



IN THIS ISSUE:

WASLI 2011 IN SOUTH AFRICA: REGISTER NOW!

WASLI'S FIRST SEASONAL SALE: DISCOUNTED CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

JOINT AGREEMENT IN CANADA

FIRST TRAINED DEAF SOUTH AFRICAN SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS

PAIDE (PHILIPPINES) HOLDS SECOND GOLDEN HANDS

ZAMBIA RECOGNISES AND APPROVES SIGNED LANGUAGE IN NEW NATIONAL CONSTITUTION

SIGNED LANGUAGE RECOGNISED IN KOSOVO

ST. LUCIA, SAND SEA AND DEAFNESS

Please share interpreting news from your part of the world with us! To make a contribution to the first newsletter for 2011, please contact newsletter@wasli.org.

The next deadline for newsletter contributions is **FRIDAY 14th JANUARY, 2010**.

WASLI 2011 IN SOUTH AFRICA: REGISTER NOW!

Momentum is building for an outstanding conference in Durban, South Africa, 14-16 July 2011. For more information about the conference and how to register, visit the conference websites:

English: <http://www.wasli.org/wasli-conference-2011-p37.aspx>

Spanish: <http://www.wasli.org/conferencia-de-wasli-de-2011-p102.aspx>

We are looking for your assistance in raising sponsorship funding for our colleagues from developing countries to attend the conference. Please see <http://www.wasli.org/sponsorship-programme-p96.aspx> for more information about how you can contribute.

We are pleased to announce that our keynote speaker will be Colin Allen from Australia. Colin has a wealth of experience in working in the international Deaf sector, particularly in developing countries, and is an accomplished relay interpreter. You can read his abstract at <http://www.wasli.org/keynote-presenter-p127.aspx>.



The 2011 WASLI Conference will be on the beachfront in Durban



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Who should buy these?

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- Students who aspire to belong to the profession
- Teachers of signed language interpreting
- Libraries at institutions that have signed language interpreting courses
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CANADA



Area: 9,984,670 sq km
Population: 33,487,208 (July 2009 est.)
Capital: Ottawa
Language/s: English (official) 58.8%, French (official) 21.6%, other 19.6% (2006 Census)
Currency: Canadian dollars (CAD)
GDP: \$38,400 (2009 est.)

(Source: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ca.html>)

JOINT AGREEMENT IN CANADA

Deb Russell, WASLI North America regional representative

Over the past year, I approached AVLIC about the opportunity to create a joint agreement between the three major associations in Canada: namely, the Canadian Association of the Deaf, the Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf, and AVLIC. In keeping with WASLI's commitment to collaboration among organisations that involve interpreters and Deaf people at the national level, the three organisations were able to reach an agreement. This agreement, in many ways, helped them to formally acknowledge and celebrate the manner in which all three organisations have collaborated since AVLIC's inception.

Some examples of their long standing collaborations include: CAD and CCSD played a vital role in encouraging the founding meeting of AVLIC to take place, and sent representatives to that founding meeting to offer formal support. Later CAD and CCSD assumed major roles on the Canadian Evaluation System development team, providing financial support for the testing development, as well as shaping key decisions and processes that resulted in the final evaluation process, product and standard. In addition, on one occasion all three organisations hosted their national conferences in the same week in the same city, which culminated in a shared banquet. Finally, over the years the presidents of all three organisations formed a Joint Communication Team that met regularly to discuss common issues of concern and to consult one another on matters of relevance to all associations.

In many ways, the signing of this joint statement was a celebration of our past working relationships, and a renewed commitment to future collaboration and communication, anchoring our future in our past practices. Congratulations to all who were involved in reaching this agreement!

SOUTH AFRICA



Location: Southern Africa, at the southern tip of the continent of Africa
Population: 49,109,107
Capital: Pretoria
Language/s: IsiZulu (official) 23.8%, IsiXhosa (official) 17.6%, Afrikaans (official) 13.3%, Sepedi (official) 9.4%, English (official) 8.2%, Setswana (official) 8.2%, Sesotho (official) 7.9%, Xitsonga (official) 4.4%, other 7.2%, isiNdebele (official), Tshivenda (official), siSwati (official) (2001 census)
GDP: \$10,300 (2009 est.)
Exports: Gold, diamonds, platinum, other metals and minerals, machinery and equipment
(Source: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sf.html>)

FIRST TRAINED DEAF SOUTH AFRICAN SIGNED LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS

Reprinted with permission from [Mzansi DiToloki](#) (a 6-monthly insight into the works of South African Sign Language interpreters).

We now have our own officially trained Deaf interpreters! What an amazing accomplishment! We are proud to introduce them to you. Voster Makola (Provincial Chairperson North West Province), Nkosinathi Ndlovu (Vice Chairperson National Deaf Youth based in Mpumalanga), Charity Shikwambana (Social Auxiliary Worker Limpopo Province), Fani Fani Chiya (Hotel scullery KZN province) and Ayesha Tilly (SASL instructor based in Gauteng).

The Deaf interpreters had to go through the same training as hearing interpreters, to become familiar with the theory behind interpreting. The practical part of the training introduced them to various modes of interpreting including simultaneous and sight interpreting. They were taught how to work with a hearing feeder and how to use their peripheral vision.

They were also trained how to do relay interpreting, especially when they are interpreting for “home signers”. It was amazing to see the development in their interpreting skills. Thank you for your commitment and hard work! Watch the profiling space in future editions where we will profile some of our Deaf interpreters. We look forward to the result of their exams and welcoming them to our hood!



*Voster Makola, Nkosinathi Ndlovu, Charity Shikwambana,
Fani Fani Chiya, Bibi Tilly (not present)*

PHILIPPINES



Location: Southeastern Asia, archipelago between the Philippine Sea and the South China Sea, east of Vietnam
Area: 300,000 sq km
Population: 99,900,177 (July 2010 est.)
Capital: Manila
Language/s: Filipino (official; based on Tagalog) and English (official); eight major dialects - Tagalog, Cebuano, Ilocano, Hiligaynon or Ilonggo, Bicol, Waray, Pampango, and Pangasinan
GDP: \$3,300 (2009 est.)

(Source: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/rp.html>)

PAIDE HOLDS SECOND GOLDEN HANDS

Joy Lanon Cristal

The Philippine Association of Interpreters for Deaf Empowerment (PAIDE) held its second Golden Hands Award on the grand evening of May 2, 2010 at the Legend Villas, Mandaluyong City. The first of its kind in the Philippines and a brainchild of RIDERS (Registry of Interpreters for Deaf Empowerment Representatives and Supporters) and PAIDE Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Alfredo D. Celada, Jr., the Golden Hands Award is given to professionals who have served the deaf community with remarkable commitment for 15 years and more.

These year's awardees came from a long and dedicated service to deaf people, each doing admirable contribution to the betterment of the life of deaf people. While all of the awardees are in educational setting, their tracks of service show involvement with deaf people beyond the usual job requirements in schools. All the awardees have been engaged in community and outreach activities where they share their skills and talents without remuneration. Aptly so, Ms. Letty V. Uy, PAIDE Chairman of the Board, commended the awardees for their unselfish and untiring service to the deaf community.

The awards night was attended by PAIDE interpreters, supporters, and friends from the deaf community, different school and organisation representatives. Mr. Julius G. Andrada, current vice president of the Philippine Federation of the Deaf (PFD) was the guest speaker for the event. He praised PAIDE's noble work of recognizing the dedicated hearing people who serve as their allies. Speaking on Deaf identity and culture, Mr. Andrada encouraged everyone in the audience to learn both signed language and Deaf culture as the two are inseparable. He appealed for greater support so



Atty. Judy Alice U. Repol welcomes the 2nd Golden Hands Award attendees as Jerly Ann D. Villanueva interprets



Golden Hands Award Trophies on display during the award's night



Mr. Julius G. Andrada, Vice President of Philippine Federation of the Deaf (PFD) delivers his message in sign



PAIDE Performing Artists presents the opening number with their interpretation of "Magandang Gabi."

that the larger society will come to respect and accept the unique identity of the Deaf.

The grand affair could not have happened without the help of PAIDE's graduates and trainers who served as interpreters, performers, program director, writer, assistants, documenters, technical staff and ushers. Truly entertaining were the beautiful song interpretations performed by the artistic interpreters. A special thanks was given to Atty. Judy Alice U. Repol who charmed the night with her graceful hosting as master of ceremony. Mr. Michael S. Potian, PAIDE's Sign Language Training Officer served as award's night director.



Ms. Leticia V. Uy, Chair of the Board delivers her inspirational message as Mr. Michael S. Potian, S-L Training Officer interprets

Also present during the awards night were the 2006 Golden Hands Awardees whose show of continuing support to PAIDE's endeavours encouraged younger batches and modelled an empowering community of seasoned and new interpreters.



The 2nd Golden Hands Awardees

ZAMBIA



Location: Southern Africa, east of Angola

Population: 13,460,305

Capital: Lusaka

Language/s: Bemba 30.1% (official), Nyanja 10.7% (official), Tonga 10.6% (official), Lozi 5.7% (official), Chewa 4.9%, Nsenga 3.4%, Tumbuka 2.5%, Lunda 2.2% (official), Kaonde 2% (official), Lala 2%, Luvale 1.7% (official), English 1.7% (official), other 22.5% (2000 Census)

Currency: Zambian kwacha (ZMK)

GDP: \$1,600 (2009 est.)

(Source: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/za.html>)

ZAMBIA RECOGNISES AND APPROVES SIGNED LANGUAGE IN NEW NATIONAL CONSTITUTION

Euphrasia Mbewe

Zambia has recognised its signed language in the national constitution through the National Constitution Conference. From December 2007 to August 2010 a commissioner was appointed to sit on the National Constitutional Conference (NCC). The NCC has 489 members and I was only one who was Deaf; there was also one blind member and one with a physical disability. The three of us were representing disability organisations in Zambia. The NCC also consisted of the Republican Vice President, Member of Parliament, Ministers and their deputies, Provincial ministers, women's movement representatives, religious organisations, trade unions, a legal association, the University of Zambia students' union, a media organisation, a teachers' union, and political parties. The NCC was given powers to examine and make amendments to the constitution or possibly delete it and adopt a new constitution that had been submitted by the Constitution Review Commission (CRC). Approving an article was based on conscience – the acclamation of YES or NO. However in the absence of consensus, decision was determined by two thirds of majority vote (secret ballot) of the commissioners of the NCC.

Through some advocacy and lobbying we were successful in getting several important articles approved. For example:

Part II, Article 7

(2) Any language, including sign language, other than the official language, may be used as a medium of instructions in education institutions or for legislative, administrative or judicial purpose, as provided under an act of parliament.

(3) All local languages in Zambia are equal and the state shall respect, promote and protect the diversity of languages of the people of Zambia, including sign language.

Part VI, Article 47

(1) To have, without payment, the assistance of an interpreter if the accused person cannot understand the language used at the trial, and in the case of the Deaf person, a sign language interpreter.

(2) Where the article requires information to be given to a person, that information shall be given in a language which that person understand, and in the case of a visually impaired person, in Braille, and a Deaf person, in sign language.

The NCC approved these and other progressive and straightforward articles related to disability. Zambia has followed Uganda and South Africa in Africa. I am very happy to have been honoured to represent the thousands of persons with disabilities in Zambia though under challenging circumstances beyond my control. We are grateful to all the stakeholders who contributed to the achievement of this result. I hope all will have a bright future, as legislation is a priority that results in an inclusive national development plan that benefits every person. The inclusion of signed language in the constitution will brighten the future of Deaf generations in Zambia. Other governments around the world should emulate the example if steps have not yet been taken to include persons with disabilities in their national constitutions. It is a powerful legal tool for persons with disabilities to live independently.

SIGNED LANGUAGE RECOGNISED IN KOSOVO

Selman Hoti, WASLI Balkans regional representative

On September 29th 2010, the Kosovo Government recognised signed language in Kosovo. Below is the email from the Kosovo Government.

Dear Sir/Madam,

The Government of the Republic of Kosovo in its program prioritises the respect for human rights especially the rights of people with disabilities.

The procurement of language rights for deaf people is one of the priorities which the Government of the Republic of Kosovo has been working on and now has concluded its work so this rudimentary right will be respected and implemented in Kosovo as well.

Apropos we inform you that in 29 September 2010 the Government of the Republic of Kosovo held its 146th regular meeting where the decision had been taken to formalise the Sign Language in the Republic of Kosovo.

This decision was based on the constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, antidiscrimination legislation, National plan of action for people with disabilities and the provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.

Finally on behalf of the Office for Good Governance/Office of the Prime Minister we assure you once more that the Government of the Republic of Kosovo will continue to be dedicated in achieving the goal where people with disabilities will be treated with dignity and will not be marginalised but rather become an equal and active part of our society.

Special thanks go to the members of the Group for Formalising the Sign Language, the Kosovar Association of the Deaf and to the national and international experts that helped in finalising this process.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Habit Hajredini

Human Rights Coordinator in the Government of Republic of Kosovo

SAINT LUCIA



Location: Caribbean, island between the Caribbean Sea and North Atlantic Ocean, north of Trinidad and Tobago

Population: 160,922 (July 2010 est.)

Capital: Castries

Language/s: English (official), French patois

Currency: East Caribbean dollar

GDP: \$10,900 (2009 est.)

(Source: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/st.html>)

ST. LUCIA, SAND SEA AND DEAFNESS

Leah Hall – BSL/ English Interpreter

Saint Lucia is 27 miles long and 14 miles wide. The island is located in the Eastern Caribbean and is the 2nd largest of the Windward Islands. St. Lucia has a population of 162,982 (Saint Lucia Census 2001). The capital is Castries and the main language is English. A French-based Creole is also spoken, a result of St. Lucia's dual British-French heritage. St. Lucia has some of the finest mountain scenery and excellent beaches in the West Indies. St. Lucia is without doubt, simply beautiful. Ok, so having St. Lucian parents does make me a little biased, however, thousands of tourists who visit St. Lucia each year would agree with me.

While in St. Lucia I was told that I had two profoundly Deaf cousins. No one at ever mentioned them before! One lives in England and the other in New York. I started to recall the number of times I had been to St. Lucia and had never seen a Deaf person. I wanted to know where the Deaf people were. What were the educational provisions for them? Did they have the same challenges as Deaf people have in the UK? Where are the interpreters or CSW's? What's it like for a Deaf St. Lucian to live on this beautiful island?

St. Lucia's screening programme ensures that babies are tested from birth for their levels of hearing. The island also has an inoculation programme. The Government's official website shows the reduction in new cases of mumps, rubella, and meningitis, all of which are associated with childhood deafness.

St. Lucia's Educational Digest (2005) collects and analysis information relating to its education system. In August 2005 the report showed that over a 10 year period (1994/5 - 2004/5) the number of children with 'hearing impairments' had considerably decreased. As these figures only went up to 2005, I wanted to know if this trend was continuing. I decided to visit one of the schools that had the most intakes of Deaf pupils on a yearly basis. Over this period (from 1994/5 – 2004/5) they had an average of 31 pupils with 'hearing impairments'. The report categorises all levels of deafness as a 'hearing impairment'.

The Lady Gordon Centre of Opportunity is one of the special educational centres on the island. It's located in a place called Ciceron in South Castries. The staff at the centre use ASL (American Sign Language) to communicate with their Deaf students. The centre also caters for students with various learning disabilities.

I met the Principal of the centre, Mrs. Preville, members of her team, and students. I was impressed with the amount of work and support that Mrs. Preville and her staff provide to students and members of the Deaf Community. I found that her team provided many of the services that outside agencies would be responsible for in the UK. This included providing support for job interviews, police stations, inviting speakers to talk on a variety of topics. Lady Gordon Centre of Opportunity seems to be the hub of the Deaf Community for its students and ex students. This inevitably places immense pressure on the already over stretched members of staff and aid workers.

When asked about the reduction of Deaf children at her school. Mrs. Preville informed me that she only had 7 Deaf children. She explained that she didn't know if this decline had been as a result of

the governments health programme or if parents were deciding not to send their children to school. Our discussion also revealed a number of issues and challenges faced by the school and members of the Deaf community.

Issues

- Educational – further ASL training is needed. The centre needs to be able to provide Deaf students and their community a higher level of ASL. This is to ensure the Deaf community is able to communicate at an appropriate level, linguistically. This will aid better communication to the wider communities in the other Caribbean islands and Americans that use ASL.
- Priority – the government has made screening of newborn babies a priority. While this is commendable, the government still has to deal with the issue of the people who are Deaf.
- Social - some St. Lucians may have never met a Deaf person and therefore may not understand how to effectively communicate with them. A lack of interaction between the Deaf and Hearing communities may well lead to incorrect perceptions about each other.
- Legal issues – St. Lucia does not have any fully qualified ASL interpreters. This means that the Deaf St. Lucian has no legal representation in the legal system, as they are unable to understand the proceedings.
- Medical – doctors may find it difficult to communicate with a deaf patient. This leads to frustration with both doctor and patient. At best the patient is misunderstood; at worst the wrong medication is prescribed.
- Deaf people do not have the same job opportunities as their hearing peers. This is due to the lack of access for job interviews etc. and leads to members of the Deaf community being unemployed or only able to access menial jobs.

Later, that week, I met up with the three ‘Deaf aids’ from Lady Gordon’s Opportunity Centre. They brought with them ten other Deaf friends. Despite my ASL skills being limited to the alphabet, we were able to communicate enough to understand each other. One thing that was quite clear from these Deaf St. Lucians was they want an opportunity to contribute to the growth of St. Lucia. They want to be able to work and have hopes and aspirations like their hearing counterparts. They want access to information in order for them to continue to gain knowledge about the things that affects St. Lucia. They don’t want to be patronised, they want to be empowered so they can become role models for other members of their community. As the evening progressed, some of them shared their experiences of what it’s like living in a world where there are no interpreters, no support workers (apart from the staff in the school) and no advocates. Story after story about how dreams and aspirations have been put on hold and lives have been endangered because of the lack of access.

As a result of listening to what was said by members of the Deaf community, I have made a number of recommendations. I am convinced that if some of these recommendations could be implemented St. Lucia could start moving forward in providing greater equality for its Deaf members of society.

Recommendations

- We need to study the infrastructure models from other ASL countries that cater for deaf people effectively – then leverage experts to implement all successful strategies.
- ASL interpreters could be flown in from Trinidad, USA or both to teach St. Lucian interpreters.
- Gain sponsorship from local businesses and grants from governing bodies so as to facilitate training of interpreters. The purpose of training interpreters to a high standard is to provide access to deaf citizens and to standardise ASL communication across the country.
- Create deaf awareness programmes and teach employers and public sectors all the information required to understand potential deaf employees and service users.
- Deaf citizens need to get the same opportunities as their hearing counterparts so they need access to the same level of education.
- Deaf clubs need to be set up so that a) deaf people can interact and build a strong community base, b) signers can meet with deaf people in an environment that solicits synergistic learning, and c) requirements can be assessed and realised from a grass roots level.
- There needs to be a lobby to the St. Lucian government to encourage them to take deaf issues more seriously.
- The WFD (World Federation of the Deaf) needs to take a more active part in supporting St. Lucia's Deaf community. In June 2008, WFD published a report which stated that an observation had been made that St. Lucia was one of the islands that needed funding to analyse the situation of the Deaf community.

Sources: <http://www.stats.gov.lc/>, <http://skoolvibz.com/goc.html>, www.wfdeaf.org



About the author:

Leah Hall recently qualified as an MRSLI at Preston University via the Postgraduate Diploma in BSL Interpreting at SLI. In August 2003, Leah resigned from her job as a manager in a magistrate's court and embarked on a new career initially as a CSW. Her last three years have been spent working in the arena of access to work. In January 2010, she started work as a full time freelance interpreter.

IMPORTANT

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