

# WASLI Newsletter 2008 - 05



*WASLI is committed to the development of the profession of sign language interpreting worldwide*

- Sign Language Interpreters at a High Ergonomic Risk
- Sign Language Interpreting in Somaliland
- Sign Language Interpreting in Turkey
- AVLIC Conference "Connecting Minds and Communities" - 29 July to 2 Aug 2008, St John's Newfoundland, Canada

## **Sign Language Interpreters at a High Ergonomic Risk**



Science Daily reports of research that sign language interpreting comes with a high risk from RSI (or similar), <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/04/080417105449.htm>

The research indicates that interpreting causes more physical stress to the extremities than high-risk tasks conducted in industrial settings, including assembly line work. It also found a direct link between an increase in the mental and cognitive stress of the interpreter and an increase in the risk of musculoskeletal injuries such as carpal tunnel syndrome and tendonitis.

And goes onto state:

"The impact of repetitive stress in industrial and office settings has been well documented, but there is less data on the risk of ergonomic injury to sign language inter-

preters," ..... "Our findings indicate that interpreters may actually be at a higher risk of injury than other professions."

This research has to be welcomed as a health and safety measure, and lends weight to the associated risks of the profession. However, does this mean any injury related insurance premiums might take a hike?

## **TURKEY – SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER TRAINING**

Area: 779,452 km<sup>2</sup>  
Population: 69,630,000  
Capital: Ankara  
Language: Turkish, Kurdish  
Currency: Turkish Lira (US\$1=144,000 TL)  
GDP: USD \$181,700  
(Source: Reader's Digest World Atlas (2005))



WASLI has received communications that the first sign language interpreter training will get underway 18-24 May 2008 in Cesme by Izmir. The Turkish Deaf Association together with the Government will be running the training and 22 interpreters will be participating.  
(Source: Hasan Korkmaz and Oya Ataman)

*WASLI wishes them well with this training and hopes to get a report on the outcomes of the training.*

## **SOMALILAND – A REPORT ON SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETING**

Area: 176,210 km<sup>2</sup>  
Population: 3,500,000  
Capital: Hargeisa  
Language: Somali, Arabic, English  
Currency: Somaliland Shilling  
GDP: Not available

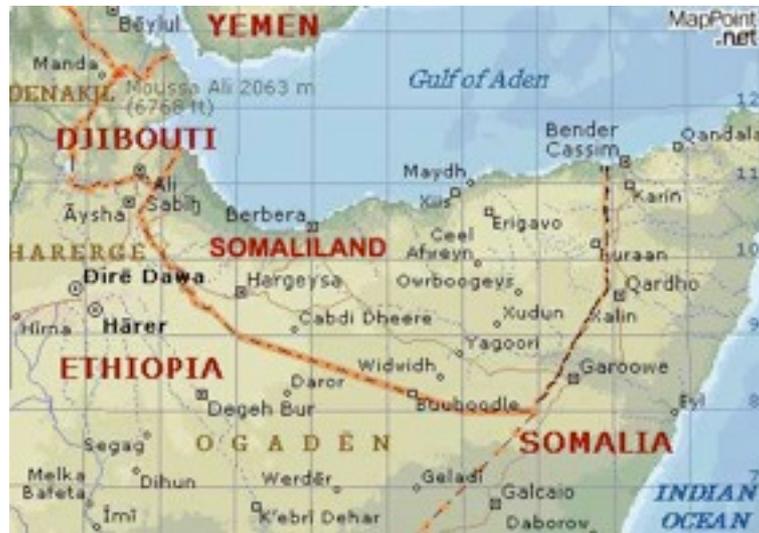


### **1. The Situation of Sign Language Interpreting in Somaliland**

Sign language interpreters are the principal means by which deaf individuals gain access to the facilities, services and information of the larger communities in which they live with. Sign language interpreters are the crucial mechanism whereby deaf people enjoy opportunities

equal to those of hearing individuals. WFD affirms the right of all deaf individuals to have access to high quality interpretation between the spoken language of the hearing community and their own sign language. This right in turn requires the establishment of training programmes and screening mechanisms in every country to make qualified interpreters widely available.

The current situation of sign language interpreters in Somaliland is best described as disheartening. This is because the deaf community in Somaliland doesn't enjoy the same rights with other larger deaf communities around the globe.



There are no training institutions that offer training programmes to deaf teachers so that interpreting skills could be accessible to those who need it most. Moreover, the local authorities are not familiar with sign language interpreting and this fact is reflected in the planning of educational needs of the country.

Similarly, the country's deaf organisation is not able to function due to a shortage of resources. This organisation would struggle to promote the rights of deaf community in the country in terms of creating awareness by the general public and lobbying to have a say in all the issues and decisions that affect the very life of the deaf community. In this regard, the efforts paid by Doreen Woodford deserves to be mentioned as she has contributed much to the training of the current teaching staff in the deaf schools in the region as well as her extensive work and campaign in publicising the activities of deaf community in the eyes of the world. The deaf students who have joined secondary schools are not able to pursue their education because of the absence of interpreters. Without interpreters, secondary education might prove to be too frustrating and difficult for the deaf students. In order to provide interpreting services to these students, Borama Deaf School has already sent a teacher/interpreter to one of the local secondary schools who assists them. However, the sign language interpretation need on the ground is far behind sending an interpreter to one of the high schools. In this regard, there is a pressing need to help deaf community access interpretation services by training secondary teachers and additional training for the teachers at the deaf school. In schools, the management is responsible for ensuring all the deaf and hearing students have the fundamental right to communicate freely at all times and when there is a meeting, lecture, workshop and other activities in particular.

Outside the school, there is a tendency that deaf community lacks the capacity to contribute to the developing activities in the country. This is reflected in the absence of technological advances that meets the needs of deaf persons in Somaliland such as television programmes in sign language, conversing the sign language through mobile phones and computer with webcams.

Finally, there are no sign language interpretation services in Somaliland at the courts, hospitals, police stations and other important places. Some times friends and family members who are familiar with sign language might help them. This, however, might not prove successful as misunderstanding often emerges and these people can not correctly sign everything that is said or say everything that is signed.

Even the teachers who know sign language need to be trained as a professional interpreter because they may not understand the ethics and the role of interpreter.

*(This report is courtesy of Mohamed Abdi Hashi of the Boroma School for the Deaf 2008)*

## **AVLIC 2008 - CONNECTING MINDS AND COMMUNITIES**



AVLIC is the Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada. This year the AVLIC 2008 Conference takes place in St John's Newfoundland on the country's east coast. The theme of the Conference is 'Connecting Minds and Communities'.

For information about AVLIC visit [www.avlic.ca](http://www.avlic.ca)

For information about AVLIC 2008 visit <http://www.avlic2008.com/home.html>

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