This past year has been a challenging and fruitful year for DSi however personally, I look forward to 2022 and the end of 2021.

The pandemic continues to have an impact on people with Down syndrome across the world. Many of you would have lost loved ones due to COVID-9 and I extend my sincere condolences to you.

I would like to reflect on some of DSi's achievements in 2021...

COVID response

Research has shown that together Down syndrome and contracting COVID-19 is 'the perfect storm’.

DSi published a [statement](https://na01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fital.maillist-manage.com%2Fclick.zc%3Fm%3D1%26mrd%3D164d1cfa9611a2bf%26od%3D3z272f681767d5df3b645705507ab3dd440509d8309db14b2e26e5c59fc524defd%26linkDgs%3D164d1cfa960bfce5%26repDgs%3D164d1cfa9611e278&data=04%7C01%7C%7Cdd4f59df1dc44045e74808d9c47f8748%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C637756874279868769%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=DzUR49KLItdLdk%2FtC6YCbN%2BQwT85cAw%2FgK8T%2FJhrUsY%3D&reserved=0)calling for the prioritisation of people with Down syndrome in the COVID-19 vaccination programme.

We have worked tirelessly with our global network of member organisations to advocate for vaccine prioritisation in their jurisdictions.

We will continue to support the global Down syndrome community with our COVID response as we head into 2022.

Education

DSi published tool kits to support the promotion, implementation and translation of the [International Guidelines for the Education of Learners with Down Syndrome](https://na01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fital.maillist-manage.com%2Fclick.zc%3Fm%3D1%26mrd%3D164d1cfa9611a2bf%26od%3D3z272f681767d5df3b645705507ab3dd440509d8309db14b2e26e5c59fc524defd%26linkDgs%3D164d1cfa960bfce7%26repDgs%3D164d1cfa9611e278&data=04%7C01%7C%7Cdd4f59df1dc44045e74808d9c47f8748%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C637756874279868769%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=7qwopcNQ89CMsnrFdde8XlK7fFOE7h0le%2FdOEiZk9%2Fo%3D&reserved=0). The Guidelines have been widely circulated with versions published in French and Bosnian. Other translations are in the pipeline.

DSi launched our UK Inclusive Education pilot study, running a national advocacy campaign to share the key messages of the guidelines with key education stakeholders.

In the future, DSi hopes to work with our member organisations, using the processes, resources and materials developed, to have a positive impact on other education systems around the world.

Employment

We have published a [case study](https://na01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fital.maillist-manage.com%2Fclick.zc%3Fm%3D1%26mrd%3D164d1cfa9611a2bf%26od%3D3z272f681767d5df3b645705507ab3dd440509d8309db14b2e26e5c59fc524defd%26linkDgs%3D164d1cfa960bfce9%26repDgs%3D164d1cfa9611e278&data=04%7C01%7C%7Cdd4f59df1dc44045e74808d9c47f8748%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C637756874279878760%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=z03SMzC4RRe1%2FUai3CoSIAUsJvuTjzTSKZkDKOjT8Jk%3D&reserved=0) on the best practices in inclusive employment of people with intellectual disabilities, this one based in Bangladesh. We have been working with self-advocates in Bangladesh and in several African countries to advocate for inclusive employment.

Through 2022 we will be running a webinar series with our member organisations to support them to advocate for inclusive employment in their countries.

World Down Syndrome Day (WDSD)

In March we hosted the 10th WDSD on the theme 'CONNECT' helping to bring the global Down syndrome community together during the ongoing challenges of isolation. Thank you to everyone who took part.

We have just published the theme and concept note for WDSD 2022, 'Inclusion Means', and we look forward to working together again to advocate for full inclusion in society for people with Down syndrome and disabilities, and indeed for everyone.

World Down Syndrome Congress (WDSC)

Dubai was a virtual Congress due to the ongoing global pandemic. This virtual event did not prevent Emirates DSA from delivering an exciting and informative programme appreciated by families across the globe and particularly people with Down syndrome in the Middle East, North Africa region, and UAE.

The topics were presented by world-renowned leaders in their field, including academics, self-advocates, parents, medical professionals, and education leaders.

Thank you to the Emirates Down Syndrome Association and the WDSC organising committee for all of your hard work.

On behalf of the DSi Board and staff, we wish you all a safe and peaceful holiday season and that you have an opportunity to spend time with the people who matter the most in your life.

***Bridget Snedden***