



# Country Reports

WASLI is committed to the advancement of sign language Interpreting world wide

## WASLI Country Reports Issue 1 - November 2005

by Nigel Cleaver

**In readiness for the inaugural WASLI Conference in South Africa 2005** countries were asked to provide a report telling the world about the situation in their country. Information that was thought to be useful included- what was the population? How many Deaf people are there? Is the indigenous sign language recognised as an official language of the country? How many sign language interpreters are there? Is there a National Association of Sign Language Interpreters and what training facilities are there?

As WASLI is committed to advance sign language interpreting world wide this information is important as it provides not only an accurate picture of where we are today but enables us to plan partnership work, share resources and later identify growth and development.

**As you will see not every country was able to respond in time** though those that did provide a fascinating picture of the sign language interpreting profession in the world today. Some reports came from Interpreter Associations, some from Deaf Associations, others from both individual hearing and Deaf interpreters.

It is hoped that in ensuing years more countries can contribute to this valuable resource and begin to take part in the further dissemination of good practice.

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## ARAB Federation for the Deaf By Hend Al Showaier



This report is a reflection of my own personal information and experience about the situation of sign language interpreters and Arabic Sign Language in Saudi Arabia and the Arab countries. Based on my work with the Deaf and hard of hearing people at the Saudi Association for the Deaf as well as various discussions with many Deaf and hard of hearing people and sign language interpreters from different Arab countries. I would like to thank all those who provided me with valuable information regarding the Deaf and Sign Language Interpreters in the Arab world:

### A. Arab Deaf:

Hanan Mohsen (Egypt).

Amal Wali and her colleagues: Sanaa Al Ghoul, Rasheed Alhashmi, Monsif Az Aldeen, Abdul Ghani Al Zaazaa, and Reem Al Zaazaa (Tunisia). Ali Al Qatreefi (Yemen).

### B. Hearing people:

Dr. Yousif Al Turki, Director of the Deaf department – Ministry of Education (Saudi Arabia).

Sameer Semreen & Naji Zakarenah, sign language interpreters (Jordan). Mohammed Al Banaali, sign language interpreter (Qatar).

### Facts about the Deaf in Saudi Arabia and the Arab countries:

Saudi Deaf are estimated to be more than 80,000. Unfortunately, I do not have the exact number of the Deaf and hard of hearing in the Arab World. There is a need for a concerted efforts by the research community and governments to assess the state and/or numbers of the Deaf and hard of hearing people in the Arab world.

In Saudi Arabia Deaf people use Saudi Sign Language. Signs differ from region to region, also some signs used by the male Deaf community are different than the ones the female Deaf community use, because our society is conservative, and males and females are separated. In spite of these differences in signs, Deaf people can communicate with each other without any problem using sign language, body language gestures, and facial expressions. When a male deaf marries a female deaf, the wife learns the signs used by her husband.

Many deaf prefer to marry a deaf spouse for easy communication. Saudi Sign Language was influenced by other Arab sign Languages like Egyptian Sign Language. Egyptian teachers used to work in Saudi Deaf schools; therefore, they have spread Egyptian Sign Language which has become mixed by Saudi Sign Language. Nowadays, Saudi teachers have replaced Egyptians in teaching the Deaf in Deaf schools. Finger spelling is also used in Deaf schools. Arab countries started to use Finger spelling system in 2001 (Dr. Al Turki); therefore, old Deaf people do not know it, so they do not use it. This system is usually used by young Deaf especially in Deaf schools. Some Deaf, especially hard of hearing people rely on lip reading in addition to signs that are established within each individual's home setting.

Arabic language is the spoken language in Saudi Arabia and all over the Arab countries. Although all the Arab countries speak the same language, Arabic language, but each country has its own dialect.

### Types of education available to Deaf people:

In Saudi Arabia as well as in the Arab countries in general there are eight different types of education available to the Deaf and hard of hearing people these include:

Residential schools.

Day schools.

Special program classes in mainstream schools.

Full Integrated Program.

Resources room program.

Ambulatory teaching program.

Advisor teacher program.

Studying in colleges and universities.

### Types of jobs Deaf people hold:

Deaf education is mostly vocational training, thus, Deaf and hard of hearing people in Saudi Arabia and in the Arab countries as well hold different types of jobs. They work as systems analyzers, librarians, air conditioner maintenance, administrative workers, manual labor, arts, crafts, ... and the like. In 2001 the Saudi government issued a decree to allow the Deaf and hard of hearing people to enroll in colleges and universities. In 2004 Deaf and hard of hearing enrolled in the colleges officially for the first time.

### Protection of Deaf rights:

Saudi Arabia as well as Arab countries did not overlook Deaf services. The Ministries of Education in Saudi Arabia and the Arab countries have established

standard rules for institutions and programs of special education to protect the Deaf and hard of hearing people. These standard rules include modifications and changes to suit Deaf and hard of hearing environment, various method of communication with the Deaf and hard of hearing people, assistive listening devices, individual education program, ... etc.

Disabled protection code which include all aspects of psychology, social life, educational, medical, ... etc.

Providing jobs to the Deaf and hard of hearing just like hearing people. According to the Saudi law, each governmental administration is required to assign at least 2% of its employment to disabled people. In Saudi Arabia there is a legislation that promotes the hiring of individuals with disabilities. The three-for-one legislation, that hiring an individual with disability counts as three Saudis in the Saudization scheme.

### Laws about interpreters,

In Saudi Arabia as well as in all Arab countries currently there are no laws about interpreters.

### Overview of what is happening in the Arab countries:

Saudi authorities as well as Arab countries realized the importance of sign language in Deaf education. The Arab Federation of the Deaf has accomplished a study about the Arabic Sign Language, finger spelling, and numbers in Arabic which was approved by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Educational Symposium of the Arab Federation of the Deaf in 1984.

In 2001 the Arab Federation of the Deaf approved the Unification of the Arabic Sign Language Dictionary to be used by all the Arab countries. 16 Arab countries contributed to this Unified Arabic Sign Language Dictionary including Saudi Arabia. In Saudi Arabia the CD for the Unified Arabic Sign Language Dictionary is distributing for free by the institute of Al Amal for the Deaf to encourage hearing people to learn sign language.

Training sessions in Arabic Sign Language are held from time to time in the Arab countries to encourage hearing people to learn sign language. There are some good and qualified Sign Language Interpreters, yet, they are few and scattered around the Arab countries. Most of the interpreters do not get proper training. They mostly learn sign language through their deaf family and relatives, or through their work with the Deaf.

Our future plan is to set a code for sign language interpreters to abide by the laws, as well as set professional training programs to prepare and train hearing people to be qualified interpreters. I have written a code for sign language interpreters and sent it to Shaikha Jameela Al Qasimi of United Arab Emirates, the first supporter for the Deaf in the Arab world, to present it to the Arab Federation of the Deaf to approve it in its next meeting. Tunisia is considered the first Arab country to establish a curriculum of four years training program for sign language interpreters. In Saudi Arabia we have future plans to establish a National Association of Sign Language Interpreters. The Arab Federation of the Deaf may establish a committee or an association for professional and sign language interpreters which will include in its membership well educated Deaf from the Arab countries as well as qualified sign language interpreters. This committee will work toward improving the services of the interpretation as well as the quality of the sign language interpreters all over the Arab countries.

### Country Report:

There are no statistics about the number of the interpreters who work part-time/full-time. Most of the interpreters are volunteers. They are either from a deaf family, have deaf relatives, teachers and employees who work in Deaf schools, or hearing people who have a deaf spouse. Some of them work part-time, and some work full-time. In Tunisia there are about 16 hearing students enrolled in the interpretation program in the university, and the number of the students will increase in the future (Amal Wali). At present, there are no Associations for Sign Language Interpreters in the Arab countries, but hopefully in the future each country will establish one.

### Interpreter Training:

As mentioned earlier, Tunisia is considered the first and the only Arab country to establish a four year program for training sign language interpreters at university level. The program is based on the Unified of the Arabic Sign Language Dictionary, Tunisian Sign Language Dictionary, French Sign Language Dictionary, and Canadian Sign Language Dictionary (Amal Wali). In Sultanate Oman, there is a two year sign language interpreters training program. As for Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries there are some efforts to set training programs in sign language, but they are mostly short terms. We

have future plans to make a four years training program at the university level. Prince Salman Center for Disability Research will conduct in the near future a survey, and then write a proposal to Saudi authorities to indicate the importance of establishing such a program.

### Testing system for qualified interpreters:

Unfortunately, in all Arab countries there is no testing system to decide who is qualified to interpret.

### Most important events for the situation of sign language:

The most important events for the situation of Sign Language are:

The Arab Federation of the Deaf approved the Unified Sign Language Dictionary.

Approved Sign Language Dictionary for the Names of Countries & Cities.

Sign Language is recognized by Saudi authorities and all the Arab countries.

More and more hearing people want to learn sign language. Workshops in Sign Language have been conducted frequently all over Saudi Arabia and all the Arab countries.

Workshops in Sign Language in Saudi Arabia are sponsored by the General Secretariat of Special Education, Ministry of Education, and the Saudi Association for the Deaf. They encourage applying the Unified of the Arabic Sign Language Dictionary and distribute it for free.

Deaf schools in Saudi Arabia also have efforts in conducting training sessions in Sign Language for the teachers and parents of Deaf students.

Saudi Arabia has a plan to establish a job with the title: "Sign Language Interpreter".

Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia has prepared guidelines for Sign Language Interpreters and testing system to decide who is qualified to interpret. We have interpreters work in TV interpret some programs in sign language. Also Saudi Arabia has interpreters work in educational setting.

There are diligent efforts in improving the interpretation services by the Saudi authorities and the Arab Federation of the Deaf.

Saudi Arabia is working on a new project that will benefit the Muslims all over the world. This project is interpreting the Holy Qur'an in Sign Language. *King Fahad Complex for the Printing of the Holy Qur'an* is the one responsible for this project.

The second workshop for Unified Arabic Sign Language Dictionary will be held in Qatar after few months. Several Arab countries will participate in this important event and work on creating new signs for Arabic words which do not have a known sign.

### Goals for the coming years:

Saudi Arabia is planning to establish an association for sign language interpreters. Arab Federation of the Deaf is working on setting the code for professional interpreters and improving interpretation services and interpreters quality.

### What is needed for sign language interpreting to develop?

We have to encourage researches in sign language, and provide funding for these researches.

The Deaf must be participated in these researches.

The Deaf must do the signs not hearing people, because sign language is the first language for the Deaf. Let the signs come out from the Deaf naturally.

Conduct national and international workshops in sign language to exchange experiences and share information among the participants.

As for the Arabic Sign Language, we need to do researches and benefit from the experience of the advanced countries in order to set the rules and grammar of Arabic Sign Language. When we set the rules, grammar, and structures of the Arabic Sign Language, we can begin writing curriculums in Arabic Sign Language supported with educational video tapes and DVDs performed by real Deaf.

I suggest these researches be on a national level, so the authorities provide support and facilitate our work.

Each country has to select at least 1 – 2 Deaf persons from each part of the Country, so we can study the different kinds of signs used by the Deaf in each region. As it is known, signs are regional not unified.

Conduct researches and workshops regularly to create new signs for words that do not have known signs.

Participate in national and international workshops and conferences in sign languages.

Professionals and researchers from advanced countries have to collaborate and share information and experiences regarding sign languages with the countries that have less experience in this field.

### **My expectations of a world body and how can they support the Arab countries?**

In Saudi Arabia and in all the Arab countries sign language interpretation services are not up to our expectations. Sign Language training programs need to be improved. Currently there are no laws to determine if the interpreters are qualified or not. Any person can apply for sign language interpreter position even if they have not completed their education and have never been trained or taken sign language courses.

Having a Deaf family member alone without getting proper training and good education do not make applicants qualified for interpretation. Such interpreters make many mistakes and overstep all bounds. They usually interfere in the conversation and speak out on behalf of the Deaf taking advantage of their deafness, besides they do not interpret every thing.

I have noticed that interpreters from Deaf parents are much better than those interpreters who have a deaf member in their family like a Deaf brother, Deaf sister, or a Deaf spouse. We have to set rules and force such interpreters to abide by them. We have to encourage hearing people to enroll in sign language training programs and train them to interpret in small groups and large groups as well to make them confident. Some interpreters are shy. They refuse to interpret in symposiums and conferences, but they are willing to interpret in small groups, classes, and the like.

By joining an international organization of sign language interpreters I will have the opportunity to learn from the experts and professionals from advanced countries and all over the world. Share information, get experiences, and support from the associations of sign language interpreters which will help me in my goal toward improving the interpretation in all the Arab countries. There is a shortage in the number of qualified sign language interpreters in all the Arab countries. Some Arab countries

do not have even qualified interpreters; therefore, they do not have sign language training programs. Such international organization will work to set rules and codes for professionals conduct. All the organizations/associations, and individuals who join this international association are required to follow its statutes. This will benefit the Deaf not only in the Arab countries, but also all over the globe, and will improve the quality of the interpreters as well as the interpretation services.

### **I can help others by:**

As the representative of the Arab Federation of the Deaf (AFD), and the representative of Saudi Arabia I will work closely with both AFD and the Saudi authorities to establish an Arab Association of Sign Language Interpreters, and a Saudi Association of Sign Language Interpreters.

The General Secretariat of Special Education, Ministry of Education – Saudi Arabia is planning to establish a Saudi Association of Sign Language Interpreters. They have made the first step toward this goal by submitting a request to the Ministry of Civil Service to establish a new position with the title: “*Sign Language Interpreter*.”

I will work closely with the General Secretariat of Special Education to set the statutes of this national new association.

My position as the Coordinator of the Deaf and Sign Language Program at Prince Salman Center for Disability Research [www.pscdr.org.sa](http://www.pscdr.org.sa) will facilitate my task. The research center strongly supports such researches and proposals. It provides financial and technical aids needed for such researches. Also by joining WASLI, WASLI can support my goals in improving the interpretation and the interpreters' quality in Saudi Arabia as well as in the Arab countries. The Saudi Deaf as well as the Deaf and hard of hearing people all over the Arab countries will benefit a lot from this international association.

I have outlined a sign language training program. I am in the progress of developing it. I am also collecting information and references to start a research proposal on Saudi Sign Language. As a member of the Ad Hoc committee of Unification of Saudi Sign Language I will do a research to set the grammar and rules of our sign language. When we are done, we will work on preparing sign language curriculums to be taught in the universities, colleges, associations, educational centers, ... etc. Also I have written a law and set a primary testing system to decide who is qualified to interpret. I have sent this law to the

Arab Federation of the Deaf to approve it in its next meeting. I also sent it to the General Secretariat of Special Education, Education Ministry – Saudi Arabia.

Arab Federation of the Deaf is also very interested in this international association. As their representative, I am responsible in providing them with all the information regarding this international association and write reports to the president of the Arab Federation of the Deaf in order to establish an Arab Association of Sign Language Interpreters.

### **Argentina** By Juan Druetta



This is a report about my country: Argentina is in South America and the spoken language is Spanish. Our Sign Language is not yet recognised by the Government.

We do not have a National Association of Sign Language Interpreters and I don't know how many there are. However, I do know that most people working as interpreters are CODA, Teachers of the Deaf and Parents of Deaf children and have no formal interpreting qualifications or skills.

In one State we have a Sign Language Interpreting Course which has been recognised and is certificated. However, it does not consider the National Constitution or Law.

Most of those working as Interpreters do not liaise with or work together with the National Association of the Deaf or any local associations or clubs.

Best wishes from Argentina



**Australia** By Karen Bontempo,  
Jemina Napier and Marcel Leneham



## 1. The Australian context

### 1.1 Deaf population

The estimates of the number of signing deaf people in Australia vary greatly. The following table from Johnston (2003) provides a summary of published estimates.

Source	[Aus- tra- lian] Popu- lation in mil- lions	Signing deaf com- munity	Im- plied preva- lence rate [in 1/1000 of popu- lation]
Flynn, 1987	15.8 (1985)	>9,500	0.57
Power, 1986	15.9	7,000	0.44
Johnston, 1989	16.0 (1987)	<10,000	0.58
Deaf Soci- ety of New South Wales, 1989	16.6	>15,000	0.89
Hyde & Power, 1991	17.2	>15,400 +	0.89
Deaf Soci- ety of New South Wales, 1998	6.3 (1997, NSW)	>1,261 to >2,522	0.19 to 0.39
Ozolins & Bridge, 1999	18.9	>15,000	0.79

Note that the prevalence rate is calculated based on the statistic that in developed countries 1 in 1,000 babies are born with a hearing impairment. However, Johnston (*ibid.*) recognises that a large percentage of these children will be educated orally. Therefore, the number of signing deaf children is a subset of this 1/1000 of the population. That is to say, in the statistics above from Power (1986), can be calculated in the following way:

Australian population:  
15,900,000

Estimated children born with hearing impairment: 15,900 (1 in 1,000 births)  
Prevalence:

$$6,996 \div 15,900 = 0.44$$

Given that the Australian population is somewhere around 20 million, using the range of prevalence rates from the above table (0.19 – 0.89), an estimate of the signing deaf population in Australia would be somewhere between 3,800 to 17,800. Based on his research using school enrollments and National Acoustic Laboratory records, Johnston (2003) estimates the signing deaf population in Australia to be approximately 6,500.

### .1 Australian languages

English is Australia's national language, but due to cultural diversity in the population, over 200 languages are spoken in the community. Languages other than English are not only spoken by migrants who have settled in Australia from all over the world, more than 60 different languages are spoken by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. (source: *Australian Bureau of Statistics*.)

### .2 Australian Sign Language

The sign language used within the Deaf community in Australia is Australian Sign Language (Auslan). Across Australia there are several distinct dialectal differences to be found within Auslan. However, these dialectal differences do not impact greatly on successful communication between signers from different regions. Generally the dialectal differences are at the lexical level of the language and common sign variations are quite familiar to signers from different regions.

An artificial sign system, Australasian Signed English, has wide-spread usage in schools where deaf students are mainstreamed. As such, some signs from this system of signing have gained common usage in the adult signing community. While there is still much debate about the use of artificial signed systems in deaf education its continued use means that a large proportion of deaf children do not begin to acquire Auslan until after leaving school.

This late exposure to Auslan undermines the individual's ability to work

successfully with an Auslan/English interpreter until they develop suitable Auslan skills. This is necessary because there is no formal accreditation system for Signed English interpreters and the signing system is not used widely within the adult signing community. As such, Signed English "translitterators"\* work almost exclusively within primary and secondary education.

In addition, there has been some discussion in the literature about traditional Indigenous Sign Languages in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) communities. A recent publication by Suzannah O'Reilly (2005) discussed some issues surrounding interpreting for deaf individuals from ATSI communities, and highlights the unique nature of their indigenous sign languages.

### .3 Education for deaf people in Australia

Deaf education in Australia has followed similar trends to those in the United States, United Kingdom, and other Western countries, ranging from an oral-only approach to Total (simultaneous) Communication with the use of an Australasian Signed English system and spoken English (Johnston, 2002; Leigh & Hyde, 1996) and deaf students integrated into mainstream schools with support from interpreters and note takers (Bowman & Hyde, 1993). All of these educational approaches are still present in different parts of the country, depending on the policy of the Education Department in each state.

There are, however, bilingual programs in the states of New South Wales (NSW) (Paterson, 1996), Victoria (Komesaroff, 1996, 2001), Tasmania (Gifford, 2000), and Queensland (Baker, 2000), with the schools in Queensland and Tasmania adopting a co-enrollment approach whereby deaf and hearing students are educated in the same classroom through a team of a regular classroom teacher and a qualified teacher of the deaf using both sign language and English (Kreimeyer, Crooke, Drye, Egbert, & Klein, 2000).

As a result of a review of best practice in deaf education (Beattie, Toe, Leigh, & Napier, 2003), the NSW Department of Education established what they called a bilingual program for primary- and secondary-level deaf children in

\* The term "translitterators" is used because these practitioners are not accredited and it can not be strictly said they are working between languages – which is the traditional definition of an interpreter. The intention of Signed English is to visually represent written English. By referring to these practitioners as "translitterators" we can more clearly distinguish them from Auslan/English interpreters who have achieved formal accreditation.

two state schools, but they are, in effect inclusion programs using interpreters in the classroom. This is very common in Australia, with more and more deaf children being educated in integrated settings with interpreters in the classroom (Potter & Leigh, 2002).

Australia has Federal anti-discrimination legislation, which has enabled deaf people to demand equal access to education. However, while this legislation has existed for more than a decade, there is still a great level of inequality in educational sector.

One potential for improvement are the impending amendments to the (*Disability Discrimination Act*, 1992), which will introduce “Disability Standards for Education” (2005). One purpose of this new legislation is outlined below:

*“The Act seeks to eliminate, as far as possible, discrimination against people with disabilities. Under section 22 of the [Disability Discrimination] Act, it is unlawful for an educational authority to discriminate against a person on the ground of the person’s disability or a disability of any associates of that person.”*

These amendments to the Act will now protect the rights of individuals with disabilities in the following areas: enrollment; participation; curriculum development, accreditation and delivery; student support services; and the elimination of harassment and victimisation.

As mentioned above, currently Australasian Signed English is used widely in the education of deaf students. Furthermore, there is no standard requirement across the nation that interpreters working in K–12 education have appropriate accreditation. And, as previously mentioned, there is not accreditation process for Signed English “translators”. As such, with the implementation of these Standards, may impact on this standard of service delivery. In Section 7.3 of the Standards, it states that the service providers have a responsibility to ensure that students with disabilities have access to specialised support services, such as:

*“(d) appropriately trained support staff, such as specialist teachers, interpreters, note-takers and teachers’ aides, are made available to students with disabilities.”*

It will be interesting to see the impact of this legislation on the provision of Auslan/English interpreters in education, specifically within the K–12 sector. One concern is that the demand, which already out-strips the level of supply, will be unable to be met, which could result in: a) maintaining the status quo, or b) greater attention to appropriate training needs for interpreters.

In summary, in theory, deaf people across the country have access to all levels of education – from early intervention through to tertiary study. However, the extent to which this demand is adequately met is arguable. The implementation of the new Standards may allow deaf people improved access to a wider range of educational opportunities, with broad-reaching benefits to the Deaf community, and serious implications for interpreting practitioners.

#### **.4 Employment**

The vast majority of employed Deaf people work in open employment situations in Australia and have the same employment potential as their hearing peers, but experience significant barriers to full participation in the workforce. In summary form, the key concerns are as follows:

- Deaf workers tend to be more adversely affected than workers in general in periods of economic decline
- Deaf people tend to earn less than their hearing peers
- Whilst Deaf people are represented across many work industries, and they can, and do, perform many responsible jobs in society, Deaf people continue to be proportionally better represented in ‘blue collar’ jobs (manual trades such as carpentry, manufacturing work, printing, leather work, baking, tailoring and dress making). This is largely due to communication difficulties and educational deficits which have not been ameliorated by practices and policies to date in Australia. This is also the sector of industry that is declining due to automation, out-

sourcing, trade agreements etc, whilst information processing and retail industries are on the rise (retail, education, health care and the like) but these industries are not as accessible to Deaf people, and also require a higher level of education

- Superfluous requirements in job descriptions often disadvantage Deaf people, who might be able to perform the actual job task competently, but an additional and not integral job description requirement (such as ‘good verbal skills’, when it is not actually necessary for the position) excludes their ability to perform competitively in the application process
- Deaf people proportionally experience unemployment and underemployment at more significant rates than hearing people, with promotions and career paths not easily accessed
- There are also some serious deficits in supporting Deaf school students transitioning to the workforce (those who do not go on to higher education) - particularly students that drop out of school are at risk of juvenile delinquency and get lost in the system – this is particularly a problem in regional Australia
- Interpreters are not provided for the full range of requirements a Deaf employee or a Deaf applicant may have in maintaining or seeking employment, thus disadvantaging the Deaf person. Professional development and training opportunities are limited, and opportunities to participate in OH & S activities, performance appraisals etc on a fully equitable basis may be limited also
- The lack of interpreting support for Deaf employees and job seekers are a critical barrier to full economic participation for Deaf people in the community. There is little government funding in the states and territories for employment specific interpreting; the cost of interpreting is considerable; and in many cases the demand for interpreters is not met by the current supply available in most states and territories

- Workplace modification and subsidy schemes initiated and conducted by the federal government do not currently accommodate the need for Deaf job seekers to have on the job interpreting support and interview support. With communication in the workplace a key issue for a new employee/a job applicant, this oversight in the current framework is astonishing and continues to cause Deaf job seekers and workers anxiety, frustration and distress in seeking, obtaining and maintaining employment
- Employment agencies that are not specifically targeted to meeting the needs of Deaf clients are often unable to meet the special requirements of Deaf clients, cannot communicate directly with their clients, and are unwilling in many cases to provide expensive interpreting support for case management and interview purposes. This sets up a negative service framework which is continued by case managers into interviews with employers and new employment environments, where the communication needs and interpreting support requirements of Deaf people are overlooked or ignored
- Those employment agencies that are geared to provide good services to Deaf clients are often disadvantaged by their choice of target group as case based funding and other block individual funding allocations for employment support services are at a rate that does not allow for additional communication support expenses, meaning Deaf-specific employment agencies are unfairly burdened with additional costs not incurred by other agencies
- The range of the employment opportunities for Deaf people should be broader, given the scope and potential in a modern society that celebrates diversity, however the fact remains that the larger employers of Deaf people that provide an accessible work environment for Deaf employees are government departments and large corporations. This is due to the costs of interpreting expenses and other workplace

modifications for Deaf employees that smaller businesses and employers cannot or will not bear the costs of, despite federal legislation such as the DDA which should favour the employment of Deaf people in the wider community. The reality of the employment situation however is that most Deaf people in the workforce actually work in small to medium sized businesses who are often unaware, or unwilling, or incapable of providing appropriate support to Deaf employees

- Many well educated Deaf professionals work in Deaf owned businesses or in social service agencies that provide services to Deaf people. Career options can be limited due to the lack of access, opportunity and career path in mainstream employment, but also by virtue of the fact that remaining in 'cottage industries' such as deafness resources organisations that are typically small organisations, they are also limited in terms of career opportunities by the size, scope and organisational culture of these cottage industries
- Much of the literature on the economic impact of deafness points to the additional costs incurred by deafness itself (purchase of technology, amplification devices etc), plus the compounding factor that family incomes for Deaf people are typically below those of the general population. The economic penalty attributable to deafness is therefore very high

The Deaf community is a sector of the Australian demographic who are very capable citizens of society and can be competitive job-seekers, however, they are frequently underestimated and under-resourced by employers and case managers of employment services; face communication constraints in negotiating the labour market; fall prey to ignorance, prejudice and economic conditions; have restricted social contacts that might limit job networking; and are at the whim of government policies that do not provide this population with the appropriate range of access and support required to compete in the modern Australian labour market.

## .5 Legal provisions

Although not legally recognised, Auslan has been acknowledged as a valid language by the Australian Federal Government in the Australian Language and Literacy Policy:

*It is now increasingly recognised that signing deaf people constitute a group like any other non-English-speaking language group in Australia, with a distinct sub-culture recognised by shared history, social life and sense of identity, united and symbolised by fluency in Auslan (Dawkins, 1991).*

ASLIA National firmly believes in and promotes the Deaf person's right to **appropriate** communication access. This means not just providing any Auslan (Australian Sign Language) interpreter in order for a Deaf person to attend a class or a meeting, but to ensure the correct interpreter is provided that meets the needs and individual requirements of the service users.

Appropriate interpreter matching is no easy task. It is not simply a matter of Deaf people being choosy or particular about only wanting a small pool of interpreters to work with them. The Deaf person has many and varied needs and that means interpreters need to be carefully selected to match each and every assignment. This means that one interpreter who may work for a Deaf client on a regular basis in a classroom may not be the right interpreter in a different situation requiring different skills, for example, interpreting at a staff meeting, or in a medical appointment.

The Deaf person is incredibly dependent on the interpreter to ensure complete communication access. Although NAATI qualified interpreters are bound by a code of ethics, many workplaces that employ interpreters do not monitor their interpreters to ensure they abide by the appropriate code of practice, nor do many employers have in place quality assurance measures to ensure interpreters are working to an appropriate standard that is acceptable to their service users.

In fact, many agencies and individuals who book interpreters for Deaf clients have no understanding, or only a limited knowledge, of interpreters skill levels and abilities, and the needs of the Deaf client requesting an interpreter and how these issues impact on each other. Asking the consumer their opinion and encouraging them to stipulate their preferences is a vital way of ensur-

ing consumer satisfaction and is a basic courtesy that should be extended to Deaf people who are accessing a communication service.

Deaf people do not select interpreters purely on their specific skills and abilities in interpreting or in either target language, although these play a major part in choice of appropriate interpreter. Additionally, issues such as interpersonal skills, professionalism, presentation, educational background, knowledge of the subject, relationship with the client, work history, gender and the clarity/ease with which the interpreter is able to successfully make him or herself understood to the Deaf individual concerned, are all significant considerations in allocating an interpreter to an assignment. This is why Deaf people should be given the right to choose an interpreter who meets their needs in a specific setting.

Although at all times NAATI accredited interpreters should be used in interpreting situations, it is not sufficient to simply provide an interpreting service. Interpreters are human beings and their skills vary markedly from one to another, as do their personalities. Matching an appropriate interpreter to an assignment is critical to the success of the assignment and the satisfaction of all parties. It is not possible for Deaf people to participate fully and equally in a situation when an inappropriate interpreter has been booked. Inappropriate should not be read to mean incompetent — the person may have all the requisite linguistic and interpretation skills to perform the duties expected of him/her in that assignment, but still may not be an appropriate interpreter due to other factors as noted above.

It could be argued that it in some instances it might be preferable to not provide a service at all than to provide an inadequate/inappropriate service, which can negatively impact on participants, or lead to false assumptions by one party that all is well with the communication exchange. However, agencies not providing interpreters at all, will incur vicarious liability, and therefore ASLIA promotes the use of suitable and well-qualified Auslan interpreters in **all** interactions where comprehension of communication is desirable.

Australians have a legislative responsibility and a requirement to ensure Deaf people can access goods and services, and participate in employment and education in a manner that is not less

equitable than non-Deaf people. The cost of providing such a service cannot be raised as an issue or an excuse for denying the service, or for providing a service of lesser quality unless "unjustifiable hardship" can be demonstrated as a legitimate argument.

This means agencies and organizations must ensure that at all times, *an appropriate, good quality interpreting service is provided to Deaf people*. In fact, the Disability Discrimination Act (1992) clarifies that providing an actual physical interpreting service to a Deaf person is not the only consideration, but also that such a service cannot be provided in an unfair manner, or on unfavourable terms and conditions. A Deaf person should at no time be expected to pay for their own interpreter when accessing goods or services, and many agencies, such as Commonwealth, State and Local Government services, have a clear legal and moral mandate to provide interpreters to Deaf people and to incur the costs of such a transaction.

A Deaf person's entitlement to an interpreter, then, is more complex than it initially appears. An inappropriate interpreter can ultimately prevent or inhibit effective communication access, and therefore participation for the Deaf person. Accommodations provided under the DDA must be effective.

The Department of Crown Law states, "It would be *generally* correct to say that where a formally accredited interpreter is used, the Government agency has taken all due and reasonable care". To this end, use of an accredited interpreter at all times, as a minimum measure is a must, however the most appropriate communication access via the most suitably qualified interpreter is the best option. The simplest way to ensure this occurs is by negotiating directly with the Deaf service user and recognizing that they have a far more intimate understanding of their specific needs in different settings and are able to recommend the interpreter which best suits them in that environment. Respecting individual difference and the right to choose is a basic human right, which should not be denied to Deaf people.

## 2 The interpreting profession

### 2.1 Where are we at?

The field of sign language interpreting has been described as an "emerging" profession (Scott Gibson, 1992; Witter-Merithew & Johnson, 2004) and this is certainly an apt description of the Aus-

tralian context of sign language interpreting (Napier, 2004b; Spring, 2000). Ozolins and Bridge (1999) and Flynn (1985) provide historical information on the development of the profession in Australia, as do historical records highlighting the evolution of Deaf Societies in Australia. Deaf Societies have been the main provider of community-based interpreting services to the Deaf community in the last one hundred years in Australia, initially in an ad hoc manner, and in more recent years within a more formal service delivery framework (Bon-tempo & Hodgetts, 2001).

Sociological accounts of early Deaf lives in Australia also allude to the work and contributions of pseudo-interpreters (Branson & Miller, 1995). Additional published research on Auslan interpreting and related issues by Madden (2001), Napier and Adam (2002), Leneham and Napier (2003); Napier and Barker (2003; Napier & Barker, 2004); Banna (2004); Conlon and Napier (2004); Napier and Cornes (2004); and Leneham (2005); as well as numerous individual contributions by Napier (2002, 2004, 2005) and a region specific textbook soon to be published Napier, McKee & Goswell (2005) have strengthened the knowledge and understanding of the local context in recent years.

This growing body of research has shaped the academic development of the field in Australia in recent years. The academic endeavour of the sector has been significantly influenced by the establishment in 2002 of the first post-graduate University degree program specifically for accredited Auslan interpreters, to further advance their skills and qualifications, at Macquarie University in New South Wales, Australia (Napier, in press). A sea-change is occurring in the interpreting field in Australia as we move from primarily a community based interpreting industry with little academic foundation supporting and guiding members, to one that is increasingly requiring higher standards in training and greater academic knowledge and research to support interpreting practice.

Auslan interpreters are accredited by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) – a body which accredits translators and interpreters in spoken languages, as well as in Auslan/English – and testing has taken place since 1982 in Auslan/English (Flynn, 1996). Independent testing of skills still takes place today, and interpreters do not have to



undertake formal training if they do not wish to, instead choosing to sit a video examination consisting of questions on culture and ethics, and two dialogues between Deaf and hearing people (content of paraprofessional level test only) to gain their accreditation.

Interpreter training courses have been available in various Technical and Further Education (TAFE) colleges around Australia since the first interpreter trainer course at Central TAFE in Perth, Western Australia in 1986 (Bontempo & Hodgetts, 2001), and many practitioners now undertake training rather than just sitting a NAATI test.

Interpreter associations such as the Australian Sign Language Interpreters Association (ASLIA) have been in existence in various forms at state level for approximately 20 years, and the current national membership stands at 250. The formalized roles of an accreditation authority for Auslan interpreters and an association for practitioners have supported the professionalisation of the field in Australia in recent years. Despite these various developments however, the fact remains that there is a paucity of research on Auslan interpreting; the linguistics of Auslan (Johnston, 2000) and the community and culture of Australian Deaf people in general.

## 2.2 A profile of the profession

A total of 722 Auslan interpreters have been accredited by NAATI between November 1982 and June 2005 (Bell, personal communication, 2005). Of these, 630 were accredited at paraprofessional level and 92 at Interpreter level. Auslan interpreters in Australia are currently accredited by NAATI as Paraprofessionals (formerly known as level 2) or Interpreters (formerly known as level 3), and the competencies and work contexts differ for each level of accreditation. Whilst Auslan interpreters typically work in simultaneous mode, we do not as yet have NAATI accreditation available at an elite level of practice as Conference Interpreters. A conference interpreter level as highlighted in spoken language interpreting research is a higher and more skilled level of practice than that recognized currently in Auslan interpreters, even if some are currently functioning at that elite standard.

The aforementioned figure of 722 interpreters does not take into account deceased accredited practitioners or those who are now living overseas, nor is it representative of the number of practitioners working in the industry

today. Practicing qualified interpreters are estimated to be in the region of 250-300, although it is impossible to accurately pinpoint this figure. Also, unqualified interpreters are working in some states and territories due to increasing demand for interpreters outstripping the supply available, particularly in the educational interpreting sector.

A demographic survey of 125 NAATI accredited Auslan interpreters by Napier and Barker (2003) found that most respondents were female (83%); accredited at paraprofessional level by NAATI (70%); and predominantly aged between 26-45 years. The majority (77%) held post-secondary qualifications of some type, however less than half of those held University qualifications (48% completed, or working towards). Less than half the respondents had undertaken formal interpreter training, largely due to the lack of availability of courses in Australia. Courses have only been available since 1986, and even then, not in all 8 states or territories, and not in every year. A little fewer than half the respondents reported working mostly in education settings as interpreters, with the majority of the accredited Auslan interpreters working in educational interpreting qualified at the paraprofessional level. Napier and Barker (2003) expressed concern that a large number of respondents to their survey (41%) reported working in University settings interpreting for Deaf people, without having University qualifications themselves.

Those not working in educational contexts typically work in a casual capacity as community interpreters, with most of the work again being undertaken by paraprofessionals due to sheer numbers (Ozolins & Bridge, 1999). Domains of work as a community interpreter include health and welfare; legal; meetings; finance and real estate; public events and media; politics; mental health and counseling; employment; and theatre interpreting. There can be considerable variation in form of interpreting (requirement for oral support; individual versus group interpreting; team interpreting; inclusion of a Deaf relay interpreter) as well as participants (deaf-blind; those with minimal language (various reasons) and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds), all of which add different dynamics to the work of the practitioner.

The fore-mentioned profile appears representative of the international scene

in sign language interpreting. Whilst some regions in the world are considerably in advance of Australia, such as North America and parts of Europe, the role of the sign language interpreter is effectively the same in these regions and the challenges presented by an evolving Deaf community; the need for better training; and significant demand and supply issues for the profession generally, appear to be common threads in our sector irrespective of region.

## 2.3 Interpreter training

TAFE colleges conduct language acquisition and paraprofessional interpreter training courses in Auslan/English nationwide (mostly at Diploma level, with Advanced Diploma level (Interpreter) courses previously conducted in Perth (2000) and Melbourne (2002-2005). Macquarie University (in Sydney, NSW on the eastern coast of Australia) is the only University in Australia offering training at postgraduate level for NAATI accredited interpreters with significant experience and employment history to advance their skills.

Most interpreter training courses and institutions operate autonomously and have developed their own assessment strategies in determining the suitability of prospective candidates for interpreter training. Exchange of information and knowledge by interpreter trainers themselves appears to function on an individual and ad hoc basis, rather than in any systemic or formal manner. No training is formally made available to interpreter trainers in Australia, and any undertaken is at individual whim and often at individual expense. Instruments for assessment and materials to resource students are typically designed by trainers, often in isolation, with little networking or peer review.

Australian courses are however based on a national competency based curriculum and therefore contain a degree of consistency and standard in regard to exit competencies and learning outcomes, even if there is variation 'on the ground' in terms of operational factors and logistics, such as student recruitment, course delivery, actual content and material, sequencing of skill development stages, qualifications and quality of teaching personnel, availability of suitable resources and equipment and so on. The curriculum for TAFE level courses essentially focus on content such as interpreting practice; ethics of the profession and language extension (specialized vocabulary for various interpreting settings).

The only University course available in Australia is open to accredited practitioners with experience, and contains core units on discourse analysis of Auslan; linguistics of Auslan; interpreting techniques; interpreting practice; and electives – advanced Auslan interpreting (specialized categories such as educational, legal or conference settings); theory and practice of translating and interpreting; social, language and cultural studies in deafness; community interpreting and translating; language and cultures in context; and cross-cultural pragmatics. Upon completion of the Postgraduate Diploma in Auslan/English interpreting, students can transfer to the Master of Arts in Translating and Interpreting. Other options at University level in Auslan/English interpreting include Postgraduate Certificate in Linguistics Research, and Doctor of Applied Linguistics.

The time limitations of current TAFE level interpreter training courses, which are typically one year part-time (entry level paraprofessional interpreter training, typically after completing 2 years full time, or 4 years part time, Auslan language acquisition classes at TAFE or other similar registered training organisations) in Australia, prevent trainers from being able to allocate time and resources to those students that don't meet certain degrees of competence in various domains at the time of course entry.

The struggles ill-equipped interpreter students face upon course entry and during the transition phase from 'language acquisition course' to 'interpreting course' are not unique to Australia, and are well documented elsewhere (Shaw, Grbic, & Franklin, 2004).

## 2.4 Recent achievements and future goals

### 2.4.1 Annual Winter-school

A traditional annual event of ASLIA, the **ASLIA National Winter School**, was held this year from 29-31 July 2005 in Cairns, Queensland. The conference covered an impressive range of issues in Auslan interpreting, addressing individual interpreting techniques, occupational health and safety issues, interpreter training, technical aspects, including: emerging technologies, interpreting in the arts, ethics and legal issues, team building, indigenous sign language culture and diversity and small business practices.

The program of this conference can certainly be described as innovative and

unlike previous years, the planning committee focussed on providing appropriate learning opportunities for participants by introducing concurrent sessions that would cater for both experienced and beginning practitioners alike. The majority of participants commented that the program was engaging and informative, and had "raised the bar" for future professional development programs for the sign language interpreting profession.

The number of participants in 2005 was 111, appreciably above the target for this year and certainly near the limit for the chosen venue. 77% of participants were Auslan/English Interpreters, 13.5% were Deaf Relay Interpreters and the remainder were consumers, students, teacher aides, a Japanese/English Interpreter and invited guests.

Participant feedback was strongly positive, with many aspects being described as "good" to "very good" (4/5 on a range of poor to excellent). A significant number of participants indicated that they have gained information that they will be able to use in their employment. Many participants highlighted the value of informal networking (information adapted from Final Report - Fayd'herbe, 2005).

A similar annual event is in the planning stages for 18-20 August 2006, to be held in Perth, Western Australia. The international keynote presenter at the next Winter-school will be Dr Elizabeth Winston, the Director of Project TIEM (Teaching Interpreting Educators and Mentors) at Northeastern University in Boston, MA, USA. A teacher of linguistics, interpretation, and educational interpreting nationally and internationally, Dr Winston is also a well-published author on educational interpreting and on mentoring issues for sign language interpreters and it is an honour to have her join us at Winter-school 2006 in Perth, Western Australia.

Other features of the next Winter-school will be: Interpreter trainer workshops; the JW Flynn address; Papers on interpreting research; Practical workshops and activities for interpreter skill development; the ASLIA National AGM; and networking opportunities for delegates.

### 2.4.2 National Representative Council

In addition to the national executive of ASLIA which consists of 7 individuals hailing from 6 different states and terri-

ories across the nation, a recent decision to appoint up to two representatives from each state and territory as liaison points between the national body and state branches, has been implemented. The national representative council was appointed in response to a need for ASLIA National to become a more nationally representative association, both geographically and in terms of our practitioner accreditation profile.

### 2.4.3 Short-term future plans

In terms of the year ahead for ASLIA, in the short term, we are focussing on strategic planning to direct our association over the next year and into the immediate future; seeking funding to establish a secretariat position for ASLIA National to allow for more effective functioning as an association; re-branding the association to raise the profile of our association and to position ourselves nationally and internationally to be clearly recognisable as the body representing the needs and interests of practitioners; establishing a database of local research on Auslan and interpreting; and we will be drafting more policies on specific work conditions for practitioners. We anticipate being extremely active in regard to advocacy for our membership.

As the practitioner association representing the needs and interests of Auslan interpreters in Australia, ASLIA National has put forward a number of specific proposals, or developed projects in regard to specific aspects of training and accreditation. We are constrained from detailed comment at this point, however, we are confident our current and further proposed partnerships, if successful, will be mutually beneficial and will allow benchmarks of best practice to be developed nationally in terms of training and accreditation. The main objectives of our various proposals and projects are as follows:

- To provide consultancy and feedback on training modules
- To develop a certification process for evaluating and accrediting Deaf Relay Interpreters and conference level interpreters

At this stage we are awaiting further advice regarding some of our projects underway, and our current proposal to another body is under consideration.

In a separate issue, we were recently invited to sit on the national reference group of a newly established National

Auslan Interpreter Booking Service for medical interpreting, and we look forward to having input into interpreting services in this way.

In these ways, ASLIA National represents members at a national level and deals with systemic issues affecting practitioners.

#### 2.4.4 Long-term future plans

In terms of long-term future plans, ASLIA National has identified the following key issues requiring attention:

- Need not only a greater pool of practitioners to meet the current supply and demand problem; but also a greater pool of *competent* practitioners within that group able to handle the diversity and the challenge of the more complex work (i.e., currently we have a large number of accredited practitioners in theory, but few who are still in the industry, and competent to manage the extent of work available with confidence (regardless of self-perception in ability). Even amongst those in practice, the vast majority are paraprofessionals not Interpreters)
- Strategies to increase capacity to meet increasing demand in the education sector - across primary, secondary and tertiary levels.
- Corresponding training to practice in the fore-mentioned education fields.
- Training tailored to meet the emerging demand for interpreters working in employment settings, particularly in the professional/corporate sector - domains previously not accessed due to barriers faced by Deaf people in education and employment.
- Establishment of Conference Interpreter accreditation level.
- More geographically accessible University based Interpreter level training (via satellite campuses in different states if from current University provider; or via alternate providers in each state if necessary).
- Proper consideration given to licensure of interpreters, leading to ability to strike off practitioners in cases where warranted.
- Professional development mandates.
- Greater strength and increased membership of the practitioner association (i.e. ASLIA).
- Greater collaboration with the spoken language interpreting sector on

issues of mutual concern and interest.

- An emphasis on research effort in the sector to draw together empirical and rational data to support best practice in the field in Australia
- Better entry level recruitment strategies to reduce attrition rate from courses and the profession generally.
- Accreditation issues - an enquiry into the current situation regarding the serious over representation of Paraprofessional interpreters, to address concern over current industry practice that favours the use of Paraprofessionals over Interpreters because it's more cost-effective and cheaper.
- Indigenous Auslan/Relay Interpreters Recruitment
- National mentoring program for interpreters
- Recognition and lobbying by Deaf organisations for higher standards of training and service.
- Government recognition regarding the need for appropriate training and pathways from school to TAFE to University and even from 'experience' to formal training and qualification.
- Career paths established and appropriate remuneration for qualifications and experience.
- Public recognition for the need for professional interpreters.
- Spoken language and sign language interpreter associations working together.
- Enquiries into:
  - National Pay Rates and Working Conditions
  - Agency Code of Conduct and employment processes
  - Complaints/ grievance procedure & investigations for allegations of official misconduct or a breach of Code of Ethics.

#### 2.5 Expectations of a world body for SLIs

The establishment of a worldwide professional association has the potential to affect the further professionalisation of sign language interpreting, in terms of standards for training, testing, and accreditation. The day may come when there are international guidelines for interpreter education program content,

service provision, ethical conduct, and—in particular— research agendas. Research is the key to furthering the profession.

WASLI can play an important role in the dissemination of information on interpreting research and publications, including the translation of various research into English.

In effect WASLI could operate as a 'clearing house' for information from national associations. With more research and information sharing, more nations would be able to reflect on and review their own training, testing, and accreditation systems.

Countries with less established systems could be supported in the development of their own professional infrastructure. (Although Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States have adopted similar models, these will not necessarily be suitable for all nations, and members of the interpreting community in those three countries should be mindful of not imposing existing systems on other cultures). Developing countries in particular should be supported by WASLI in the establishing sign language interpreting associations, training programs, assessment procedures and regulation of the profession. This may include applications for funding, lobbying of local governments, and 'train the trainer' courses.

#### 2.6 Support for others

- ASLIA National would be happy to share their guidelines policies, and protocols with other sign language interpreting associations and WASLI.
- Unfortunately due to the youth of the organisation and its small membership, ASLIA National are currently not in a position to provide financial support to other countries. However, if this situation changes in the future, then ASLIA National would be pleased to support emerging sign language interpreting professions wherever possible.
- ASLIA National recognises the potential for delivering training workshops and mentoring to sign language interpreters (especially in the Asia-Pacific/ Oceania region), and to to share professional development resources, such as: videos of workshops, training resources, etc.



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## Austria From ÖGSDV



The Austrian federation of Sign language Interpreters (ÖGSDV) was founded in 1998. Today we have 61 full members in seven regions of Austria. The majority are working as freelancers. In most parts of Austria there are no companies managing interpreting assignments or supplying sign language interpreters. The organisation of the appointments is made by each interpreter.

Also, because of the recognition of our sign language in June 2005, there is a growing acceptance, interest and need for interpreters. For that reason we see, that there are not enough interpreters working full time right now.

At the moment there are three ways to become a sign language interpreter in Austria:

University of Graz (Styria): study sign language and a second language as an interpreter. This lasts for a minimum of four years.

College to become a sign language interpreter in Linz, which takes three years (began 2 years ago)

“Individual way”: For people with high sign language skills (CODAs) the ÖGSDV tries to offer workshops and traineeship possibilities to prepare these people for the job.

After the completion of one of these three “curricula” it is necessary to pass the “profession amplitude exam” held by the ÖGSDV in cooperation with the University of Graz. This allows the individual to work as sign language interpreter and possible for them to become a member of ÖGSDV.

Members have a ÖGSDV card, which guarantees quality and validity for three years. After three years the member has to show that he/she has done 15 hours of further training, has worked actively as a sign language interpreter and has participated at a certain amount of meetings of the ÖGSDV.

Since July 2004 the daily news is presented in sign language once a day. In Austria we have no deaf sign language interpreters.

## Brazil By Ricardo Sander



Sign Language research in Brazil started in the late 70's by a linguist name Lucinda Britto, with a native indigenous group called Urubu Kaapor, up from the north of the Amazon area, which use sign language to their deaf people. As well she researched deaf people sign language in urban areas, like São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. After the years of confusion of Total Communication from 1980 – 1990, Brazil's deaf communities started a new era. With the inclusion of deaf people in the Universities, in 1992, with interpreter, as well the first national meeting of interpreters from all Country, in that year, in Rio de Janeiro and with the support of the Brazilian Federation of the Deaf (FENEIS), was given the start of a better live for the deaf in Brazil and for the interpreter.

However only in April 2002, LIBRAS - Brazilian Sign Language - becomes official and legal in our Country. Today life for deaf people becomes better every day, not only for the legal support they have because of Libras, but also because of the increase of courses for sign language interpreters.

I muss say that deaf people are being more and more respected for their language, their identity, their culture and their needs, and consequently the same for the interpreters.

- What is the Sign Language of your Nation? Do you have more than one Sign Language?

Brazil has officially one sign language, named LIBRAS – Brazilian Sign Language. However the indigenous tribe Urubu Kaapor have their sign language.

- What is/are the spoken language/s of your Nation?  
Portuguese. Brazil is the only Portuguese spoken Country in the entire America Continent.
- What type of education is available to Deaf people in your Nation?

All types of Education, from kindergarten through University level; master and PhD programs with interpreters, at public and private universities. However, Brazil government educational systems adopted recently the inclusive educational system, which comprehends deaf students in regular classrooms, mostly in public elementary and high schools, and some with interpreters. However deaf people and the majority of hearing people who understand the reality of bilingualism are against the inclusive public system. Some inclusive schools have interpreters for their deaf students and others the teacher use broken Brazilian sign language.

In the southernmost states of the Country, public and private schools for the deaf use Libras as their first and more important language. The Brazilian Federation of the Deaf (FENEIS) is working towards the acceptance and respect to Libras, bilingualism, identity and deaf rights in all Country.

- What types of jobs do Deaf people hold in your Nation?

The majority works manual types of work, because of little study. But you can find a good number of deaf people in all kinds of professions like engineering, computing programmers, and specially in the area of teaching in deaf schools. We have several deaf who completed their Masters and or PhD program with the use of interpreters.

- Are there laws in your Nation to protect, and/or provide services to Deaf people?

Yes. Since 2002, when the Brazilian sign language was officially recognized many other laws towards people with specials needs were also created.

- Are there laws about interpreters in your Nation? If yes, please explain them.

Yes. Brazil has a law on accessibility, where in is clear about the used of sign language and/or interpreter always when needed. However, there is no law about curses for interpreters in University level.

The first sign language interpreter courses in University level started this year, one in Sao Paulo and another in Rio de Janeiro.

Brazil is a huge Country and there is a great need for more Universities to offer courses for sign language interpreter.

- Current overview of what is happening in your country.

I would say that finally the new interpreters would have the opportunity to go to a university to be able to study all the apparatus of knowledge and praxis on interpreting.

However, I think that the Brazilian Federation of the Deaf should and could have done more support and understanding about interpreters and associations for them.

- The number of Sign Language interpreters (part-time/full-time)

The total is just an estimation of my own. There are not official numbers. In Sao Paulo state we have around 200 interpreters, at least, but in the whole Country I could easily come up to a thousand. This would include all kinds of interpreters (oral and sign language interpreters), all in educational setting and situations.

Most of the interpreters started in their Churches, and still do volunteering also in all the social area, where is need. More and more interpreters are having their income by interpreting only, like me.

There are officially only four sign language interpreter associations in Brazil. We meet only virtually.

The Association of Sao Paulo will have their first congress next February 2006.

The Association of sign language interpreters of Sao Paulo is named APILS-BESP – Associação dos Intérpretes e Guia-intérpretes da Língua de Sinais Brasileira do Estado de São Paulo. (Association of Sign Language Interpreters and Guide blind Interpreters of Brazilian Sign Language of the State of Sao Paulo). We have also interpreters for deaf blind in our Association. We have around 120 members.

Interpreter training: At what level is the training if any (University or lower) How many centres are there in your Country?

There are today (2005) two Universities only, which offer a course of University level, to train interpreters. Those courses are new and nobody have many experience yet. But the majority of the interpreters who work today had none or very few training.

Do you have a testing system to decide who is qualified to interpret in your Nation?

No. However the Brazilian Federation of the Deaf (FENEIS), in their regional offices offers a very basic exam for all the future official interpreters.

Most important events for your association/etc. in the past year?

The first and only time interpreters' nation wide ever meet was in 1992, in Rio de Janeiro, with the support of the Brazilian Federation of the Deaf, and only then. After that, the interpreters would meet only restricted in their state or city they live.

Most important events for the situation of Sign Language interpreters in your country (for example the recognition of the national Sign Language, of the profession, Particular Training courses, etc.)

April 2002 the official recognition of the Brazilian Sign Language (LIBRAS). We don't have yet the official recognition of the sign language interpreter's profession.

Goals of your association/etc. for the coming year/s

The Association of Sao Paulo will have their first Congress in February 2006, and in 2007 a national meeting of all interpreters of Brazil.

What is needed for sign language interpreting to develop?

Understanding and support from the Brazilian Federation of the Deaf (FENEIS), to incentive and support the creation of associations for sign language interpreters.

What are your expectations of a world body and how can they support you?

All can be possible when different people, from different places, and different cultures aim the same goals. Everyone has something that can make the difference for somebody else in this world.

Brazil is a huge Country. We have 8.523.000km<sup>2</sup> and we are almost 180 million people living in this rich Country. Please do not under estimate what I say. We do have a rich culture, languages, natural resources and a people with an open heart. We can help in many ways so that WASLI becomes effectively a solid international entity for the benefit of many interpreters. Tell us what we can do, in what way we can help and how.

[ricsander@uol.com.br](mailto:ricsander@uol.com.br)

## Cameroon By D.W.C. Penn



### REPORT ON DEAF COMMUNITY AND SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETATION IN CAMEROON

There are approximately 20,000 deaf people living in Cameroon.

Given the multilingual nature of Cameroon, there are mainly 3 sign systems being used in Cameroon at the moment: The American Sign Language, the French Sign Language and the Natural Sign System also called the Cameroon Sign Language (CSL).

#### THE AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE

The American sign language was brought to Cameroon by Dr. Andrew Jackson Foster, a Deaf African American Missionary who founded the Ephraïm institute for the Deaf in Kumba, Cameroon in 1977.

#### THE FRENCH SIGN LANGUAGE

The French Sign Language which is used in the Fracophone part of Cameroon was introduced by the French who founded the Ecole specialisee pour enfants Deficients Auditifs (ESEDA) in Yaounde, Cameroon.

#### THE NATURAL SIGN SYSTEM ALSO CALLED CSL

The Natural Sign System also called The Cameroon Sign Language (CSL) is used mostly by Deaf people who did not have the chance to attend school for one reason or the other. This natural Sign language is also used by parents and relatives of the Deaf who do not know any standardized sign system. The Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organisation is currently working to standardize the CSL as the language of all the Deaf in Cameroon. We believe that the CSL will facilitate communication among the Deaf and their families and relatives and also facilitate the work of the interpreters.

There is no government schools for the Deaf yet, but with the sensitization campaigns that are being carried out by the Cameroon Deaf Empowerment Organization and the National association for the Deaf, there are hopes that the situation will change. In fact for some time now, when the Head of State addresses the nation there is

someone who interprets for the deaf as a result of these sensitization.

### **SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETATION IN CAMEROON**

There are few well-trained Sign Language interpreters, and of course there is no association for sign language interpreters in Cameroon. Most of those who interpret for the deaf in various circumstances are actually teachers for the Deaf who know how to sign. Some of the professional interpreters we have are not well-paid and sometimes are not paid at all for the services they render because those they interpret for simply cannot afford the cost of this service. Because of this situation, some of the interpreters end up choosing more lucrative professions or carriers. But we think that this situation can change if the interpreters come together to form an association where they can sensitize the general public and our government even more on the need for sign language interpreters in various administrative units. This could also improve on the financial situation of the interpreters. After attending the WASLI conference in S.A. I came back home to Cameroon to see how we can work in partnership with other Interpreters associations in the world to form The Cameroon Association of Sign Language Interpreters (CASLI). With such an association in place we will provide training for more interpreters, campaign for the Deaf (many of whom are marginalized even in their own families) and improve on the situation of the Deaf and the interpreters themselves. Whatever assistance from the WASLI or any organization working for the deaf is welcome.

### **Canada From AVLIC**



#### **Facts About Canada**

An estimated ten percent of Canadians have some form of hearing loss and an estimated two percent of Canadians use a form of signed language to communicate. Canada is the second largest country geographically in the world, and has a total population of 32 000 000 people.

Canada has two official signed languages: American Sign Language (ASL) and Langue des Signes Québécoise (LSQ).

Canada has two official spoken languages: English and French

Education for Deaf Canadians is covered by government up until the age of 19. College and university tuition is paid by the individual, unless funding is found to cover cost of tuition, books, etc. Accessibility (e.g., interpreters, note takers, etc) is provided at no cost to Deaf and hard of hearing students who qualify for Disability Support Funding. If the student is not eligible for funding, the cost for these services is covered in different ways depending on the province and the specific institution. Deaf people hold a variety of professional (teacher, lawyer, counsellor, etc.) positions as well as non-professional (secretary, mechanic, clerk, etc.) positions. However, Deaf people are either unemployed or under-employed at a significantly higher rate than hearing Canadians.

Canada has the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms that protects persons with disabilities from discrimination. Although discrimination still exists, the Charter has been used to defend Deaf people's rights to interpretation.

Canada's current major political challenges are meeting public demands for quality improvements in health care and education services.

#### **Country Report**

AVLIC has approximately 450 Active members. AVLIC is aware that this does not reflect the entire number of people working as interpreters in Canada, especially at the primary education level.

AVLIC is the national professional interpreting association with eight regional chapters across the country. There are currently four interpreter education programs in Canada ranging in duration from two to four years.

Our national testing system, the Canadian Evaluation System (CES), is currently being revised and will be made up of four stages: Written Test of Knowledge, Preparation Phase, Test of Interpretation and Certification Maintenance. Canada currently has 46 certified members.

The most important events for AVLIC in the past year were the revisions of the CES and the Dispute Resolution Process (DRP).

The most important issues for interpreters in Canada include the: recognition by employers with regard to the importance of requiring interpreters to be trained and to be members of the professional association, funding to pay for interpreting services,

access to quality interpreter education programs,

demand and supply issues such as unequal access to enough quality interpreters in one region, and too many interpreters for the amount of work in another region,

challenges of inclusive education for Deaf people, and the demands for interpreters in the education setting,

lack of definition of qualifications for interpreters in inclusive settings,

working conditions and standards, and

the implementation of Video Relay Services and the impact that will have on our field.

AVLIC's goals include implementation of the revised CES and DRP. We are also focused on revising membership categories, encouraging increased numbers of interpreters to join AVLIC, and working collaboratively with national associations representing Deaf people. Title protection and legislated membership in AVLIC are needed for signed language interpreting to further develop in Canada. If more working interpreters are required by law to be members of AVLIC, more revenue can be generated by the national organization to spend on important initiatives to further develop the field of interpreting.

AVLIC's expectations of a world body and how it can assist us include creating links among all countries, shared discussion and support on issues of common concern at the national and international levels.

AVLIC can help others by the:

Sharing of expertise regarding lobbying for quality interpreter education programs,  
Sharing of expertise regarding lobbying of employers of interpreters,  
Development of standards of practice and of education,  
Sharing of our current knowledge base in the form of position papers and resource documents,



Consultation on screening and testing issues,  
 Consultation on effective collaboration with Deaf organizations,  
 Sharing of our documents as models, access to a wide base of talented interpreters,  
 Experience with two signed languages within one country and how to work together in this diverse climate.

## Denmark From FTT



### Facts about Denmark

Population: 4,7 mill. ~ 4.500 Deaf  
 Size of the country (km): 44.326 km<sup>2</sup>  
 The number of Sign Language interpreters (part-time/full-time): 138 full time, 32 part-time  
 The interpreter organization: how many members: 138 interpreters (26 only freelance)  
 Interpreter training: One year of basic training, learning sign language. After that 2,5 years interpreters training including 6 weeks practice with the interpreters as mentors.

### Country Report

There are now several different interpreter agencies throughout the country. FTT has a new role in keeping an eye on the working conditions in all these agencies and keeping us together as one group despite the competition. (2004)

The most important events for the situation of Sign Language Interpreters in Denmark:

The labour market for interpreters is more unstable with all the different agencies some of them without an agreement with the trade unions. (2004)  
 The extra competition between the agencies puts pressure on the price and the working conditions for the interpreters. (2004) A lot of the new interpreters are only offered freelance jobs.

The Deaf are starting to complain about some of the consequences of the changes in the interpreter field. It is more expensive now to order an interpreter if you live away from the larger cities. This can make it even harder to convince the local authorities that they should pay for an interpreter. It is difficult to ensure the quality of the interpreters. We should explain that the largest customer in Denmark paying for interpretation related to education is

using their power to play off one company against the others.

The students don't get to decide themselves what interpreter agency they prefer. Price is all that matters. So the user of the system and the payer is not the same therefore quality is not the focus point.

Goals of your association for the coming year:

The goals for the coming year in our association in Denmark is:

Improve communication amongst the members working for different employers. (2004)

Improve the awareness on interpreters working conditions among the new interpreters and the new agencies. (2004)  
 Get more members among the new interpreters. (2004)

To increase the portion of assignment where we work in pairs by interpreters and employers agreeing nationwide on what we define as a "2-interpreters-assignment". (2004).

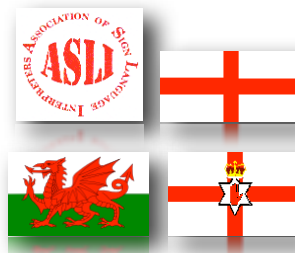
Now it should be to counteract the decrease in the number of "2- interpreter assignments". In many situations public authorities refuse to pay for more than one interpreter. Very sad since we have worked for years to increase the number in order to reduce the work-related injuries (2005)

Create a volunteer register for interpreters so that customers can check who is fully qualified and have passed the exams after the 3 ½ years education)

**MAKE SURE THAT WE STILL REPRESENT A PROFESSIONAL PROFESSION WITH A GOOD REPUTATION AND KEEPING GOOD STANDARDS SO THAT WE CAN STAY PROUD OF WHAT WE DO.**

## England, Wales & Northern Ireland

By Zane Hema



### STATISTICAL INFORMATION

The following information is for the United Kingdom, which includes England, Wales, Northern Ireland and

Scotland: The population is 59, 595, 900 over an area covering 241 752 km.  
 The currency is £ Sterling (GBP)

### INTERPRETERS AND INTERPRETER TRAINING

Number of Sign Language Interpreters as members of ASLI (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)

ASLI Licensed: 232

ASLI Associate: 82

(Other categories: 147)

Total 461

Figures correct as of September 2005

Number of Sign Language Interpreters registered by the Independent Registration Panel (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)

MOR: 214

Trainee: 40

Junior Trainee: 67

Total Registered 321

Figures correct as of July 2005

Legislation that affects Deaf People and Interpreters: Disability Discrimination Act 1995, Broadcasting Act 2001, Communications Bill 2003, Special Education Needs and Disability Act 2001

### Interpreter Training Centres and qualifications

University of Wolverhampton  
 BA BSL/English Interpreting (3 years)

University of Central Lancashire  
 Graduate Diploma BSL/English Interpreting (1 year)  
 Post Graduate Diploma BSL/English Interpreting (2 years part time)

University of Bristol  
 BSc BSL/English Interpreting (3 years)

University of Leeds  
 MA BSL/English Interpreting (2 years part time)

Sign language International Ltd.  
 Post Graduate Diploma BSL/English Interpreting (1 year part time)

### Interpreter Assessment Centres and National Vocational Qualifications

Durham University  
 NVQ Level 4 Programme

Sign Language International Ltd  
 NVQ Level 4 Language Units  
 NVQ Level 4 Interpreting Units

Holton Lee  
 NVQ Level 4 Language Units  
 NVQ Level 4 Interpreting Units



City Lit Centre for Deaf People  
NVQ Level 4 Language Units

University of East Sussex  
NVQ Level 4 Language Units

### **ASLI Calendar October 2004 – September 2005**

ASLI is one of several organisations to support the SENDA Conference in London – the Special Education Needs Disability Act Conference

ASLI works with the Independent Registration to develop policy on Registration Maintenance by completing a report on 'Hours an Interpreter works' and 'Should Reassessment be part of Registration Maintenance?'

The ASLI Mentor Training Programme kicks off in Brighton. This is the first of 3 weekends, the 'taster' weekend and those wishing to go on to train will complete the remaining 2 weekends.

ASLI continues to develop its involvement internationally with people sitting on the EFSLI Board and on the Working Group for the World Association.

The ASLI Professional Development Programme (APDP) continues to be a success and runs a successful weekend on 'International Sign' in Durham

The ASLI Regional Programme continues where the National Chair visited members in the more distant regions - in Belfast, Northern Ireland and in Exeter, Devon.

The ASLI Continuing Professional Development Programme (CPD) gets underway for the first time and Licensed Members submit documents to demonstrate their commitment to CPD

A record number of delegates attend the successful ASLI AGM Conference by the Tower Bridge in London. The National Chair, National Vice Chair and National Treasurer all step down.

ASLI launches its special fund, GIVING UP A DAYS PAY with the aim of raising money to support interpreters from developing countries to attend the International Conference in South Africa in Nov 2005.

The Annual National Executive Committee Away Weekend takes place in Wolverhampton. ASLI looks at working informally with Signed Performances in Theatre (SPIT)

First group of Interpreters trained as ASLI Mentors graduate and the ASLI APDP launches its 2005/2006 Programme

ASLI in conjunction with the Royal National Institute for the Deaf and the Community Fund launch their report "Abandoning the Profession"

### **Plans for 2005/2006**

Our plans are dictated by the ASLI business plan 2002 – 2005. The business plan was drafted in May 2002 and is informed by National Executive Committee and membership consultation. There are a number of important plans for 2005 /2006:

ASLI will host its own conference (1-2 April 2006) in Durham, England. The theme of conference is 'Contemplating Interpreting'.

ASLI will set up its own Secretariat in collaboration with the Institute of Translators and Interpreters (ITI)

ASLI will continue to develop its relationship with the Deaf community.

ASLI will continue to support its Deaf Interpreter Network in the further development of training and the registration of Deaf interpreters.

ASLI will continue the training of interpreters to become Mentors as part of the ASLI Mentoring and Mentor Training Programme. ASLI are working in conjunction with the Welsh Assembly to provide mentor training to 'apprentice' interpreters.

ASLI continues its own training programme for interpreters (APDP).

ASLI are working with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister exploring interpreter provision to Government departments.

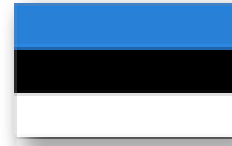
ASLI will be represented at the International Conference for Interpreters in South Africa in 2005.

ASLI will be represented at the EFSLI Conference in 2006.

Work will also be happening in other areas, by all accounts 2005/2006 looks to be another busy and exciting year.

Respectfully submitted.

## **Estonia From EVKTU**



There are 27 qualified sign language interpreters in Estonia and the number of Deaf people is approximately 1500. There is an association for sign language interpreters – Eesti Viipekeeled Tõlkide Ühing (EVKTÜ, Estonian Association of Sign Language Interpreters), which has currently 25 members. EVKTÜ is a full member of EFSLI.

Interpreting services in Estonia are provided by the local government and by educational system; the interpreters usually work in the interpreting centres at the Deaf Association or at the local Deaf societies.

Interpreter qualifications is provided according to the National Qualification Standard for Sign Language Interpreters. More information about sign language interpreters in Estonia available on our website: [www.evktu.ee](http://www.evktu.ee)

## **Finland By Jenni Laine**



### **Facts about our country:**

The population of Finland is 5,2 million. The percentage of Deaf people 0.001. There are some 5000 Deaf Sign Language users, 750 Deafblind people and 3000 Deafened people.

The Sign Language of our nation is Finnish Sign Language. Due to our history we have a Swedish speaking minority. As a result there are Swedish speaking Deaf people as well. This minority within the minority of Deaf people uses Finnish-Swedish Sign Language. The community of Deaf Swedish speaking Finns agree that their Sign Language is separate from Finnish Sign Language. Nevertheless, so far there no official opinion whether their Sign Language is separate from Finnish Sign Language or not.

The spoken languages of our Nation are Finnish, Swedish, Same and Roman (language of the Gypsy minority)

There are Deaf schools which provide education in Finnish Sign Language in

all major towns. The schools are not residential. Most pupils attend the school that is closest to their hometown. There is one high school which in which the courses are taught in Finnish SL. In addition there is a institute for Deaf people which offers senior secondary vocational level training. Other educational possibilities in SL include: vocational training for social services, Master's Degree in elementary school teaching, MA and BA in Finnish SL, MA in Finnish SL subject teaching, Bachelor's Degree in Finnish SL translation and interpreting. These days more and more Deaf students study with hearing students via SL interpreter especially after having finished comprehensive school education in Deaf schools.

Through the recognition of Sign Language as an official language and, the status of the Deaf people has improved and the educational and work related opportunities have enhanced. Traditionally Deaf people worked in manual labour settings such as in factories. These days more and more Deaf people have academic professions. Nowadays in addition to manual labour jobs Deaf people hold jobs in kindergartens, in Deaf schools as teachers or in other training institutions providing education in Finnish SL, in The Finnish Deaf Association, as translators or interpreters, in retirement homes for Deaf people or in other service and care institutions such as rehabilitation centres for Deaf people with multiple disabilities.

The Finnish constitution (1995) protects the needs of Deaf people. Finnish Sign Language is recognised in the constitution. Section 17 Finnish Constitution, Right to one's language and culture: "The rights of persons using sign language and persons in need of interpretation or translation aid owing to disability shall be guaranteed by an Act." The law also states that the rights of people using SL are guaranteed in social services, medical care, education, in court issues and while a Deaf person is dealing with authorities. In addition the law states that Finnish SL needs to be researched and promoted in national broadcasting. Each Deaf individual has 120 hours (minimum) or interpreting per year. Deaf-Blind people have 240 hours per year. In educational setting there is no limit in the amount of interpreting granted. The student gets as many interpreting hours as she/he needs.

SL interpretation is mentioned in law while considering broadcasting, social

services, leisure time activities, active involvement in the society, studying, court, police and dealing with authorities. When a Deaf person is in contact with the issues or authorities mentioned above the law guarantees the right for interpretation.

#### **Country report:**

The number of Sign Language interpreters (part-time/full-time) There are 650 registered Sign Language Interpreters, some 400 actively working.

The interpreter's organization is Suomen Viittomakielen Tulkit Ry. The Finnish Association of Sign Language Interpreters. We have approximately 400 members.

#### **Interpreter training:**

The training is in Polytechnic level and the Degree is equivalent to Bachelor's Degree. There are two training institutions that provide training: Diaconic Polytechnic (Diak) and Humanistic Polytechnic (Humak). It is possible to study SL interpreting in three different towns, Helsinki which is the capital of Finland (Humak), Turku on the west coast (Diak) and Kuopio in eastern Finland (Humak). The duration of the training is four years. The contents include Finnish Sign Language, Theory and Techniques for Consecutive and Simultaneous interpreting, Translation skills, Ethical issues, Deaf culture and history, service provision for Deaf people, communication and performance skills in Finnish language, foreign languages such as English and Swedish and issues related to professional conduct. The only qualifications needed are Degree in Sign Language interpreting, in other words the training program for SL interpreting and passing the exam of a national interpreting registry, which is normally included in the Degree Programme for SL interpreting.

#### **SVT – Finnish Association of Sign Language Interpreters 2004**

Main aim for 2004 was to successfully organize EFSLI AGM & Seminar with the theme: "Interpreting – Cooperation and Team Work" which also served as the theme for SVT in 2004. In order to achieve the goal above extensive cooperation among Organising Committee, members, Sign Language field organisations such as Interpreting Agencies and relevant Associations was required.

#### **Working Seminar for Sign Language Interpreter Trainers**

September 23 - 24, 2004 in Helsinki, Finland. Themes: Reflection for action

- how do we teach proactive interpreters in Europe? Reflection on action - how do we teach interpreters to evaluate interpreting in Europe?

#### **Master of Arts Degree in Sign Language**

Started for the first time in The University of Jyväskylä. The degree requires 2,5 years of full time study.

#### **Training for Sign Language Interpreters in Open Polytechnic**

Short training modules on several topics dealing with SL interpreting (3-5 days) provided by the Interpreting Training Units. Open to all interpreters.

#### **Sign Language Broadcasted on Digital TV Channel**

The digital TV channel YLE 24 launched a signed program on current affairs broadcasted twice a week (10 minutes). The news in Sign Language are broadcasted every day on analogical and digital channels (5 minutes). The Association of the hard of hearing recently advocated for having more subtitling on TV. At the moment commercial TV broadcasters don't provide any subtitling at all.

#### **The Finnish Deafblind Association's Communication Project**

Provided new information on tactile Sign Language: Johanna Mesch, 2004, Viitotaan yhdessä. Tietoa taktiillista viittomakielestä. (Lets sign together. Information on tactile Sign Language.) Riitta Lahtinen, 2004, Sujuva tulkkaus kuurosokeille. Selvitys kuurosokeiden tulkinkäytön kokemuksista. (Fluent interpretation for the Deaf Blind people. A study on the interpreting experiences of the Deaf-Blind people.)

Due to Finnish and European Union legislation the producers of public services nowadays need to be selected through bidding. The best bid in terms of quality and price effectiveness wins. For many years the public authorities have failed to comply with the legislation. Currently neglecting the bidding instructions is no longer an option. This development affects the field of Sign Language interpreting a great deal as in Finland the municipality pays for the interpreting service required by their Deaf habitants.

The outcome is that municipalities are re-structuring their Sign Language service provision and setting up joint bodies that take the responsibility of organising Sign Language interpreting services for a set area. The body is responsible for

organising the bidding and purchasing quality interpreting services for reasonable price. The body itself does not produce interpreting services but it buys them from service providers such as private or commercial interpreting agencies.

First interpreting service body is starting off in the capital area this autumn and another one will start in Tampere in the beginning of 2006. Other areas have similar plans. The main impact of this development is that as the interpreting services are bought from agencies interpreters need to be employed through agency. In other words freelance interpreters need to make contracts with agencies or set up their own agency of. This is a new situation in Finland. Previously an interpreter could be self-employed without being required to set up an interpreting business and simply send his/her bill directly to the social service office of the Deaf person she/he had interpreted for. In the future interpreters either work for an agency or run their own agencies. This means that the labour market situation is more straightforward.

Interpreters hope that the new structure will be more effective and that it will diminish the time spent over the phone bargaining for reasonable salary conditions. The interpreting service bodies may prove to create more stable working conditions for an individual interpreter as she/he will be able to focus in the core of the interpreting instead of labour market disputes.

#### **SVT – Finnish Association of Sign Language Interpreters 2005**

- Valentines Day campaign, "For your mate as well" funded EFSLI's Special Attendance Fund.
- The salary revision for the period February 16th 2005 to September 30th 2007 introduced some major improvements to free-lancer fees:
- The interpreter will be paid accordingly what s/he was booked for, not by how many minutes/hours s/he actually interpreted.
- The Demanding interpreter situation and the tactile interpretation were separated. Earlier the tactile situation was always paid as a complex interpreting situation so in case the situation itself was exceptionally challenging (conference, theatre etc.) there was no extra pay for that. Now the extra pay for the tactile interpretation is +25%.

- Several statements have been expressed by the board of SVT.

- The Member Newsletter Kielisilta was redesigned and updated. It now has a fine professional approach. By the request SVT has started marketing the Newsletter to other partners.

- A workshop for spoken language interpreters and sign language interpreters was held. As a result the interpreters agreed to organize a nationwide conference for interpreters in Helsinki, spring 2006. The theme of the conference will deal about securing the profession title *interpreter*. - Spring meeting decided about the SVTs strategy for international affairs.

- A Three day training Cruise for SVT's contact persons was held in June 10th to 12th. Local groups were active this year: training, field trips and other events were arranged.

- We have also provided our members legal assistance in the form of training.

#### **SVT Goals for 2006**

- A four day field trip to some European country to visit the interpreter community there will be hopefully arranged by SVT for the members.
- Conference with the spoken language interpreters will be held in Helsinki in March 25th - 26th
- The work with the Trades Union will be started in order to negotiate the terms and conditions of employment for the Finnish Sign Language Interpreters. More information provided on this in the attachment.

At the moment within the field of Sign Language interpreting there is a strong shift from freelance based work towards more stable working conditions. Interpreters are encouraged to set up their own agencies or work for already existing interpreting agencies. The result of more reliable working conditions hopefully is that instead of bargaining for pay the interpreters have the opportunity to focus and develop the essential interpreting skills which might lead into deeper understanding and appreciation of the profession.

We are in a process of defining our field of work. The aim of this work is gaining stronger influence towards authorities while matters linked to our profession are being decided. We believe that defining our work assist in achieving recognition for our profession.

We are considering the possibility of starting to look for ways of adopting testing system for interpreters.

What are your expectations of a world body and how can they support you?

We expect dissemination of information, research material in SL interpreting and knowledge in professional matters linked to SL interpreting. We wish to learn from other countries situations in SL interpreting field and promote international cooperation. We believe in sharing information and experiences.

What do you have that can help others?

We have experience in organising the SL interpreting service provision, in training interpreters and providing quality interpreting services. Our profession is well established. Therefore we have knowledge in ethical dilemmas affecting our work and in professionalism and professional conduct. Likewise we have experience in setting up and running interpreting agencies.

Contact Person for international affairs:

Jenni Laine

#### **Germany From BGSD**



#### **Facts about Germany:**

Germany comprises an area of 357.000 km<sup>2</sup> with a population of about 80 million people. Given a percentage of 0,01 % of congenitally deaf people, it is assumed that about 80.000 deaf people live in Germany. By a wider definition, the number of hearing impaired people probably amounts to about 180.000 (not including those who suffer from hearing impairment due to old age). Most of the Deaf tend to live in bigger cities like Hamburg, Bremen, Hannover, Berlin, Cologne, Essen, Leipzig, Dresden, Frankfurt, Stuttgart and Munich. The largest deaf population is said to be in the capital, Berlin.

There are approximately 460 sign language interpreters working in Germany, some full-time, some part-time, we don't have exact data about the percentage yet. As legal changes have been implemented, deaf people's demands for interpreters have increased. More and more interpreters complete a formal interpreter training course, so the num-



ber of full-time interpreters (most of them free-lance) is likely to grow every year.

The Federal Association of Sign Language Interpreters (BGSD) represents about 350 interpreters, about 75% of all sign language interpreters in Germany. Interpreters in 13 of 16 Federal States are organized in their own regional associations, some Federal States have two regional associations. We still have individual members who are not regionally organized (over 30), but there is strong debate about how much longer individual membership should be upheld. In Germany there are four full-time training programmes for sign language interpreters at degree level, (University of Hamburg, University of Applied Sciences Magdeburg, University of Applied Sciences Zwickau, Humboldt University of Berlin (new)), other part-time courses allow interpreters, who already have some work experience to prepare for an interpreting exam, the so-called "Staatliche Prüfung". By passing the exam they obtain a certification as Sign Language Interpreters by the State.

University programmes run for four to five years full-time starting from scratch, part-time training programmes run over two or three years, but include the prerequisite of good Sign Language competence. Contents of training programmes cover a wide range of issues, often the same as Sign Language interpreter curricula in Scandinavian countries. It is not possible to give a short description of the contents. In case of further interest contact our Board.

#### **Most important events for our association in the past year**

One of the most challenging tasks was the rewriting of our statutes, including several guidelines and internal rules. Besides the normal AGMs, we offered our members a platform called working conference, where we controversially discussed guidelines and contracts the association had negotiated in 2004 with important bodies and representatives (concerning the area of interpreting fees for doctors' appointments and assignments in the workplace). In cooperation with the National Deaf Association, we formulated and published a paper on the quality requirements and standards of Sign Language interpreters ("Quality standards for the training and examination of Sign Language Interpreters"), in order to secure good practice for our customers.

In June 2005, a new Board was elected, which also means that the leaders of the

different departments (Interpreter-training and retraining; working conditions & taxes, law, payment and social security; Public Relations; mediation) were newly elected. As the former Board had been in charge for a long time, there is quite a lot of work for the new crew who up until now struggle bravely through every day's email flood. For the first time since BGSD has been founded, there will be money for administration work done at our office. This is a big step. BGSD has an EFSLI representative again now, so hopefully, German members will get to know more about EFSLI in future.

#### **Most important events for German sign language interpreters in the past year**

In most Federal States new legislation concerning deaf people's right to use Sign Language when dealing with authorities has been implemented, but there still is a lot of diversity about how these guidelines are used and how well they are known. This also differs from State to State. So interpreters still have to fight and inform customers continuously to obtain - still insufficient - fees. The same is true for the mentioned contract and guidelines BGSD has worked on.

#### **Goals of our association for the coming year**

The goals for the BGSD for the coming year are to

- go on discussing our positions in dealing with working conditions and payment of sign language interpreters with relevant institutions,
- distribute our paper "Quality standards for the training and examination of sign language interpreters" dealing with interpreter training programmes in Germany approved by the BGSD to a wider audience, with the aim that only interpreters providing good quality get assignments,
- discuss opinions concerning "adequate fees" on this year's working conference in November,
- review our Code of Ethics,
- offer mediation services to members and customers if financially possible,
- establish stronger networking bonds between us and AIIC (International Association of Conference Interpreters) (delegates from BGSD being invited to their AGM just now).

#### **PRESENTATION TOPIC OF THE YEAR:**

**"European policies, guidelines and awareness about sign language interpreters"**

#### **What does it mean in your country to be a "sign language interpreter"?**

It still means that you have to be the one in charge: see to get assignments (most of our interpreters work as free-lancers as the State or other institutions are rarely willing to employ us, this also due to the financial situation Germany finds itself in), find out who will pay, do a lot of PR work concerning deaf people and our work.

It also means that a lot of people aren't aware of our work and requirements, of those of the hearing impaired clients, and that there are a lot of situations where our service either isn't paid for or not found necessary or if it is found necessary, it can't be provided due to the insufficient number of interpreters. That said, this varies greatly from State to State, as there are large numbers of interpreters in some cities meanwhile there are States where there are only some few interpreters altogether. We hope to improve the overall situation through the publication of recommendations on e.g. working conditions and the already mentioned paper on quality standards.

#### **What are the general principles adopted in your national associations' Code of Ethics?**

BGSD has pretty much the same principles as most countries with university training, such as professional behaviour, neutrality and impartiality, discretion, duty of retraining, working only in assignments one is capable to deal with, correct behaviour towards colleagues, and so on, but at the moment, there is a discussion going on whether we need something more like "the associations' court", in case somebody acts against our statutes and/or Code of Ethics. So far, there aren't any sanctions if anyone acts against the Code. A special team will look at this issue in the future.

#### **What is the situation of Deaf Interpreters in your country/ association?**

We don't have a Deaf member so far, but are aware of the possibility that a Deaf interpreter could apply for membership. As we now have quite strict guidelines concerning membership, the person would need to be qualified at university level.

Theoretically, it is possible for Deaf people to study sign language interpret-



ing in Germany, but so far and to our knowledge, there has emerged only 1 person from such a training (but is not working as a Deaf interpreter) and we haven't any knowledge about Deaf people actually working as Deaf Interpreters on a regular basis in Germany. The National Deaf Association with whom we usually get together at least once a year in a formal meeting hasn't addressed this topic so far. This might change in the future, as there will also be a new Board elected in October this year.

## Hong Kong From HKAD



Hong Kong Association of the Deaf (HKAD) has an Executive Board of 10 Deaf volunteers who are elected by the general assembly of Deaf members. The Executive Board is responsible for all the administrative and management duties performed by the staff. There is also an Advisory Committee of 10 professionals who volunteer their time and professional skills as advisors to the Executive board and the Association.

HKAD aims and objectives are as follows:

1. To promote mutual trust, mutual aid and mutual love among the deaf and to encourage the deaf to contribute to the society;
2. To provide appropriate and relevant services, such as sign interpretation and training, to the deaf.
3. To encourage the deaf to participate in service development and improvement, and to petition for reasonable rights.

The first of "Assessment of Qualified HK Sign Interpreter" was held by Hong Kong Council of Social Service in June of 2005. It is a good commencement to raise up the quality of sign interpretation services and to promote the concern of professional skills of sign interpreters in Hong Kong. And, HKAD is planning to fight for the establishment of a independent Sign Interpretation Association which can do research on sign language and to improve the qualified assessment in the future.

You are welcome to visit HKAD website [www.hongkongdeaf.org.hk](http://www.hongkongdeaf.org.hk) to search for more information.

## Japan From Zentusken



### Facts about our country:

You are judged by a doctor to be hearing-impaired during your infancy. Before starting school at the age of 6, you can go to a local deaf school or a day-care center. When you are 6, you go to a deaf school (about 100 in the country), a hard-of-hearing class in a local school, or a local school where most of the pupils are hearing and no sign interpreting is provided. After finishing (12 years of age) school, most of the graduates get jobs for an income and/or can apply for a pension for the disabled, while about 200 people a year go on to college.

The spoken language of our nation is Japanese and there is Japanese sign language too. Education that is available to Deaf people in our Nation is in schools for the deaf, in schools for the hearing, and higher institutions (colleges, universities and graduate schools).

The types of jobs Deaf people hold in our Nation are half in manufacturing jobs and the others are in a variety of jobs.

There are laws to protect disabled people in general. Deaf people are provided services within the framework of those laws.

There are no laws about interpreters in our Nation though there are some references to interpreters in such laws as Code of Civil Procedure, Code of Criminal Procedure, and Law for the Welfare of Physically Disabled Persons.

A current overview of what is happening in our country is that the population is 120 million. We are one of the biggest economies in Asia with certain educational and social welfare systems, which are not as good as those of Europe and the U.S.A.

### Country report:

About 1,500 interpreters are employed, of whom 70 percent work part-time on a year-to-year basis and find it difficult, if not impossible, to make a living. There are 3,000 registered interpreters and 13,000 volunteer (non-professional) interpreters.

The National Research Association for

Sign Language Interpretation (Zentusken), Japan has a membership of 11,000. The Japanese Association of Sign Language Interpreters membership is 1,200.

### Interpreter training:

8 colleges and junior colleges have training courses. The term is 2-4 years. About 500 students are enrolled. The contents are Japanese sign language and Japanese sign language interpreting.

We have a testing system to decide who is qualified to interpret in your Nation and it is in two parts:

1) Local level sign interpreters examination

Tested on knowledge of sign language and interpreting as well as ability to interpret between Japanese and Japanese sign language based on the curriculum set by the national government. People who pass the exam are to be registered as an interpreter by the local government.

2) National level Japanese Sign Interpreters Examination

Tested on knowledge of sign language and interpreting as well as ability to interpret between Japanese and Japanese sign language on a higher level.

Last year we celebrated the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of our organization, Zentsuken.

Two years ago, Japan National Sign Language Research Center was established in Kyoto. Our organization is a member of the Steering Committee.

A bill in session in the Diet (the National Legislative Body) includes a plan to implement sign language interpreting services starting next year in all the local autonomies throughout the nation.

### Goals of our association:

The membership of 20,000 within 10 years;

A meeting of Asian sign interpreters within 5 years.

What is needed for sign language interpreting to develop is the establishment of a firm sign interpreting system based on the understanding of the people; to obtain enough funding from the national budget to implement nation-wide sign interpreting services;

the establishment of education interpreters;

the establishment of professionalism among sign interpreters

Our expectations of a world body are for them to help exchange a wide range of information enough to accelerate the development of the world body and to provide and encourage research among the members.

We would like to do whatever we can to help develop sign interpreting activities and services in Asia.

## Kenya From KSLIA



The Kenya Sign Language Interpreters Association (KSLIA) was established and registered in 2000 its main objectives in a nutshell are:

To secure official recognition by the government of KSL interpreters  
Improve the standards of KSL interpreters and interpreter training

Cooperate with other organization that deal with the deaf on the providing interpreter training

Create awareness on Deafness and KSL interpreters

Raise funds through various methods to facilitate the running of the association

To maintain and administer a register of KSL interpreters.

Since its inception it has managed only a membership of about 20. This is a pointer to the kind of inactivity that has characterized KSLIA. Despite this state, interpretation work has been going on. KSL interpreters in Kenya are involved in various interpretation activities.

Recent events in Kenya have however given hope to not only to the deaf but also to the interpreters. The persons with disability act, 2003 laid down the rights of persons with disabilities there is also the Draft Equity Bill and a draft affirmative action Bill. The draft new constitution to go through a referendum on 21<sup>st</sup> Nov. also goes a step further but no further enough to recognize sign language and not KSL as the third language in Kenya apart from English and Kiswahili. If passed it will be a step in the right direction.

All the above legislative frameworks are actually geared towards the deaf. There

are however no specific policies regulating interpreters for the deaf. Kenyan interpreters are not recognized by the government. Certain areas of the government though try to cooperate interpreting e.g. the judiciary has employed a number of K.S.L Interpreters. These interpreters cannot really be said to be professionals. They are people who learn K.S.L and through constant interaction with deaf people became very fluent and end up being used for purposes of interpretation.

Most of these go through the Kenyan Sign Language Research Project (CKSLRP) basic K.S.L training and interpreter training which are very inadequate.

Some of the major obstacles facing interpretation in Kenya include:

- Lack of funds to run KSLIA

- Lack of adequate training for interpreters and room for professional development.

- Lack of proper records/ register for interpreters country wide.

- Lack of corporation with national examinations certification body so as to recognize interpreters certificates.

- Lack of recognition from the government of the important role interpreters play in the lives of the Deaf.

In Kenya today, interpretation is more of a vocation than a profession. Despite all these hurdles, it is important to note that the few interpreters that are working with the Kenyan Deaf have managed to keep communication going thus their contribution cannot be underestimated.

Recently a Norwegian association called Deaf Aid Presented what it call a "Write Paper on Kenya Registry of Interpreters/Translators for Deaf"

Among its objectives in summary are:

- Maintain an updated registry of interpreters/translators for the deaf nationwide and make it accessible to the public.

- Come up with a code of ethics together with corrective and or punitive strategies for any infringements.

- Liaise with Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) to develop appropriate curricula for KSL interpreters.

Liaise with the national examination council (KNUT) to develop a national testing service for interpreters for the Deaf – by offering specific certification programmes and defining the eligibility requirements and exam process.

- Organize periodic training and workshops for professional development of certified interpreters.

- Set standards for interpretation

This effort by Deaf Aid is highly commendable and may actually be what Kenyan interpreters have been longing for. The problem with Deaf Aid programme is that it has ignored the main stake-holders in all this KSLIA and went straight ahead to deal directly with other organizations such as Kenya Institute of Education (KIE), Kenya National Examination council (KNEC), Kenya Society for Deaf Children (KSDC) etc Little mention or recognition is made even of Kenya National Association of the Deaf (KNAD) or the Kenya Sign Language Research Project (KSLRP). Deaf Aid also starts from the premise that there are already many interpreters in Kenya which is a fallacious premise. Maybe the right entering point would have been to do situational analysis. Start a training program that will lead to the certification.

One of the issues Deaf Aid raises in its white paper is that it will organize provisional workshop for purpose of providing some basic training to certified interpreters and will award a certificate of attendance that will act a provisional certification of interpretation

Most practicing interpreters in Kenya have a KSLRP certificate. Deaf Aid does not indicate what will happen to these certification.

All in all the Deaf Aid Program if well implemented would give a fresh impetus to interpreter training and interpreter morale.

## Lithuania By Dainius Jakutis



### SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF THE DEAF IN THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

In 1995, the Lithuanian Government passed a resolution that acknowledged sign language as the native language of the deaf, which was in 1996 consolidated in the Law on the Social Integration of the Handicapped Persons. According to the population census data, about 9,000 Lithuanian citizens are deaf and their native language is Lithuanian sign language. As many as 1,000 of this figure are children up to 15 years of age. The disability of the deaf was inborn or was caused by illness, professional hazards or mutilation. 30,000 people in Lithuania suffer from hearing disability.

At the moment, 2003-2012 Programme of the National Social Integration of the Handicapped Persons is underway in Lithuania. It covers the following areas: rehabilitation, social services, accessibility of environment, education, employment, public education, culture, sports and recreation.

In 1996, there was founded the Surdology Institute, which was commissioned with research into Lithuanian sign language and its standardisation. The Institute publishes dictionaries, and arranges courses of Lithuanian sign language.

All deaf people insured by the mandatory health insurance are entitled to receive compensatory equipment for hearing for free once in five years. The adults can get deaf-aid for one ear, while children up to 12 for one or two ears. Within the period of 2000-2005, 1,833 cell phones were distributed to the deaf. Computers have been started to be also donated to them from 2005. All this is fully state-funded.

In 2004, Lithuanian Government adopted the Programme of Special Education Service Provision aimed at increasing the availability of education for people with special needs, and to develop environment favourable to them.

The legislation in Lithuania enforces the privileges for the deaf in the employment field. They have priority in the Job Centres and receive unemploy-

ment grants. Employers are encouraged to employ deaf people as the Employment Fund compensates the adjustment of their workplaces.

1996 Law on Social Services provides for the following general services to the deaf: interpreting into sign language, provision with compensatory equipment, services of assistance, guiding, housing adjustment, transportation, information provision and consulting, assistance and care at home, care allowance, catering, provision of the essential items. Unfortunately, the interpreting into sign language is accessible to the deaf with certain difficulties due to the lack of sign language interpreters. Now, one interpreter has to serve about 160 deaf persons, which of course limits their right to receive full information. Quality of interpreting is also rather low because the majority of the interpreters are self-taught. There are no interpreters who can translate into international sign language. No interpreters' qualification testing system has been developed so far.

The Government also approved 2005-2008 Programme of Lithuanian Sign Language Usage and Interpreting Services Provision aiming at implementing sign language usage programme and providing handicapped people with interpreting services. It is expected that in 2008, when the programme is accomplished, one interpreter will serve about 70 deaf people, which will make the availability of interpreting services about 50% higher. The expected value of the programme amounts to LTL 11 million.

## Madagascar By R Theodoric



### Facts about our country:

For Madagascar with 17,000,000 population, we estimate the number of deaf person around 170,000.

It's the last statistic from WHO, but we know 1,500 deaf person educate and understand sign language since 1950.

Our sign language is called MALAGASY SIGN LANGUAGE. It's the one sign language for whole Madagascar.

The spoken languages of our Nation are MALAGASY AND FRENCH.

Education that is available to Deaf people in our Nation is by both methods: Total Communication and sign language as Bilingualism.

Jobs that Deaf people hold in our Nation are based on handicrafts: sewing and embroidery for deaf women and woodwork like carpentry for the deaf men.

Currently, in our school in Antananarivo, the capital, we have a computer class and now there is a deaf secretary that works in publicity & commercial.

There have been laws in our Nation to protect and provide services to Deaf people since 1998, but it's written laws only because our Government hasn't a clear policy towards handicap person. Now, we make up Malagasy decade for handicap people 2003 to 2013. This committee tries to do the National Policy for handicap people.

The Malagasy Lutheran Church has services for the Deaf persons. All the school for deaf are under their authority. They have 6 schools for whole Madagascar.

And The Federation of the Deaf in Madagascar (FMM) who defend the Deaf causes and the Deaf Rights. They have 9 branches in total. Now, they launch projects with the Norwegian Deaf Federation (NDF) in four fields since 2004, like in:

Education  
Sign language Dictionary  
Visiting  
Training new interpreters

### There are no laws about interpreters in our Nation

#### Madagascar report:

Now, Madagascar has 5 interpreters in total since 1998, who working part time. Because they have their own work:

- 01 Reverend
- 02 Teachers
- 01 Webmaster
- And me 01 Social Worker.
- 

We have no interpreting organisation yet. However, now we are considering creating an association. We may call it "Madagascar sign Language interpreter service" MSLIS

We haven't a Centre for the interpreter training in our Country.

For us, it's a special courses for 2 years training (1996-1998) organised by the Malagasy Lutheran Church. Theoretical and practical courses.

Now, we become teachers at the FMM project to teach 20 new interpreters (2005-2007) in a special course too.

We have exam (theory and practice) in the end of training with a book of research in sign language.

No Association, but we work together with FMM : Federation of the Deaf in Madagascar and NDF to set up a project to teach 20 new interpreters.

### Most importantly:

We started to translate the National TV news in simultaneous since on 2000 (once a week at Saturday noon TV news).

We work in Church every Sunday morning during the worship at the Lutheran church.

We interpret too at the Deaf school with the teachers (or lectures) who don't practice sign.

We teach sign language for the parents of deaf children and teachers at the Deaf School. Deaf Social events (training, wedding, meeting,...)

We do all this as volunteers in part time because we have our own job.

Indeed currently, Malagasy populations start to understand the Malagasy sign language. They accept it as deaf communication but we haven't laws about it. We have only natural recognition.

### Goals for the coming year/s

Set up a Legal Association of sign language interpreter.

Make recognition of sign language whole our big Island.

Defend the interests and causes of sign language interpreter.

### For our Country, we need:

International training and skills to have diploma to training sign language and new interpreter.

Technical aid and financial support.

### How can WASLI help us?

Create a school for Malagasy Sign Language.

Set up "DEAF MEDIA" for deaf TV news, teach sign language in TV, deaf film/movie and documentation in sign language,...

To be full time working and work as interpreter with reasonable salary.

### What we have that can help others

Ideas and suggestions.

Thank you

**Malaysia** By Ms. Rose Ng Yoke  
Yang & Ms. Lucy Lim



### Facts about Malaysia

There are approximately 23,000 deaf people registered with the Department of Social Welfare Malaysia.

The sign language that is used is Bahasa Isyarat Malaysia - BIM (Malaysian Sign Language)- used largely by the Deaf Community in Malaysia however it is yet to be recognized by the Ministry of Education and the Government.

Kod Tangan Bahasa Malaysia – KTBM (Coded Bahasa Malaysia) & Signed English is being used as the mode of communication in schools for the Deaf, there are Smatterings/ Scattered usage of ASL

The spoken languages are Bahasa Melayu (Malay Language) which is the official language of the country. English Language, Chinese Language (Mandarin, and all other major dialects), Indian Language (Tamil, Hindi, etc.) and Indigenous Languages

Education that is available to Deaf people in our Nation is the Malaysian National Curriculum; there is no curriculum specially designed for Deaf and Hard of hearing people. Deaf students enrolled in public schools as well as privately run institutions and centres, which predominately are NGOs. These students are being prepared to sit for all the major National Examinations, after which they are streamed, either to continue in the academics or vocational/ technical setting. Centre managed by NGOs are day school or centres.

Education Programmes available are:

- residential
- mainstreaming/inclusive
- special classes within the regular school programme
- few Deaf people qualify for admission to colleges/universities

Education Philosophy/System/Mode of delivery or communication: Total Communication (*Komunikasi Seluruh*), use of BIM, KTBM, SE, etc.

Employment for Deaf people ranges from blue-collared to white-collared positions, semi-skilled, and skilled types of work. Some Deaf people who have a college/ degree certificates are able to secure jobs of higher positions. A handful of them hold jobs at the executive and decision making positions. (Types of jobs- some examples: cashier/ data entry clerk, teachers of the Deaf, graphic designers, programme coordinators, IT Programmers etc..)

There are no current laws to protect and provide services for Deaf people but the draft on the Malaysian Disability Act has been submitted to the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, and has yet to be tabled at Parliament to the Cabinet.

There are only three (3) Sign Language Interpreters who have undergone a formal training in Sign Language Interpreting and has received their certificates (2 in US & 1 in Canada). Those who are currently "interpreting" in Malaysia are those who work with NGO's/ schools for the Deaf. This includes Teachers of the Deaf who does "interpreting" on an ad-hoc basis. Sign Language profession is not a recognized field and those who interpret are merely recognized as "social workers" for the Deaf.

The number of interpreters in our country by States (Part-time and Full-time) is:

Kuala Lumpur	6	6
Kedah	0	2
Penang	3	
Sabah	3	
Sarawak	1 or 2	

Malaysia is made of 13 states and the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur and Labuan, Kuala Lumpur being the Federal capital of Malaysia. The above figures are estimates. No data is available from the other states.

The interpreting organisation is The Society of Interpreters for the Deaf in Selangor and the Federal Territory. (SID) (Persatuan Penterjemah Untuk Orang Pekak Selangor dan Wilayah Persekutuan)

There are 30 members but only a handful are actively involved in interpreting.



There are some “Interpreters” who are currently working with other Deaf organizations are not registered with the Society of Interpreters.

Interpreter training has yet to be implemented. However the Majudiri ‘Y’ Foundation for the Deaf (MYF) is currently working on a partnership with the University Malaya and the Institute of Translators Malaysia on an Interpreter Education and training program in Malaysia. The Foundation has secured the support of Dr. Debra Russell, chair of Deafness, University of Alberta, Canada as it’s external consultant. The Foundation has also carried out various Sign Language courses to prepare the students who may be keen in this area. In addition to that it has carried out several weekend workshop on Sign Language Interpreting for the Community in some states in Malaysia.

The most important recent event for us was when members participated in a Sign Language Interpreting Workshop organized by the Majudiri ‘Y’ Foundation for the Deaf which was held over 5 days, conducted by Dr. Debra Russell, Chair of Deafness, University of Alberta.

Various organizations of/by/for the Deaf are in the process of lobbying for the recognition of the National Sign Language. Also looking into recognition of Sign Language interpreters as a profession.

The Majudiri Y Foundation for the Deaf has embarked on a training programme for Deaf Sign Language Instructors to be trained as BIM Instructors. (Sign Language Instructors)

The goals for our Association are:

- to advocate for the communication rights and access of Deaf and Hard of hearing people in the use of Sign language interpreters and to develop and encourage a greater awareness of the basic rights among both Deaf and hard of Hearing people and the general public.

- commitment to the goal of establishing minimum standards for professional interpreters in the country.

- to enhance the quality and standards of interpreter .

- to promote the profession of interpreting and to provide training as well as professional development in the forms of in-service activities, workshops, and or support to attend conferences and

- seminars to advance the recognition of Sign language Interpreters

- gain recognition and advocate for the profession of Sign Language interpreting, the role of the interpreter in the country and the related needs of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing consumers. Interpreter education/advocacy program (training on how to use interpreters)

- develop a mandate and ways to enforce financial responsibility for payment for interpreting services, interpreter accessibility paid for by the provider

- provide ongoing consultation and training workshops to consumers, Deaf and Hearing to remove environmental, communication and attitudinal barriers.

- promote a constant growth of Sign language interpreters education/advocacy program in Malaysia and demand for quality interpreting services

- to have consistent and uniform standards for Sign Language interpreter education program to ensure the availability of quality interpreting services

- establish and accredit Interpreter Training Programs to ensure they have the highest standards possible to train interpreters.

What is needed for Sign language interpreting to develop in our country is:

- a need to recognize that Interpreters are an important member of the Deaf community and is a profession.

- place emphasis on improving interpreting skills especially in parts where there is a thriving Deaf community and have a clear understanding of our roles and the ethics

- advocate on communication access

- have a platform where interpreters could get together to share information and concerns that would provide opportunities for professional growth

- Develop a network of interpreters to protect the rights of interpreters

- offer to mentor those who are newer to the profession or those who have an immediate need for bolstering and nurturing.

- network to find out about other role models

support, uphold and preserve the professional standards and ethical conduct

having an active Deaf Community to support the growth of Sign Language Interpreters

Our expectations of a world body and how can they support us are networking and sharing of resources/materials, i.e. offer support to one another. Offer educational, technical and consultative assistance related to the field of Interpreting and Deafness through professional networking and support

## Netherlands By Maya de Wit



### Country facts:

Population: 16,300,000  
Size of the country: 33,783 sqkm

### Deaf people and the law:

Number of Deaf people: 15,000 – 25,000 sign language users.  
Sign Language: Dutch Sign Language (Nederlandse Gebarentaal, NGT)  
Spoken languages: Dutch and Frisian

There are five institutes and schools for the Deaf. In addition many deaf students are being mainstreamed.

Deaf people have all different types of jobs, ranging from manual labor to management level.

The laws in our Nation to protect, and/or provide services to Deaf people are the Law for equal treatment (no matter what disability you have), the Law for the provision of interpreting services and the Law for the provision of special needs of people with disabilities

Law for the provision of interpreting services: All people with a hearing loss are entitled to interpreting services in the Netherlands. This can be the service of a sign language interpreter, oral interpreter, palantypist or a note taker. The provision is divided in interpreting services in education, employment, and private situations. The deaf person is entitled to a 100 percent interpreting services in educational settings, 15 percent of the work time in employment situations, and 30 hours a year for private settings. The latter can be any situation where the deaf person is in need of interpreting services, ranging from a doctor visit to a meeting with a

real estate agent. Additional interpreting hours, if needed, can be requested.

### Interpreters:

Number of Sign Language interpreters: 184 (part-time & full-time)

The interpreter's organization: Nederlandse Beroepsvereniging Tolken Gebaretaal (NBTG), that is the Dutch Association of Sign Language Interpreters. ([www.nbtg.nl](http://www.nbtg.nl)). The NBTG has a total of 463 members: 172 interpreter members, 163 student members, 11 sponsors, and 117 supporting members. Interpreter training: In the Netherlands there is one interpreter training program. Four-year Bachelors program (part-time and full-time) at the College of Utrecht. The program is a combined program for teachers and interpreters in Dutch Sign Language. The program officially started in 1998. Main subjects in the program are Dutch Sign Language, Interpreting or Teaching Skills and Deaf Culture.

The NBTG has established in 2001 an independent foundation: the Registry of Sign Language Interpreters ([www.stichtingrtg.nl](http://www.stichtingrtg.nl)). The Registry demands that registered interpreters have graduated from the formal interpreter training program and hold a diploma. In addition interpreters have to obtain six continuing education units (equals 60 hours) every three years. If these criteria are not met, the interpreter will be removed from the Registry. Only registered interpreters are paid through government funding.

Most important events for the NBTG and the sign language interpreters in the past year:

Cooperative working day for all parties in the field of Sign Language interpreting: topic was the continuing lack of interpreters in the Netherlands. All parties presented their view on the lack of interpreters. The presentations were then discussed in a forum and with the audience. This resulted in an extensive report and a plan of action on how to resolve the issues. The NBTG held a survey amongst its members as a basis for their presentation. The survey questioned the interpreters on the number of hours they had available to work and how many hours they in fact did work. Publication of completed research on the work-rest schedules of sign language interpreters (in Dutch:

[www.nbtg.nl/nbtg/Onderzoeksresultaat%20werkrustschema%20tolken.PDF](http://www.nbtg.nl/nbtg/Onderzoeksresultaat%20werkrustschema%20tolken.PDF))

Continuing negotiations with government agencies on the regulations and payment of sign language interpreters.

New implemented format within the NBTG board. Board members are now responsible for specific tasks and issues. The board hopes to achieve a more efficient way of working in the rising amount of board work.

Goals of the NBTG for 2006:

Improving the involvement of members with the NBTG

PR: providing information on the profession of sign language interpreters and increasing (supporting) members to the NBTG

Continuing education: increasing the number of workshops organized by the NBTG and sharing expertise and support on an international level

Improving the working conditions of interpreters, e.g. formal recognition of two interpreters on an assignment where this is required.

### Expectations:

What are our expectations of a world body and how can they support us? Sharing our experiences and provide support to each other in the profession of sign language interpreters.

Working together to form a greater power in achieving a higher status of the profession.

A large international organization will have a greater impact in society.

What do we have that can help others? Experience in setting up a well working organization of sign language interpreters and the establishment of a Registry.

## Nigeria By Josiah Arinze Edmond



**POPULATION ESTIMATED at 127 MILLION. The DEAF POPULATION is ESTIMATED at 6 MILLION**

Nigeria is a west African country. In Nigeria there is the National Association of the Deaf and other deaf associations, but there is no cooperation due to personal interests.

In Nigeria there are no courses in sign language offered in schools, though sign language is formally recognized. Basically we use American Sign Language here in Nigeria.

Unfortunately, there is no National Association of Sign Language

We are looking up to WASLI to assist us in establishing our association. However, in the mean time plans are underway to establish the Nigerian National Association of Sign Language interpreters (NNASLI).

### Hopeful contributions to WASLI

We hope to contribute our cultural sign language heritage.

We hope to share our experiences, and the sharing of research work in sign language.

We hope to provide interpreters to work internationally for WASLI conferences, workshops, etc.

### Needed support from WASLI

We need WASLI to assist in establishing and providing needed support to NNASLI.

Mentorship and the training of qualified and accredited International Sign Language Interpreters.

Sharing of researched work in sign language.

The providing of training materials and the sharing of code of ethics and professional guidelines for interpreters.

Assistance in creating awareness with the Nigerian governmental institutions e.g. court, TV, etc to acknowledge sign language, to the benefit of the deaf and hard of hearing.

For more information please feel free to contact me: [joekisc@yahoo.com](mailto:joekisc@yahoo.com)

## Palestine By Shukry Mahmoud & Khalil Alawani



Shukry Mahmood, who is Deaf, received his Master of Science Degree in Deaf Studies/Deaf Education from Lamar University, Texas, USA in 2002. He currently resides in Al Bireh, West Bank, Palestine, and is working as an independent Educational Consultant and a member of Benevolent Society of the Deaf.

Khalil Alawani received his Bachelor of Science Degree in Chemistry from Osmania University, India in 1992. He currently resides in Ramallah, West Bank, Palestine, and is working for the Ministry of Education as a Head of Programming. He is an interpreter for Benevolent Society of the Deaf since 1996.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Palestine, which is divided into three main geographical regions (the Palestinian Territory, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip), has been occupied by Israel since 1950, and this has affected all aspects of life within the country. For example, with the country's attention being mainly focused on the political arena, little time and effort has been directed toward developing a social service infrastructure. Similarly, with occupation-related regulations such as a curfew, the ability to travel, interact, and socialize has been significantly circumscribed. Social isolation has been especially severe since 1987, with the start of the Intifada, and this has resulted in many young deaf adults going outside of Palestine to study. After completing their studies, and returning to Palestine, these young adults return home, integrating their adopted cultures and languages into that of Palestine's Deaf community. In general, however, deaf individuals are isolated, from each other, from the larger Palestinian community, and from knowledge of their language and culture.

## THE PALESTINIAN DEAF COMMUNITY

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics 2004 report described the distribution of persons with hearing-related disabilities as follows:

### TYPE OF DISABILITY

#### Hearing and Speaking

Palestinian Territory 5.0

West Bank 3.3

Gaza Strip 8.3

#### Hearing

Palestinian Territory 6.0

West Bank 6.3

Gaza Strip 5.3

#### Congenital

Palestinian Territory 32.5

West Bank 30.1

Gaza Strip 36.9

#### Birth-Related

Palestinian Territory 6.9

West Bank 6.7

Gaza Strip 7.4

#### Disease

Palestinian Territory 34.6

West Bank 32.8

Gaza Strip 37.9

#### Other (Accidents, War-Related)

Palestinian Territory 26.0

West Bank 30.4

Gaza Strip 17.8

As can be seen from this chart, the incidence of hearing-related disabilities in all three regions of Palestine exceeds the commonly-held "rule of 1%" often applied within European countries and the United States. Additionally, except in Gaza, hearing-related disabilities within the Palestinian population appear to be equally distributed between three main causes: congenital disability, disease, and injuries due to accidents or the war.

Palestine's spoken language is Arabic; its sign language is Palestinian Sign Language (PSL). The recognition of PSL has been one of the most significant events to impact on Palestine's Deaf community within recent years. In 1992, the Benevolent Society of the Deaf, in Ramallah, along with the first representative of this delegation, Shukry Mahmood, researched the sign being used in our country and developed the first Palestinian Sign Language book. In 2000, with support from the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, a book of PSL was developed for educational purposes. Currently there are no training programs nor certifying standards for interpreters in our country; most deaf people rely on family members when an interpreter is needed. Similarly, there are no laws pertaining to interpreters, nor to any rights related to the use of interpreters, and there are no associations for interpreters. There also are no laws pertaining specifically to the rights of individuals with disabilities or deafness, nor are there any specific social services or supports available, although the Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children, in Gaza City, is a registered NGO which has been providing education, audio logy, speech therapy, vocational training and other services within a limited basis since 1992.

Although the social isolation which has been present in Palestine has so far prevented the formation of an organized, united, national association of the Deaf, there currently are five clubs of the Deaf. Each club is estimated to have approximately 125 dues-paying members, with annual dues being (US)\$14.00. However, many deaf people cannot afford to pay these annual dues, and travel to each deaf club is often difficult, since roadblocks and the curfew prevent many deaf people from traveling outside of their village or farm. Despite this, each club generally has seven to nine board officers, led by a president and vice president. Duties

within each club are only vaguely defined, and regular meetings may occur anywhere from once a month to four times per year. Few individuals involved with the deaf clubs have any knowledge or skills related to advocacy or political lobbying. Events of any kind are rarely held and, when they do occur, attendance is generally poor. For example, the Deaf women within a club may gather once or twice a week to do embroidery or artwork. Last month, for the first time in five years, the Deaf Club in Ramallah managed to hold a fundraising event to sell the women's crafts.

## DEAF EDUCATION IN PALESTINE

The Palestinian Red Crescent Society operates four day-program schools for deaf and hard of hearing children, with programming beginning in kindergarten and generally extending to the 7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> grade. Additionally there are a number of Islamic and private schools which also run day programs for deaf and hard of hearing students in West Bank and Gaza. These programs begin in kindergarten and go through the 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> grade. In Bethlehem, within the West Bank, there is also a residential school, operated by the Vatican. A dorm is provided and both boys and girls are educated through the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, with girls continuing on through 8<sup>th</sup>. Finally, in Hebron, a day program for deaf and hard of hearing students is run by the local Deaf community and, Qalqilya has a vocational training center for the deaf and school for the deaf.

In general, then, education of deaf and hard of hearing students begins at kindergarten and ends around 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Only less than one thousand deaf and hard of hearing students attend the schools. Some deaf/hard of hearing students also attend regular hearing classes, but without any supportive services, such as interpreters or tutors. Currently, application is being made by MuEHE, the Palestinian Educational Authority, to establish regional special education resource centers in several areas by the year 2007, and consultants and observers from outside of Palestine have provided input on ways to improve education for deaf students, although these recommendations have not yet been put into practice. Overall, there are few professionals adequately trained in special education, audio logy, or deafness, and little technology available for use. As stated earlier, some deaf individuals go outside of Palestine to obtain higher education but, in general, deaf adults are usually unemployed or work in manual, unskilled labor.



## HOPES FOR THE FUTURE

There are a number of needed goals for Palestine's Deaf community, but all of these are contingent on the Deaf community first finding one, unified voice. Towards this end, it is hoped that a Palestinian National Association of the Deaf will be established within the next several years, complete with bylaws and regularly-attended meetings. The Norwegian National Association of the Deaf (Norges Deveforbund) helped us in the past and has indicated that they might be interested in helping with this.

As part of the agenda for the newly-forming Deaf Association, the Deaf community needs to learn skills for leadership, self-advocacy, public relations/awareness training, conflict resolution, and Deaf pride. Once these skills are in place, the Deaf community can then begin to assert the need for interpreters, and educate the hearing community on the value of interpreting in terms of a profitable career as well as a means to fulfill a societal need. Guidelines, a code of ethics, training curriculum, and testing materials will need to be developed, in order to begin to produce a body of trained, professional interpreters. A standardized method to identify who is qualified to teach interpreters and assess and certify them is also needed. Additionally, concrete items, such as office space with access to needed communication and office machinery, is also needed, as is so much more.

Baseline data would need to be obtained. For example, information regarding the number of potential deaf consumers for interpreting services is needed, as is knowledge of their demographics (i.e. where are clusters of Deaf individuals located, what are their ages, and their specific interpreting needs, such as educational or work-related). The Deaf community needs to be educated regarding their rights to obtain interpreters, the dangers of having relatives interpret, how to use interpreters, and how and where to obtain certified interpreters. Confidentiality needs to be discussed, tried, and proven.

Extensive education and public relations with the hearing population would also need to occur. As in the Deaf community, hearing people would need to be made aware of the need for interpreters, the dangers of having relatives interpret, and their responsibility in regard to providing equal access to information. They would also need to be made aware of interpreting as a possible career choice, and be informed regarding where they could obtain required training.

## PALESTINE'S NEED AND POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION

The world body of interpreters and the world Deaf community could best help Palestine in achieving these goals through providing consultation, interactive models, advice, training, and funding. Once Palestine's Deaf community has unified and developed a sense of Deaf pride and awareness of rights, and obtained skills in self-advocacy, negotiation, lobbying, and conflict resolution, Palestinian Deaf can begin to work towards improving education for deaf and hard of hearing children, increasing employment options for deaf and hard of hearing adults, and decreasing dependence on hearing family and relatives. This, in turn, would lead to increasing the need for qualified, trained, interpreters, which would then provide economic incentive for hearing Palestinians to support the establishment of interpreter training programs, and for hearing Palestinians to pursue interpreting as a career goal.

Once these strengths begin to develop within Palestine, the Palestinian Deaf community, and its emergent body of interpreters would be able to expand the services for the deaf and hard of hearing people and also send the deaf and hearing interpreters to other countries for training. We will also input the information on what do we need to improve the services.

### Scotland From SASLI



Estimated 7000 sign language users in Scotland (population around 5 million), using British Sign Language.

Main spoken language is English, though there are many other language groups in the country.

Education for Deaf people is mainly in mainstream education with support, but some specialist education exists.

Deaf people often work in less well-paid jobs, but there are those who work in professional roles as well.

There are no specific laws about interpreters in our country, but there is recognition of the need for them and they are available for employment support, health issues, legal situations and so on.

## Current issues:

There is a great deal of work being done to increase the number of interpreters in Scotland and to establish stronger systems for selection, training and monitoring of the provision.

Organisations working in the field are being encouraged by the government to work more closely together to make provision for deaf people better planned and to increase awareness of deaf issues across society.

Included in this are initiatives to train deaf people as tutors of BSL.

## Country report

There are currently 48 registered BSL/English interpreters in Scotland.

They are registered with SASLI, the Scottish Association of Sign Language Interpreters and are joined there by around 12 trainee or associate interpreters.

Interpreters are trained by means of a two year, part-time university course followed by professional, in-service training and development, operated by SASLI.

The only University in Scotland offering this training is Heriot-Watt in Edinburgh.

The most important development over the past year has been the introduction of the "Training of Trainers" course, run by Heriot Watt University, SASLI and the Scottish Council on Deafness, aimed at training Deaf people as trainers in BSL.

Aims of the Association over the next few years include:

- Doubling the number of registered interpreters
- Developing professional development of interpreters
- Increasing awareness of deaf issues and interpreting services

All of these demand political commitment and funding to progress.

Our expectation of a world body would be to:

Share ideas, resources, practice  
Be a source of political pressure to raise issues of deafness at international level

Our contribution would be in all of these areas.

## South Africa From SASL



### HISTORY

1989 A formal-trained British Sign Language interpreter was introduced to South Africa.

1990 Deaf Federation of South Africa (DeafSA), previously known as the South African National Council for the Deaf, elected a Deaf Chairperson for the first time in history.

1995 DeafSA appointed more than 50% Deaf National Executive Committee members. Previously this Deaf association was administered by a majority (100%) of hearing people.

1996 The first Deaf National Director was employed by DeafSA.

1997 The first SASL interpreters training programme was first introduced by University of Free State. This programme was dissolved due to a lack of funding. The SA Government provided no support.

2003 Pan South African Language Body (PanSALB) provided a short SASL interpreters training with collaboration of the University of Witwatersrand. South African Translators Institute (SATI, This institute accredits all 11 South African spoken languages including 4 European languages) established the first accreditation system for the SASL interpreters.

2004 The SASL interpreter accreditation was implemented. At this time, four SASL interpreters passed. The Health & Welfare Skills Education and Training Authority (SETA) with DeafSA and University of South Africa funded a comprehensive SASL Interpreters training course. After numerous interviews and final selection, 27 SASL interpreters underwent this training programme. At the moment, more SASL interpreters are interested to become professional SASL interpreters, but there is no funding or any support from government.

2005 South African Sign Language Interpreting National Centre (SASLINC) was established. This company encourages more similar associations in South Africa to be estab-

lished, and welcomes any partnership with the objective of development and training of South African Sign Language interpreters

### WAY FORWARD

Collaboration of existing structures is important and the sharing of resources. At the first World Association of Sign Language Interpreters conference, South Africa would like to teach/share with the first world countries the pro's and con's of interpreting into and from different languages in a country with diverse cultures. South Africa wants WASLI to assist on how to lobby and engage government to support SASL interpreter training programmes and professionalism of our SASL interpreters.

## Spain From FILSE



### Facts About Spain

#### How many deaf people are estimated to live in your nation?

1,000,000 have some form of hearing impairment, but of this total, no more than 70,000 are Spanish Sign Language users.

#### What is the Sign Language of Spain? Do you have more than one Sign Language?

We have two Sign Languages: Spanish Sign Language for the whole Spanish territory and the Catalan Sign Language, which is only used in Catalonia. Both languages are going to be legally regulated in the near future.

#### What are the spoken languages of Spain?

Spanish for the whole territory and we also have three other languages: Basque (Basque Country), Catalanian (Catalonia, Balearic Islands & Valencia) and Galician (Galicia).

#### What type of education is available to Deaf People in Spain?

Historically, Spain has a well-known tradition in education for Deaf children. In the last few centuries there have been some famous teachers for the deaf, whose influence has been felt beyond Spanish frontiers (e.g. Fray Pedro Ponce de Leon, Juan de Pablo Bonet, etc.) But also we can consider Spain a country with an important oral teaching tradition for the deaf.

Our 1990 General Law concerning the educational system says that some ordinary schools have to have special classes with trained teachers for the hearing impaired. As a result of this law, specialist schools for the deaf are gradually disappearing, as more deaf children are integrated into standard schools.

In the last few years, as is happening generally in Occidental countries, the number of school offering bilingual-bicultural education is increasing. But this is happening rather slowly, since we have no law to encourage this.

In secondary schools and universities, more and more Sign Language Interpreters are translating the lessons for Sign Language users.

#### What type of jobs do Deaf people hold in Spain?

The answer to this question depends on certain factors: prelocutive or postlocutive hearing loss, the level of hearing loss, etc. Partially deaf people and postlocutive deaf people have more academic success, so they tend to hold better jobs than prelocutive or profoundly deaf people. The majority of people join professional courses and only 1% of the deaf population go to university. As a result, the jobs they hold tend not to be in areas where high qualifications are required. Gradually the situation is improving with the new educational methods mentioned above and with the fact that more interpreters are working within the educational system.

#### Are there laws in Spain to protect, and/or provide services to Deaf people?

We have a legal framework. First of all, the Spanish Constitution says that conditions for individual freedom and equality shall be promoted. It declares that each Spanish person is equal before the law, and protects against discrimination. Also, the Constitution promotes policies to assist people with physical, sensorial and psychological handicaps. The 1982 Law of Social Integration of Handicapped People (LISMI) is another law which helps to promote better conditions.

Most of the regional governments of Spain have promoted accessibility laws, which include regulations to try to break down communication barriers. The above mentioned legal texts refer to all people of different handicaps - this includes deaf people but is not uniquely for them.

September 16, 2005 saw the approval of the first draft of the Spanish Sign Language Law. Once this law is passed, it will ensure that deaf people can use

Spanish Sign Language in most aspects of daily life, which include education, legal settings, health settings, public media, etc.

**Are there laws about interpreters in Spain? If so, please explain them.**

Although some of the laws described above don't mention Sign Language Interpreters, it is understood that they are a vital link necessary to help the breakdown of barriers between deaf people and the wider community. Sign Language Interpreters are, however, specifically mentioned in the September 16, 2005 first draft of the Spanish Sign Language Law (mentioned above) where provision will be made for SLIs in most public settings. However, what is not stated is who is going to provide the SLIs. Are they going to be contracted by the state or, as is the situation now, by deaf associations?

**Current overview of what is happening in your country.**

We are currently waiting for the finalization and passing of the Spanish Sign Language Law.

**Country Report**

**The number of Sign Language Interpreters (part-time/full-time)**

In Spain we don't have a register of Interpreters, so it's difficult to know a precise answer. We estimate that there are about 1,700 professionals, but of this number we estimate that only 400 are actually working as SLIs. Most of those who are working as SLIs are employed full-time, mostly by Deaf associations but with short-term contracts. Only a minority of SLIs are employed by the state. There are only two private SLI companies which also employ SLIs. Freelance SLIs are almost nonexistent in Spain.

**The interpreter's organisation/s: The Name of the Association/ Organisation/Agency in Spanish and how many members it has / they have.**

FILSE - Federacion Española de Interpretes de Lengua de Signos y Guías-Interpretes. (Spanish Federation of Sign Language Interpreters and Guide-Interpreters).

FILSE only knows for sure the number of interpreters who are members of the Sign Language Interpreters Associations which are part of FILSE. This year we expect to be about 500 interpreters connected to those Associations, because two new associations are being created.

All the information about FILSE can be found at our website:

[www.filse.org](http://www.filse.org)

(which we expect will be translated into English in the near future)

**Interpreter training: At what level is the training if any (University or lower). How many centres are there in Spain?**

In Spain there are many ways to train as an Interpreter. The principal way is the “**Ciclo Formativo de Grado Superior en Interpretación de la Lengua de Signos**” (two years duration), which consists of 2000 training hours divided into 11 subjects: Modern Language: English, Psychosociology of Deaf and Deaf-Blind people, Body Language, Spanish Sign Language, Interpretation Techniques, Labour Formation and Orientation, Spanish Sign Language Linguistics, Interpretation Contexts, International Sign System, Guide-Interpretation for Deaf-Blind People and a practical training period (3 months) in companies which employ Sign Language Interpreters (Deaf Associations, High Schools...). This training leads to an official Sign Language title. There are about 25 centres in Spain which offer this type of training. Another way of becoming a Sign Language Interpreter is to do a University Masters Course (following 3 years of university). It has a similar content to the course we have talked about but it gives you a **Masters Degree** title. In Madrid there is a university (Universidad Complutense) which specialises in training sign language interpreters for legal settings.

FILSE is currently involved in the improvement of the training standards of SLIs in Spain. One of FILSEs aims is the raising the above qualifications to a University degree.

**Do you have a testing system to decide who is qualified to interpret in Spain? If you have a testing system, can you briefly describe it?**

No, we don't have a testing system. In Spain, to know if the Interpreter is qualified, one asks for his/her official title or another kind of SLI accreditation.

**Most important events for your association/etc. in the past year.**

We were one of the patrons of the 2nd Spanish Sign Language Congress.

We helped to create two new regional SLI associations.

Last year FILSE had various interviews with important Institutions with the aim of becoming recognized as the most representative organization of interpreters.

We were in Helsinki, at the EFSLI AGM and the Congress.

We helped to create one new Associations, that now is a FILSE member.

We continued the preparation of a list of International Sign Interpreters.

We attended a few Conferences to inform different Organizations about FILSE.

We strengthened our contacts with the Department of Education with the aim of trying to achieve equality for the different types of SLI accreditations / titles.

We had a Regional Associations Board members meeting to exchange impressions and to encourage motivation (December 4).

We have continued the meetings with CNSE, State Confederation of Deaf People, to continue with our collaboration agreement.

We had our **2nd FILSE Congress** (5-8 December) in Santiago de Compostela. More than 120 SL Interpreters from all over Spain were there for 3 days exchanging and sharing information, attending conferences, etc

We started our web page: [HYPER-LINK "http://www.filse.org/"](http://www.filse.org/)

**Most important events for the situation of Sign Language Interpreters in Spain.**

The most notable event that we are currently involved in is the improvement to the status of the Spanish Sign Language and also the status of the SLI profession. We hope the Spanish Sign Language Law, in which the SLI profession is mentioned, will go some way to improve the situation.

In addition, FILSE is gradually becoming better known, more regularly consulted and more often contacted for advice regarding the SLI profession by public and private institutions.

**Goals of your association for the coming years.**

To encourage SLI to be members of research groups in the Spanish universities.



We are continuing to try to standardize all the various types of professional certificates, accreditations / titles to become a Sign Language Interpreter.

To offer Conferences about FILSE in the different Regions to motivate the SLIs all over Spain.

To join the WASLI as a founder member and to participate in the WASLI meeting.

Continue with the International collaboration.

In March 2006 we have the elections for a new FILSE board for four years. The current FILSE board is preparing a large scale event called "The Forum" (El Foro) for January 2006 in order to close our four years on the FILSE board.

To be consulted by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Employment regarding subjects to do with the SLIs profession.

To strengthen our links with the Deaf and Deaf-Blind Associations in areas where we have common objectives.

### **What is needed for Sign Language Interpreting to develop?**

We believe greater consultation with FILSE by the Government is needed as regards the new Spanish Sign Language Law after it is passed - to put it into practice and make it workable in all areas related to Sign Language Interpreters.

Until now, the real control of most areas of decision-making related to the SLIs profession, has not been in the hands of the professionals. Instead, important decisions affecting the profession have been controlled by the deaf community. For this reason, the development of SL interpreting has been very limited. We are convinced that, in the hands of the professionals (represented by FILSE), much greater improvements can be achieved.

### **What are your expectation of a world body and how can they support you?**

We believe it can be of great help. Especially, we think that greater exchanging of information between countries can be very useful for the improvement of the professional situation of all WASLI members. We also think that WASLI should increase the visibility of the SLI profession throughout the world. A suggestion on one way to start would be to produce a DVD in many different languages explaining the profession

which could be distributed throughout all WASLI members who in turn could pass them on to a wider public. Another proposal would be an updated WASLI website containing greater information.

### **What do you have that can help others?**

We can offer our experience to everyone, as we are already doing with some Latin American countries. Sharing the same oral language (Spanish), naturally strengthens our ties with Latin America. We have already started to help WASLI to translate WASLI documents into Spanish, such as the WASLI Governing Document and the emails between WASLI and some Latin American SLI associations. FILSE offers its help for any such collaborations.

### **Tanzania By Geden B.S.Singo**



Tanzania is a very big country with a population over 36,000,000 and it is amongst the poorest countries in the world, with more than 120 tribes. The national language is Kiswahili .

### **DEAF ASSOCIATION:**

Tanzania Association of the Deaf was officially registered in 1984 , at that time the population of deaf people was about 400,000 . Since then no proper study has been taken in order to know the population of deaf people in the country today.

### **DEAF EDUCATION:**

Primary Education. The education of deaf people started in 1963 , up to day we have only seven special primary schools for the deaf in the country and several units , whereby all primary schools are owned by Missionaries and units are owned by the Government .

Secondary Education: In Tanzania we don't have special secondary school for the deaf, instead we have integrated schools whereby you may find 43 hearing students and 2 or 3 deaf students in the class with no Sign Language interpreters , as result deaf students end up with failing in education.

### **TEACHERS FOR THE DEAF:**

We do have one training college for the specialist teachers but the number of those teachers is decreasing year after

year due to the fact that most of the teachers leave as there is little motivation. As a result obviously deaf children do not have as good an education as they should.

### **METHOD OF TEACHING:**

Most of the special primary schools of the deaf and all units use the Oralism method of teaching, except one primary school that uses total communication .

### **SIGN LANGUAGE:**

We do have Tanzanian Sign Language but this Language is not officially recognized by the government as a language. We don't have college for Sign Language training. Our training is usually done by the Tanzania Association of the deaf using seminars for teachers of deaf children . Some times the Ministry of Education provide training when they have funds though this does not happen regularly.

### **SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS:**

No training college for Sign Language Interpreters in the country, all training is done by Tanzania Association of the deaf. Most of the trained Sign Language Interpreters have left the profession because there is no employment for them. They decide to go to other kinds of training where, at the end of the day, they may be able to get employment.

There is only one Sign Language Interpreter who is fully employed by the Tanzania Association of the deaf

In short up to this time we can say that there are only five reliable Sign Language Interpreters in the country, one female and the rest are male . No Sign Language Interpreters organization in the country so far , but for the time being we are in the process of constructing the constitution of the organization of Sign Language Interpreters. We do hope by March next year the organization will be already registered so as to be an active member of WASLI.

Being so new and small , we are able to do all things because we are getting full support from the Tanzania Association of the Deaf.

Thank you

## Uganda From UNASLI



### The History of Sign Language Interpreting in Uganda:

Uganda is land locked country located in East Africa between Sudan (North), Kenya (East), Tanzania (South) and DR Congo (West). Uganda currently has about 70 districts with more than 40 spoken languages English being the official language. Uganda by 2002 had a population of 24.4 million people (11,929,803 males and 12,512,281 females) and one in every 25 person has a disability estimating that at least one disability are 844,841 (2002 Uganda Population and Housing Census – [www.ubos.org](http://www.ubos.org))

The earliest record got from Uganda National Association of the Deaf (UNAD) indicates that the first sign Language communicators/Interpreters (people who facilitate communication between the Deaf and Hearing people i.e. translate sign language to any spoken language e.g. English, etc and vice versa) emanated from teachers of the Deaf and family members who had grown up with a Deaf person(s) in the early 1990s (UNAD News 1995 Vol. 1). These people had acquired some knowledge and skills of signing through their associating with the Deaf people, so they would to some extent facilitate communication between the Deaf and Hearing people as “interpreters”.

UNAD's international linkages with other organizations in the same struggle e.g. Danish Deaf Association (DDL), World Federation of the Deaf Regional (WFD) Regional Secretariat for East and Southern Africa, etc led for better demand of the Deaf people to participate fully and play major roles in determining policies affecting them in the community.

During that time (1990s) the political atmosphere in Uganda favored the implementation of the United Nation's declaration on equalization of opportunity for People living with Disabilities. This exposed the roles of Sign Language Interpreters to the society. In addition to the above UNAD and National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU) played an advocacy and lobbying role in the major events of the Constitutional Assembly (CA) in 1993. In 1994 when Uganda hosted the fourth East and Southern Africa Sign

Language Seminar, the availabilities of Sign Language Interpreters further more demonstrated to the society that the Deaf people's live could be improved. All these paved way for the official recognition of the Uganda Sign Language (USL) in the 1995 Uganda's constitution (UNAD News 1995)

### Training of Sign Language Interpreters:

In 1993 UNAD then took on the responsibility of training Sign Language Interpreters (funded by DDL) by initiating basic Sign Language Interpreters' (SLI) courses and these were trained to bridge the communication gap between the Deaf and Hearing community. The training was conducted for a short duration of 1-2 weeks. Some of the trainees who successfully underwent these courses are now practicing interpreters out in the field to facilitate communication between the Deaf and Hearing people in the society e.g. working in schools, Organizations of Deaf persons like UNAD and other Organizations for/working with Deaf people. In 2000 UNAD in collaboration with former Uganda National Institute of Special Needs Education - UNISE introduced a certificate course in Sign Language Interpreting conducted at regional level i.e. Eastern region, Central region and Western region for a period of 2 years (UNAD News 2001). However due to increased demand for effective Sign Language Interpretation service provision by the society, former UNISE – Kyambogo University with the co-operation of the Danish Deaf Association (DDL) and UNAD introduced a recognized training Programme for Sign Language Interpreting in 2002. The training is being conducted for a period of 2 years, were the successful students will be awarded a Diploma in Sign Language Interpreting. The first group of students qualified in August 2004.

### UGANDA NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS – UNASLI

#### General Information:

The Uganda National Association of Sign Language Interpreters – UNASLI is a non-governmental and voluntary organization bringing together all Sign Language Interpreters and relay Interpreters of the Deaf and other Deaf people with multiple disabilities (e.g. DeafBlind persons) in Uganda.

UNASLI is a voluntary social service organization registered in Uganda under non-governmental organizations statute of 1989. The Association was

established in 2003 as an umbrella association for Sign Language Interpreters in Uganda. The national association of Sign Language Interpreters is a member of World Association of Sign Language Interpreters – WASLI, National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda – NUDIPU, Uganda National Association of the Deaf – UNAD and many others working with Deaf people.

The primary task of the association is to look after the interest of Sign Language Interpreters, the Deaf community and the Hearing community communicating in Sign Language to provide services for them and to act as the expert in this area. The association's activities encompasses the dignity, welfare, and enhancing the status of the Sign Language Interpreter(s) and improving the availability of information to the Deaf community in all spheres of influence.

#### UNASLI Mandate:

Establish a bond of unity, love and transparency in executing professional work and to unite Sign Language Interpreters together for development and empowerment.

#### UNASLI Vision:

Join hands together as a professional body to contribute effectively to social-economic and cultural development of Sign Language Interpretation services to the Deaf and Hearing community in Uganda.

#### UNASLI Mission:

To enhance Uganda Sign Language Interpreters to recognition and encourage good practice in the profession.

#### Values:

- Respect of the Deaf and Hearing people's cultures
- Transparency and Accountability
- Diversity in interpretation skills
- Information dissemination
- Team spirit
- Flexibility
- Time management for effective assignments
- Networking

#### Objectives:

- Implant and promote Sign Language Interpretation in the country

- Promote gender equality in training Interpreters in Uganda

- To lobby and build the coexisting programmes so as to work more consistently and coherently focusing on the need of Sign Language Interpretation as a right for Deaf people.

Articulate the needs of Sign Language Interpreters in Uganda at all levels through the association.

Develop useful data on the situation of Sign Language Interpretation, support in research on Sign Language development in Uganda Sign Language.

To sensitize the general public and service providers on the use of Sign Language Interpreters

To network and work closely with the already existing organizations/associations of Deaf people and other disabled persons organizations towards the recognition of the profession of Sign Language Interpreters.

Promote further training of Sign Language Interpreters in their area of work

#### **Public relations:**

To ensure a high degree of awareness of Sign Language Interpreters requirements, code of ethics and opportunities amongst organizations/associations of Deaf people and other disability groups.

To ensure that Deaf people have excellent access to information about the society in and out of their country.

#### **CHALLENGES FACED BY SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS IN UGANDA**

Undefined/specific roles and responsibilities for the SL interpreters. Most institutions and offices do not have defined job descriptions for the SL interpreters because it is a new profession in the country, so interpreters end up doing other things besides interpretation e.g. interpreter/secretary, interpreter/note taker and or interpreter/guide.

Less pay/motivation; because most institutions and office do not have defined roles for the SL interpreters, most of them also do not have defined pay for the SL interpreters. So in most cases they are paid less compared to the work they do.

Lack of awareness by other professionals how to use the SL interpreters e.g. in an office related setting where the interpreters complained of interpreting for along time without rest which can be dangerous to their health and also reduces on effectiveness of the service delivery.

#### **ACHIEVEMENTS OF UNASLI**

Acquired an office at UNAD Headquarters

Registered about 40 sign Language Interpreters

Organized structure  
i.e. Board of Directors

A Constitution

#### **CONCLUSION**

I would like to send my sincere thanks to the organizers/working group of WASLI for having organized this important 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference of Sign Language Interpreters to approve WASLI and share information from different parts of the world for the development of the profession.

Lastly I would like to thank Uganda National Association of the Deaf and Danish Deaf Association (LF) for funding me to represent UNASLI in this 1<sup>st</sup> very important conference for the Sign Language Interpreters.

FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY

#### **USA From R.I.D.**



#### **The United States of America / Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc.**

**Population:** The United States has a population of 267,000,000. Of that number, it is estimated that there are 10,680,000 Deaf / Hard of Hearing citizens. It is estimated that 2,670,000 individuals are deaf.

**Size of Country:**  
9,363,400 sq. km (3,615,200 sq. miles)

**Sign Language:**  
American Sign Language

**Spoken Language: English**  
(for all government and general business. Many other languages are used but not officially recognized as languages of the nation.)

**Deaf people education:** Free public education primary through high school, colleges and universities are accessible with interpreters and other forms of access. The United States is the home of Gallaudet University. Gallaudet is the world's only university for the deaf and hard of hearing, providing a quality liberal arts education for all students.

**Deaf people's jobs:** No restrictions. Deaf people work in every field imaginable.

**Laws - Deaf:** Americans With Disabilities Act:  
<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm>

**Laws – Interpreters: Some states** have laws requiring interpreters to have national certification before being allowed to work in the state or a particular type of interpreting in the state. See listing on RID web site: <http://www.rid.org/lic.html>

#### **Country Report**

**Number of sign language interpreters:** Estimated at over 50,000. An analysis of full time and part time professionals has not been done.

**Numbers in the interpreter organization:** Registry of Interpreters of the Deaf officially has more than 11,000 members, with an additional approximate 10,000 affiliated through state and local chapters of RID.

**Interpreter training: Over 150** programs ranging from certificate of attendance through masters level training. Most programs are two-year associate degrees. There are approximately 30 programs offering four-year bachelor degree programs, and three graduate level programs.

**Testing System:**  
<http://www.rid.org/nts.html>

RID has taken a holistic and proactive approach in developing its national certification system by using the triad concept. The components of the triad are as follows:

The Certification Maintenance Program, (CMP) (an avenue through which the continued skill development of certified interpreters and transliterators is monitored and nourished). The Ethical Practices System, (EPS) (a vehicle which provides an opportunity for consumers to address concerns or file complaints regarding the quality of interpreter and transliterator services).

The National Testing System has been an important part of RID since 1970, when RID began preliminary testing of sign language interpreters. Full implementation of the national certification system began in 1972. Under this program, both full and partial certificates were offered. The full certificates offered were the Comprehensive Skills Certificate (CSC), and, the Reverse Skills Certificate (RSC) which was awarded to interpreters and transliterators who are



Deaf or hard-of-hearing. Partial certificates were also offered for expertise in several segments of the interpretation/transliteration arena. Specialty certificates were developed during 1975-1978, to include the legal (SC:L), and performing arts (SC:PA) certificates. The certification in oral interpretation (OIC: C, etc.) was offered between 1979-1983.

In 1983, a nationally recognized panel of professional interpreters and transliterators was formed under the name of the National Evaluation System Study Committee (NESSC). It was charged with the task of making recommendations related to the development and implementation of a national, standardized, valid, and reliable test for the certification of sign language interpreters. The findings and recommendations of this committee were approved by the RID membership and became the foundation for the current testing system.

The current RID National Testing System (NTS), implemented in 1987, has two components to each test offered: a written test and a performance test. The current testing system strives to maintain strict adherence to nationally recognized, testing industry standards of validity, reliability, equity and legal defensibility. As a result, an independent psychometrician (test development expert) is retained by RID and oversees all test development and revision processes.

The two tests implemented in 1988 were the Certificate of Interpretation (CI), and the Certificate of Transliteration (CT). For more information on these certificates, refer to the Explanation of Certificates in this directory. RID currently administers 2,000 - 3000 tests per year between the written and performance exams.

Over the past several years, RID has put significant effort into the development of three new certificates. These new exams have been recently implemented, and the National Office, various Task Forces and interpreters and transliterators that worked on these exams should be congratulated for all of their hard work. These three new certificates all follow the same model of testing as the CI and CT tests, with both a written and a performance component. These three new tests are:

Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI), for interpreters who are Deaf or hard-of-

hearing and who may work in teams with hearing interpreters and transliterators or with other Deaf persons who may require the services of a Deaf interpreter. The CDI written test is now available. In addition, any qualified Deaf interpreter may still apply to become a Certified Deaf Interpreter - Provisional (CDI-P). Oral Transliteration Certification (OTC), for transliterators who transliterate a spoken message from a person who hears to a person who is deaf or hard-of-hearing and the ability to understand and repeat the message and intent of the speech and mouth movements of the person who is deaf or hard-of-hearing. Specialist Certificate: Legal (SC:L), for interpreters that are already fully certified (CI and CT, or CSC) and work in a legal setting.

At a joint meeting in Boston, Massachusetts, USA in 1993 then Presidents, Ben Soukup (National Association of the Deaf) and Janet Bailey (Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf), agreed to work together. From this came the NAD-RID Task Force on Interpreting Issues. NAD and RID formed the National Council on Interpreting (NCI) to, among other things, develop a National Interpreter Certification (NIC) test. This new test will replace the current RID generalist test (CI and CT). The NIC is a three-part test: written, interview and performance. We started offering the test in 2005.

#### **Most important events for RID during 2004 - 2005:**

The San Antonio national conference attracted over 1700 participants.

State conferences were conducted

Executive members to the Board of Directors elected – Those serving terms for 2005-2007 are President Angela Jones; Vice-President Jimmy Beldon; Secretary Cheryl Moose; Treasurer Bruce King and Member at Large Glendia Boon.

Collaboration between RID and NAD continues. The latest event has been the initiation of the joint test for certification and acceptance of a new Code of Professional Conduct.

Membership continues to grow. Numbers taking certification exams up considerably, continuing a long-running trend

#### **Goals for the next year:**

Continued numerical growth

Continued expansion of training for state chapters and other leaders

Planning for 2007 conference, to be held in San Francisco, CA

Continued growth of staff and increased pay

Continued growth of services to members

Continued development of more new publications for the field

Completion and final implementation of the interview and performance test portions of the joint NAD-RID National Interpreter Certification test

Increase fiscal reserves and accelerate payoff of association-owned building

#### **Sign Language Interpreting continues to grow and develop:**

With the wide spread use of video interpreting for phone calls and remote interpreting the United States is seeing a shift in the type of work sign language interpreters are doing.

#### **Involvement with World**

**Organization:** The United States looks forward to learning from others who are involved in the world body.

**What we can offer:** The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf has a wealth of information available on the Internet <http://www.rid.org/> and has many members who are highly skilled and educated in the field of interpreting. The RID members and organization can serve as resources to others. We can also share information about the cooperation that has occurred between the USA's national interpreter association and the association of the Deaf.

## Ready to join WASLI? WASLI membership

By Zane Hema



NATIONAL MEMBERS are those national associations of sign language interpreters with goals similar to WASLI.

PROVISIONAL MEMBERS are those interpreters from a country where there is no national association of sign language interpreters.

SPONSORING MEMBERS are individuals, businesses, agencies, institutions, or others who wish to support WASLI through membership fees and/or volunteering.

Very soon, full details of how to become a WASLI member will be available. There will be an Application Form, which will come with Guidance.

There will also be the WASLI Membership Fee Schedule and the WASLI List of Countries with their GDP.

You can use these to find out how much to pay.

WASLI is also introducing an ASSISTANCE programme where you can indicate that you need assistance OR indicate that you can provide assistance.

### WASLI Membership Information & Guidance available shortly

[wasli.secretary@btinternet.com](mailto:wasli.secretary@btinternet.com)

WASLI  
is  
committed  
to the  
advancement  
of  
sign  
language  
Interpreting  
world wide

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