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WASLI MEMBERSHIP

WASLI is growing but in order to get bigger and achieve our objectives we need more individual interpreters to become sponsoring individual members. Information about how to become a sponsoring member can be found at <http://www.wasli.org/Membership.htm>. Membership fees are not large and are based on each country's GDP. You can also sponsor a developing country or an interpreter from a developing country to join as a sponsoring member. Any questions? Please email our Membership Secretary Karl Llorca (membership@wasli.org).

MALAWI



Area: 118,484 sq km
Population: 14,268,711
Capital: Lilongwe
Language/s: Chichewa 57.2% (official), Chinyanja 12.8%, Chiyao 10.1%, Chitumbuka 9.5%, Chisena 2.7%, Chilomwe 2.4%, Chitonga 1.7%, other 3.6% (1998 census)
GDP: \$800 (2008 est.)
Exports: Tobacco, tea, sugar, cotton, coffee, peanuts, wood products, apparel
(Source: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mi.html>)

MALAWI TO GRADUATE SEVEN SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS

Betty Wisiki

Below is a photograph of a class of Sign Language Interpreter training course which took place in Blantyre, Malawi.



With funding from Deaf Action (Scotland) and the Ministry Responsible for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly, Malawi National Association of the Deaf (MANAD) ran a two year program on sign language interpreter training from 2007 to 2009. The training was facilitated by two trainers from Malawi: Erick Chiunda (Deaf) and Betty Wisiki (Sign Language Interpreter) with support from Deaf Action representatives Bryan Marshall (Deaf and sign language tutor) and Nicola McNally (Sign Language Interpreter).

The training drew together 18 participants from different fields and professions all over Malawi. Seven of the trainees have successfully fulfilled the requirements of the course and are ready for work. This will solve the challenges that deaf people in Malawi were experiencing whenever they want to access services of interpreters. Malawi is a country which has a population of over 52,000 deaf people. All these people were relying on services of eleven (11) Sign Language Interpreters who were trained under the Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Sign Language Project which was funded by the Finnish Association of the Deaf (FAD). This made the ratio gap of interpreters to the deaf 1:200.

With this new development the ratio gap will be minimised. However, this number is not enough and there is need to train more in order to ensure that deaf people are receiving equal treatment and support like any other person. They have the right to access information and services in a language they can understand (sign language) as stipulated in the UN convention on equalisation of opportunities for persons with disabilities. Since the trainees were drawn from all the three regions of Malawi, this will give an equal opportunity for all deaf people country wide to have access to Sign Language Interpreters.



We want to thank the Scottish government and Malawi government for their support towards uplifting the wellbeing of deaf people in Malawi. We also thank Deaf Action in particular for the technical guidance and support they rendered throughout the whole training for it to be a success. We urge them to continue supporting projects of this nature in order to see a changed Malawi where rights of deaf people are respected and sign language recognised and adopted in the national constitution as one of the official languages in Malawi.

MALAYSIA INTERPRETER EDUCATION SEMINAR REPORT

Saturday 22nd August – Tuesday 25th August, 2009

Dr Debra Russell (University of Alberta, Canada)

This event was very professionally organised by RC Deaf Missions, with 55 attendees from 9 different countries (Nigeria was not able to attend at last minute and this was true of someone from Greece as well). The seminar was focused on language analysis and we focused on looking at the national sign language used in Malaysia, BIM. I worked with three amazing Deaf language models who were fantastic.

When it came to practice, several of the countries had Deaf people from their own country so could adapt the role plays to that, and generally all of the people were able to analyse the BIM, despite linguistic differences. We were entertained one evening by a Deaf dance troupe with traditional Chinese, Indian and Malay dances.

I had an opportunity to visit with the Malaysian Federation of the Deaf and learn about their interpreter education program and efforts there to enhance interpreting. The country remains fragmented in terms of politics and services; however I remain hopeful that they can find common ground in regards to the enhancing the skills of the interpreters and providing even greater access. It was a wonderful experience and I feel so lucky to have been able to work with them all.



LAY JUDGES IN JAPAN

A recent article in the Japanese Deaf News discusses the involvement of the Japanese Federation of the Deaf (JFD) and Japanese Association of Sign Language Interpreters (JASLI) in a new 'Lay Judge' legal system in Japan, where ordinary citizens will act as judges. Click here to read this article: <http://www.jfd.or.jp/en/news/2009-04b.html>

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

4th World Congress on Mental Health and Deafness

Brisbane, Australia

27-30 October 2009

www.mhd2009.org

International Congress on the Education of the Deaf, Vancouver July 18-22 2010

Call for interpreters

The ICED conference planning committee is accepting applications for conference interpreters. We will require teams of ASL-English interpreters and teams of International Sign (IS) interpreters to work this exciting and challenging conference.

The closing date for applications is November 1st 2009; please see <http://www.iced2010.com/interpreters.php> for further information.

IMPORTANT

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