the Centre for AAC.) Sindiswa has been very busy as she was also involved with the FOFA week in August at the CAAC where she acted as a mentor to new arrivals to the programme. The group as a whole is increasingly supportive of each other and while only a few individuals' activities are reported at this time, every single member forms an integral part to the whole. The more mature members are often role models while the less mature members challenge the others' comfort zones whilst socialising, arguing and playing.





The Pre-school Communication Project at Khethiwe has expanded, and Meg is now working with 4 groups of children (two pre-school age groups and two toddler groups). The children are seen individually and within Communication Circle groups. The Pre-school communication project at Action in Autism now

has 3 groups and Meg is working with these children regularly, using their AAC systems that were established by Avishana Sewrajan. The groups are co-facilitated by a staff member from Action in Autism who has a special interest in AAC.

On the 24th and 25th of October we held a workshop that focused on how to implement AAC in the classroom.



Meg Whitelaw and Sarita Ramkusen (Speech Therapist) hosted the workshop. A group of 10 teachers/facilitators/

therapists attended. The workshop was very interactive and practical and was well received by the group. Thereafter, a Facebook page was created "Interface KZN-AAC in the Classroom" the purpose of which page is for the course attendees to share their resources and progress with one another. The Interface KZN Journal Club has continued during the year. The goal is to now alternate sessions between more advanced AAC topics and general therapy topics. The dates are planned in advance for the year calendar to allow for scheduling well in advance. In October, Meg was also invited to do an overview of AAC for teachers in training at Varsity and this was well received by the students and will hopefully become a permanent fixture on our calendar. Avishana also participated in

two workshops hosted by Action in Autism (May & October 2017), where she presented on AAC Strategies to use with Autism Spectrum Disorders.

During individual therapy, the focus has been on trying out various layout options to expand low technology systems. Avishana has been working with a few users who are preparing for the Eye tracker but still required comprehensive low technology communication sys-



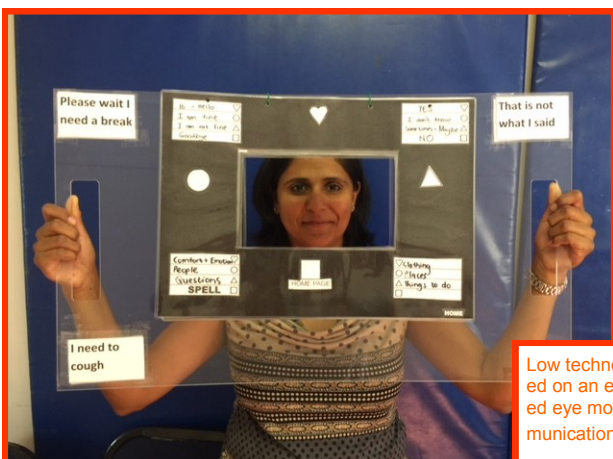
Communication book using symbols, mounted on the layout of an Eye gaze frame.

tems that can meet their communication, recreational and learning needs.

Last but not by any means least, Interface KZN is extremely proud to congratulate our team for their ongoing achievements: **Jocelyn Mngomezulu** has now completed her Master's thesis through the Centre for AAC, University of Pretoria. Her thesis topic concerned the determination of a core vocabulary for Zulu-speaking preschoolers given the implications of this vocabulary in AAC system design for pre- and non-literate people who use AAC. Jocelyn recorded the speech of six Zulu-speaking preschoolers as they went about their preschool day, collecting 1500 orthographic words from each child. The structure of Zulu meant that Jocelyn had to develop a method to analyse the words for the data to be meaningful as an AAC core vocabulary. In short, their speech was analysed for frequently occurring words used by at least two of the children and a core vocabulary of 221 items was found which accounted for 88.9% of the total sample. The thesis is published by the University of Pretoria and is available online." **Casey Bieldt** has now completed her BA Honours in AAC at the Centre for AAC, whilst **Meg Whitelaw** will progress to the second year of her BA Honours AAC in 2018.

Please do not hesitate to contact **Trudi Louw** at our Centre, on **031 708 1785**, should you wish to learn more about any of our services and upcoming events.

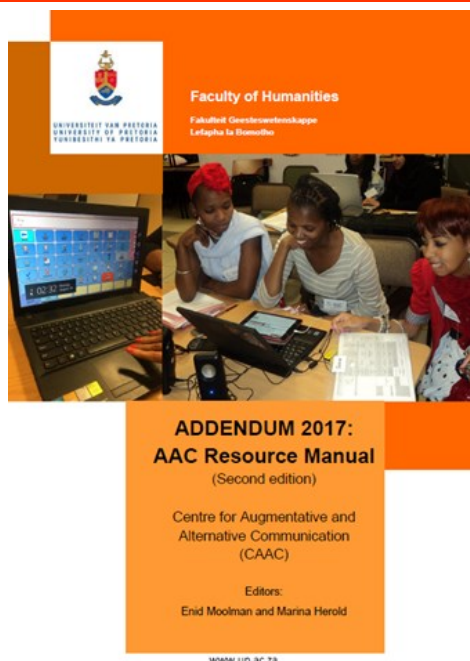
Felicity Jonck
Chairperson



Low technology communication book that is adapted from the Speak book. The book is mounted on an enlarged eye gaze frame to facilitate comfort of use with AAC users who have restricted eye movements. However, these users can only use their eyes as access method for communication. This communication book is composed predominantly of short phrases.

Advertisements

2017 Addendum: AAC Resource Manual



The 2017 addendum to the second edition of the AAC Resource Manual (2015) is now available!

This new addendum has been added to reflect some of the new developments and areas of interest in the practice of AAC in South Africa. It has loads of practical ideas and information to offer everyone involved in the AAC field.

The 2015 edition as well as the addendum are once again available from the Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (CAAC). Please contact Liza Siefe at (012) 420 2001 or liza.siefe@up.ac.za to order your copy.

Good news!

If you bought the 2015 edition of the AAC Resource Manual, you are welcome to contact Liza Siefe to get a free copy of the addendum.

Happy reading!
Enid Moolman & Marina Herold
Editors: AAC Resource Manual

AAC Consultation services by CAAC?

The CAAC offers **AAC consultations** for potential candidates in need of AAC as well as for **Medico Legal** purposes. Please contact Liza Rosetti-Siefe at (012) 420 2001 or liza@up.ac.za for more information.

Do you want to study in the field of AAC?

If you are interested to do an **Honours, Master's or PhD in AAC or Master's in ECI**, follow the link to find out more about these programmes:

<http://www.up.ac.za/centre-for-augmentative-alternative-communication/article/56213/postgraduate-degree-programmes>

Disability training and other tender training services by CAAC?

The Centre for AAC offers training to any organisation that needs assistance with AAC, disability employment issues, training court officials to testify in court and so much more.

Please contact **Refilwe Morwane** at (012) 420 2001 or refilwe.morwane@up.ac.za for more information.