



International  
**Communication**  
Project

2014 - 2023



# 2014 – The journey begins

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- Press release announcing establishment of International Communication Project
- An ‘unprecedented effort’
- Vision and mission announced
- Syndicated across multiple publications

## International Coalition Launches Unprecedented Effort to Raise Awareness of Communication Disorders

*Speech, Language and Hearing Organizations in Various Parts of the World Join Forces*

(Rockville, Maryland, USA - January 27, 2014)

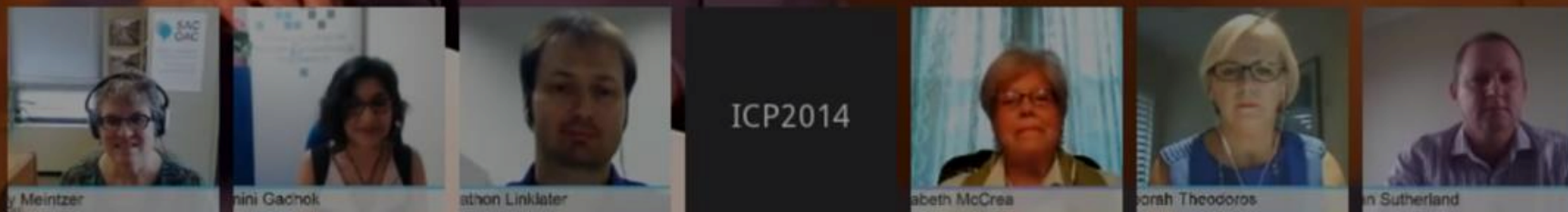
For the first time in history, organizations in six countries that focus on speech, language, hearing, and swallowing issues have formed a coalition to raise international awareness of communication disorders and their treatment.

The International Communication Project 2014 (ICP) is a collaborative effort developed by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, Canadian Association of Speech-Language Pathologists & Audiologists, Irish Association of Speech & Language Therapists, New Zealand Speech-language Therapists Association, Royal College of Speech Language Therapists, and Speech Pathology Australia.

The International Communication Project 2014 is built on the premise that although healthy communication is vital to the quality of life, communication disorders are largely overlooked as disabilities.

# Google Hangouts discussion on February 20<sup>th</sup> 2014 titled 'Raising Awareness of Communication Disorders as a Global Health Issue'

- Officially announced initiation of International Communication Project
- Framed as 'historic' collaboration between our organisations
- Vision and mission outlined
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OSBYUNAHggw>



# The Universal Declaration of Communication Rights

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- Seminal document on Communication Rights
- Its value recognized by over 10,000 people
- Considered a key milestone in the development of communication rights
- Cited across multiple publications including Wikipedia



## The Universal Declaration of Communication Rights

Communication<sup>1</sup> is the most fundamental of human capacities. People need to be able to communicate to fulfill their social, educational, emotional and vocational potential.

Barriers to communication impair an individual's ability to:

- relate to and interact with others;
- understand;
- learn, share and apply knowledge;
- achieve and maintain good physical and mental health;
- participate appropriately and safely in purposeful occupations and/or leisure activities; and
- have fair access to the justice system and other public services.

More recently, the International Journal of Speech-Language Pathology published a special issue on communication rights stating "Communication rights address both "freedom of opinion and expression" and rights and freedoms "without distinction of ... language" (United Nations, 1948)"<sup>[3]</sup> The special issue addressed communication rights from four perspectives: (1) communication rights of all people; (2) communication rights of people with communication disabilities; (3) communication rights of children and (4) communication rights relating to language. The Universal Declaration of Communication Rights (International Communication Project, 2014) has been signed by over 10 000 people and states: "We recognise that the ability to communicate is a basic human right. We recognise that everyone has the potential to communicate. By putting our names to this declaration, we give our support to the millions of people around the world who have communication disorders that prevent them from experiencing fulfilling lives and participating equally and fully in their communities. We believe that people with communication disabilities should have access to the support they need to realise their full potential."<sup>[4]</sup>

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# 'Month of Action' – May 2014

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## International Project Declares May "Month of Action" for Calling Attention to Communication Disorders

(Rockville, Maryland, USA - May 1, 2014)

The International Communication Project 2014 (ICP 2014), an initiative involving more than a dozen organizations, entities, and international bodies worldwide, has declared this May a "Month of Action" for bringing attention to communication disorders.

The Project's founding organizations have organized a range of activities for May, including outreach to Houses of Parliament in England; an advocacy day on Parliament Hill in Canada; outreach in cities and towns across New Zealand; community and parliamentary outreach in Australia; and public events around Ireland. In the United States, a Google Hangout open to public participation will feature private and government experts discussing the importance of early identification and intervention in treating communication disorders.

Visit [www.internationalcommunicationproject.com/events/event/icp-2014-month-of-action/](http://www.internationalcommunicationproject.com/events/event/icp-2014-month-of-action/) for a Month of Action listing of activities.

Communication disorders are a potential leading cause of increased numbers of physician visits, hospital stays, and lost school days experienced by children with disabilities and may account for their poor academic performance. Meanwhile, the vast majority of persons with disabilities

# The Pledge

- As part of the 'Month of Action' partners undertook activities across each jurisdiction and through social media to raise awareness of the ICP brand and the Universal Declaration of Communication Rights through the 'Pledge'
- Secured over 12, 657 signatures and support from over 40 organizations



# International support

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- Many of these organizations made the undertaking that they would use the ICP logo and brand for regional awareness raising activities
- The logo is still being used by some of these organizations

## International Communication Project 2014 Gains Support From 40 New Organizations Around the Globe

*May Month of Action Raises International Profile of Communication Disorders*

(Rockville, Maryland, USA - June 30, 2014)

Following a “Month of Action” this past May by the International Communication Project (ICP) 2014, some 40 participating organizations worldwide are now part of the unprecedented initiative.

Launched last winter, the ICP 2014 raises international awareness of communication disorders and the speech and language therapists, speech-language pathologists, and audiologists who assess and treat them.

The half dozen founding organizations of the project said recently in a statement, “it is very exciting to see the interest level in the ICP 2014 continue to grow. We encourage more organizations from around the world to become involved.”

## The International Communication Project: An Update

Due to the efforts of many around the world, the International Communication Project (ICP) has come a long way since it launched in February 2014.

To date, thousands of signatories have expressed support for the [Universal Declaration of Communication Rights](#); millions have learned about the ICP through project press releases, online events like Google Hangouts, and regional and local activities; and dozens of organizations around the globe have become recognized and engaged as participants.

Currently, the ICP is preparing to focus on global advocacy with the following goals:

1. Increasing the understanding of communication disabilities amongst world health bodies and policymakers;
2. Ensuring that future global health policy recognises and addresses communication disabilities and the vital issue of access to care;
3. Strengthening advocacy that engages key individuals, organisations and events involved in world health policy;
4. Increasing funding for local professional capacity building/training, especially in developing countries, to strengthen access to speech-language pathologists/therapists, audiologists and communication health providers.

Here are just some of the ways you can show your support for the ICP's advocacy:

- Sign the [Universal Declaration of Communication Rights](#), if you haven't already, and encourage others to do the same.
- Promote and share information about the ICP at conferences and regional and local events. Send us photos of your activities!
- Invite organizations to [email the ICP](#) about joining the Project as a participating member.
- [Submit your stories, information, and photos](#) about communication health subjects for posting on the ICP website.
- [Email us](#) your ideas for engaging policymakers, legislators, and other influencers, and increasing access to communication health services around the world, based on your own experiences.

# 2015 – Moving forward

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- Project drift
- Update issued in September 2015
- Call made out to supporters to continue awareness raising activities, increase membership of ICP organizations and ideas to engage policymakers
- Regular newsletter also launched



# 2016 – A new approach

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- Announced development of new plan for global advocacy
- Also began highlighting awareness days and intention to undertake social media awareness raising activities

## Upcoming Events & Awareness Days Related to Communication



The XXXIII World Congress of Audiology of the Canadian Academy of Audiology, and Speech-Language and Audiology Canada. The event will include pre-congress workshops, roundtable plenary sessions, featured concurrent sessions, contributed papers and sponsor symposia. All sessions will afford delegates the opportunity to engage, share and learn in a highly collaborative setting.

October 1: [International Day of Older Persons](#)

October 10: [World Mental Health Day](#)

October 29: [World Stroke Day](#)

## Latest News from the ICP: A Plan for Global Advocacy

### A Plan for Global Advocacy

In our [last update](#), we reported that the International Communication Project has shifted its attention to global advocacy. We are now developing a plan for advocating to policy-makers on behalf of persons with communication disorders. We expect to complete this plan by mid-year and intend for it to be a major focus for ICP in 2016. This is timely given that the International Association of Logopedics and Phoniatrists (IALP)—the worldwide association of professionals and scientists in communication, voice, speech-language pathology and swallowing—is hosting its 30th World Congress in Dublin, Ireland, this August. The IALP is also an ICP partner organization. [Learn more](#) about the IALP and its 30th World Congress in Dublin in 2016.

# 2017 – Advocacy

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- First substantive social media campaign on International Literacy Day 2017
- New call for stories to be featured in newsletter
- Interest in UN sustainable development goals and how they can align to ICP mission discussed by Strategic Advisory Committee
- Multiple domestic engagements planned
- ICP member organizations to meet
- Also began preparations for 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 2018

## New International Communication Stories

*The International Communication Project (ICP) regularly features stories about communication and swallowing difficulties from around the world. If you have a story you'd like to see featured, please [contact us](#). Here are the latest additions:*



## International Communication Project in Action

### International Literacy Day

Friday 8 September is [International Literacy Day](#). Declared by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in November 1965, International Literacy Day aims to highlight the importance of literacy to individuals, communities and societies. In 2017 the theme for International Literacy Day is 'Literacy in a digital world'. The International Communication Project (ICP) is a strong supporter of International Literacy Day. In 2017, ICP is undertaking an online and social media campaign ([#LiteracyDay](#) and [#ICommunicationP](#)) to highlight the fundamental role literacy plays in the development of an individual's communication skills. To participate in ICP's campaign [follow us on Twitter](#) or ['like' us on Facebook](#). The online campaign commences on 1 September.

# International Communication Project (ICP) Exhibited at the Consumer Electronics Show (CES)

International Communication Project (ICP) exhibited at the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) is an annual event that attracts people from around the world. The potential harmful effects of technology have been a major concern for the International Communication Project and other organizations. Information about the Project was shared at the event, and many attendees expressed their interest. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to freedom of expression. Many expressed their interest in protecting not only their own rights but also the abilities of their loved ones.



# 2018 – ICP in action

- Multiple articles published in member organization journals highlighting communication rights as part of UDHR 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations
- Publication of video marking 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary by ICP
- ICP Policy and Evidence group established to develop narrative on UN Sustainable Development Goals
- Attendance at the first Global Disability Summit
- Social media campaigns continued

communication disabilities

## International Communication Journal

### awareness of commu

& Cori Williams ✉

oted 22 Dec 2017, Published online: 22 Jan 2018

org/10.1080/17549507.2018.1422023

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Feustel, the commander of a six-month mission to the Intern  
recently to recognize professionals who care for those with  
es. Married to a speech-language pathologist, Feustel belie  
mission critical" role in his work and that of his internation

ife in Times Leste



ing the 70th anniversary of the UDHR

out 2018, the ICP will be celebrating the 70th anniversary of the Universal De  
ights (UDHR). As part of these celebrations, the ICP is proud to promote a sp  
*International Journal of Speech-Language Pathology* that aims to expand the c  
ication as a human right. A key article in this unique publication is written b  
cial issue is available online at no cost. Read the articles, and then circulate  
th your friends and family. Communication is a basic human right.

earing Day is 3 March 2018

earing Day is held annually on March 3 and raises awareness regarding hearin  
earing care around the world. The theme for the day in 2018 is "Hear the fu  
aws attention to the anticipated increase in the number of people with hea  
re world in the coming decades. The day will focus on preventive strategies  
outline steps to ensure access to the necessary rehabilitation services and  
ication tools and products for people with hearing loss.

# December 2018 – special edition of newsletter published on anniversary of Universal Declaration of Human Rights Anniversary

## Communications and UN Sustainable Development Goals



Communication is vital to life, yet it is largely ignored as a disability. The World Health Organization's [World Report on Disability](#) estimates that roughly one billion people around the world are living with some form of disability. However, the authors of the report also acknowledge that people with communication disabilities may not be included in this estimate, despite the fact that they encounter significant difficulties in their daily lives.

*Communication disabilities are significant and can affect every aspect of a person's life.*

The [United Nations \(UN\) Sustainable Development Goals](#) provide us with a unique opportunity to address this formidable reality. These 17 goals are set by the UN General Assembly as part of resolution 70/1 "Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development."

Some key sustainable development goals (SDGs) are:

## Addressing Accessibility as a Human Rights Issue



Despite progress in creating more inclusive societies, people with communication disabilities and hearing loss still face significant accessibility barriers in their communities and workplaces.

Here in Canada, we know that one in five people aged 20 to 79 has some degree of hearing loss, with hearing loss prevalence rising sharply after age 40, to reach 65% at ages 70 to 79. [Communication Disabilities Access Canada](#) estimates that over 440,000 Canadians have significant speech, language, and communication disabilities.

As we approach the 70th anniversary of the United Nations' (UN) [Declaration of Human Rights](#), it is important for countries such as Canada to address accessibility, including communication access, as a human rights issue.

While Canada ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2010 and has long-standing pieces of legislation that ban disability as a form of discrimination, these pieces of legislation do not fully address issues surrounding accessibility. In recent years, the federal

## Raising Global Awareness of Communication as a Human Right

In this, the 70th anniversary year of the UDHR it is timely to consider whether the declaration is truly universal. The rights agenda, through the UDHR, and other conventions such as the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities, provides the platform through which the basic human right to communicate effectively can be championed. [Read more.](#)



Proudly supporting **70** years  
of the **Universal Declaration**  
of **Human Rights**

[internationalcommunicationproject.com](http://internationalcommunicationproject.com)





International  
**Communication**  
Project

**70**  
YEARS

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF  
**HUMAN RIGHTS**

#STANDUPHUMANRIGHTS

# 2019 – ICP at the United Nations

- ICP published 'The Importance of Speech, Language and Communication to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: A Summary of Evidence'
- ICP member organisations gain accreditation for UN Conference of State Parties to the Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (COSP)
- ICP leads delegation to COSP and holds first ever side event on communication rights



**The Importance of Speech, Language and Communication to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: A Summary of Evidence**





# The event titled 'People with Communication Disability Speak Up for Inclusion and Participation: How the Implementation of the CRPD and the SDGs can Support this Right'

- Streamed on UN Web TV and can still be watched here: <https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1i/k1i2iru946>
- Described as a 'breakthrough event'
- Viewed Globally
- Promoted across multiple social media channels
- Press release issued syndicated across multiple publications

Ms. Meredith Allan  
National Forum of the Australian  
and International Communication

Ms. Gail Mulcair  
Speech Pathology Australia



# 2020 to 2022 – The Pandemic

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- Advocacy activities reduced
- Staff capacity impacted
- ICP made available resources for managing during the coronavirus pandemic to care providers and persons with communication disabilities
- ICP continued to raise awareness of Communication Disability in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the role played by Speech and Language Therapists / Speech Pathologists in the care and recovery of patients

## COVID-19 Information and Resources

The International Communication Project (ICP) extends its sympathies for the lives lost to COVID-19, gratitude for those saved, and admiration and appreciation for all professionals on the front lines of care, some members of our organizations.

The virus threatens to be particularly disruptive to the lives of persons with communication disabilities. In some instances, the problem may be individual inability to communicate self-protection measures. In others, it may be a matter of compromised access to services. The potential challenges involved are many.

Our hope is this page is a resource for meeting them. Our intent is to maintain and develop it collaboratively, expand and refresh it with submissions from around the globe. We invite parties with ideas for content or suggestions for the page to please contact us at [pr@asha.org](mailto:pr@asha.org).



## 'We Give Patients Their Voices Back': The Speech Therapists on the COVID-19 Frontline



I lead a group of NHS speech and language therapists at St Thomas' hospital in London. I decided to become a speech and language therapist because the job is so varied. But I never thought it would lead me to the centre of a pandemic.

My profession is often misunderstood and the name doesn't do justice to everything we do. Our role in the response to COVID-19 has been vital; we have been in the thick of it, treating patients with coronavirus in intensive care units (ICUs).

We are there as patients are woken up after being ventilated. The look of terror in their eyes is easy to see. The tube that has been down their throat to keep them breathing has been replaced by another, a tracheostomy, and they can't say anything. They are frightened. Often they don't realise what is going on. They may have come into hospital with coronavirus feeling a bit

## Recover Better - Stand Up for Human Rights

In 2020, the International Communication Project (ICP) acknowledges the 72nd anniversary of the United Nations General Assembly adoption on 10 December 1948 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. (UDHR). In 2020, the theme for Human Rights Day (10 December) is 'Recover Better - Stand Up for Human Rights', and reflects the challenges thrown-up by the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to ensure Human Rights are central to recovery efforts. In 2018, the ICP released a video to mark Human Rights Day and to promote the ICP's own *Universal Declaration of Communication Rights*. Watch the video and then sign the ICP's Pledge. Signing the Pledge is an easy but important way of helping bring attention to people with communication disorders and the professionals who work with them. [Watch the video now.](#)

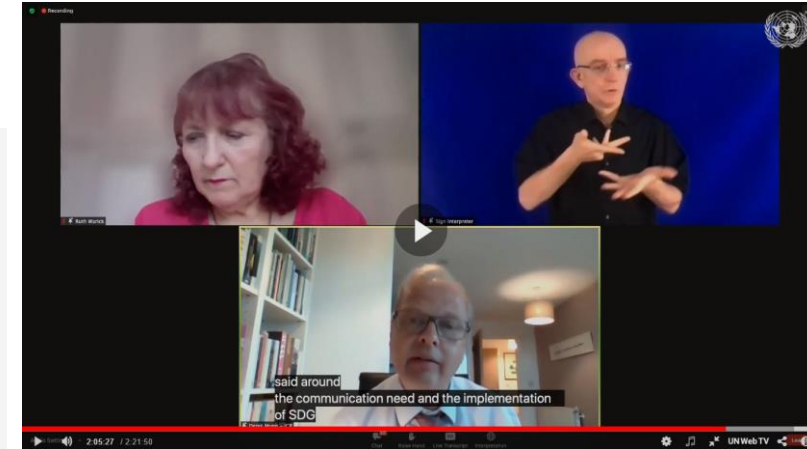
# Advocacy continued

- ICP partners continued to identify opportunities for engagement
- ICP made submissions to UN consultations including for access to work and economic opportunities for people with Communication Disability
- ICP partners also participated in the first virtual COSP roundtable meetings, which saw a substantial intervention from a teacher with a stammer

## ICP Highlights the Impact of Communication Disabilities on Work and Employment

Raising the profile of communication disabilities at the United Nations (UN) is an important goal of the International Communication Project (ICP).

The ICP recently provided a [submission](#) to the 24th session of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to highlight the impact of communication disabilities on work and employment ahead of the general discussion in March 2021 on the right of persons with disabilities to work. By contributing to the Committee's general discussion, the ICP had a valuable opportunity to influence guidance to State parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on the measures they should adopt to ensure full compliance with their obligations to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of persons with disabilities with regard to [article 27](#) of the Convention.



## ICP Submits Comments to UN Committee

This past March, the International Communication Project (ICP) submitted comments about the impact of communication disabilities on employment to a United Nations (UN) committee that monitors the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The committee had invited submissions as part of its preparation for issuing a statement concerning Article 27 of the UN Convention, the right to work and employment.

The ICP's comments covered several areas; how communication disabilities affect access to employment; their impact intergenerationally; and the support and interventions that could help persons with communication disabilities.

The points the ICP raised included:

- individuals and their families are often at an economic disadvantage since employment opportunities are impacted by communication disabilities.

# COSP15 2022

- Our last substantive advocacy activity was at COSP15 in 2022
- We were able to secure multiple interventions at the main debate [\(6th meeting\) 15th Session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(COSP15\) | UN Web TV](#)



aids inclusive communication approach  
professional supports such as speech  
therapy