

WASLI COUNTRY REPORTS

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In readiness for the 2007 WASLI conference in Segovia, Spain countries were asked to provide a report telling about the situation in their country. Information that was thought to be useful was included. The questions asked were: What is the population of your country? How many Deaf people are there? Is the indigenous sign language recognized as an official language in the country? How many sign language interpreters are there? Is there a National Association of Sign Language Interpreters and what training facilities are there? What are your future goals? How can WASLI assist you and how can you assist WASLI?

As WASLI is committed to advancing 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.

Not every country was able to respond with a report, but as you can see those that did provide a fascinating picture of the sign language interpreting profession in the world today. It is hoped that in ensuing years more countries can contribute to this valuable resource and begin to take part in further dissemination of good practice.

On a personal note.... as the editor of this report, I could have changed the reports that I received and revised them so that the information was in a consistent form. However, I felt that the individuals who wrote their country reports had a right to their own voices. These individuals prioritized the information in such a way that was important to them and still met WASLI's need for information. Some individuals signed their reports; others left their names out. I enjoyed reading these reports and learned so much about Deaf people and interpreting worldwide. It opened my eyes to life outside my own country. May it do the same for you.

- Robin Demko

AFRICA

Botswana

Introduction

The first unit for children who are deaf in Botswana was established in 1979, in a mainstream Primary School in the Southern part of the country. The unit had an enrolment of six (6) pupils who stayed with foster parents and two (2) teachers. This was an initiative of the then Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) Specialist of the Bamalete Lutheran Hospital, Dr Ian Kennedy.

As the need to enrol more children intensified, the Christoffel Blinden Mission (CBM) of West Germany built the first residential school for the deaf in the country, in 1985. The school admitted deaf children from all over the country, since it was the only one of its kind. Before the Ramotswa Centre for Deaf Education (RCDE) was built, a lot of deaf children did not access education due to lack of accommodation in Ramotswa, where the first unit was established.

Ramotswa Centre for Deaf Education had the first enrolment of eighty (80) pupils. The school could not absorb all the deaf children due to limited boarding facilities. Most of Botswana children who are deaf could still not access education. Most of them were hindered by payment of school fees required by the school, which was run by a Non Governmental Organization, while children who attended government schools did not pay any fees.

The establishment of RCDE pursued the Christoffel Blinden Mission to explore ways of providing effective services to its clients. This saw the formation of Ramotswa Society for the Deaf, which was later called Botswana Society for the Deaf (BSD), in 1989. BSD is an affiliate of the Botswana Council of the Disabled and is responsible for the welfare of people who are deaf in the country.

The second residential school for deaf was built in Francistown, in the northern part of the country. Francistown Centre for Deaf Education was opened in 1991 with an enrolment of twenty-one (21) pupils. Both schools were staffed with specialist and non specialist teachers employed and paid by the government. In addition, the government's commitment to the education of the deaf was evidenced by the financial assistance it offered to Botswana Society for the Deaf in the form of a subsidy.

In line with the international trends of integration, the government of Botswana through the Ministry of Education established its first unit for learners who are deaf in a primary school in the Central District. The unit was opened in 1993 with an enrolment of eleven (11) pupils. The opening of this unit by the government and others that followed, especially the senior secondary unit is evidence that Botswana has embraced the principle of Inclusive Education as adopted at the Salamanca World Conference on Special Needs Education (UNESCO 1994) and restated at the Dakar World Education Forum (2006).

According to the Salamanca Conference on Special Needs, Inclusive education means that:

“..... schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalized areas or groups.

(The Salamanca Statement and framework for Action on special Needs Education Para 3).

School Placement

The principle of inclusive education was embraced as more units were opened in schools throughout the country. A lot of children with hearing impairment are taught in the same schools and classes with their hearing counterparts as supported by Salamanca Statement.

“Regular schools with inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discrimination, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all .” (Art.2).

The chart below will give you a synopsis of the enrolment of Botswana children who are deaf in units and mainstream setting from 1997 to date, (see appendix).

The numbers illustrated under appendix show that children who are deaf are enrolled in primary, Junior and Senior Secondary Schools at a very low percentage as compared to those with normal hearing. According to the Botswana Central Statistics Office (CSO), from 2002 to 2003, 888 deaf children were enrolled in primary schools, and 538 in secondary schools as compared to 661 211 normal hearing in primary schools and 55 593 in secondary schools.

Services Provided

As it has already been highlighted, learners with hearing impairment; deaf and hard of hearing are catered for by the Botswana education system. As you might all be aware, most children who are deaf use sign language. It is their preferred and first language of communication. These learners receive their primary and junior secondary education in special schools and unit classes where there is concentration of resources. For senior secondary education, learners who are deaf are placed in an inclusive setting; they are educated with their normal hearing peers in the same classes

Most children who are hard of hearing lost their hearing after the acquisition of language and speech. These children are therefore able to function in speech and language modalities and are educated in mainstream schools with appropriate support.

Sign Language Interpretation

Children who are deaf cannot function in mainstream setup without appropriate services like sign language interpretation. The Ministry of Education through the Division of Special Education has since trained specialist teachers of the deaf in sign language and sign language interpreting. It

is worth mentioning that some of the people who took part in training teachers in these areas are Daniel Burch, Ron Brouillette and Dorie Brouillette. The training was done through workshops and seminars. These teachers are the ones who provide interpreting services since there are no qualified sign language interpreters in the country.

At primary level, all the teachers are conversant with sign language. Some of them are used as trainers in sign language workshops together with deaf teacher aides. Interpreting at primary school level is therefore required minimally. At junior secondary level, ninety percent (90%) of the teachers in units for the deaf are specialists and are conversant with sign language. The remaining (10%) are non-specialist subject teachers who need the services of a sign language interpreter. Specialist teachers are the ones who provide interpreting services.

The senior secondary school unit has an enrolment of nine students and seven (7) specialist teachers. Students who are deaf are taught in the same classes with their normal hearing counterparts. Ten (10) non-specialist subject teachers teach classes with students who are deaf. Since all subject teachers are non-specialists, the major role of specialist teachers is to facilitate communication between teachers and students who are deaf and their hearing classmates.

Sign language interpretation is also provided during social activities, for an educational television programme on HIV and AIDS called “Talk Back” and during public addresses.

Achievements

1. The country has taken an initiative to train some teachers as professional Sign Language Interpreters. The first group of five (5) identified teachers will be sent for training to the United States of America this year, 2007.
2. The development of a Botswana Sign Language Resources Book (Dictionary) is another step towards the development of sign language interpreting in the country. The project is envisaged to take start around August this year, 2007.
3. An initiative has been taken to form the Botswana Association of Sign Language Interpreters. A committee of seven (7) has been elected with three (3) members who are deaf
4. A constitution has been developed as a guiding document.
5. Registration of the association is in process.

Challenges

Some of the challenges that contributed to late establishment of units and or inaccessibility of education by the deaf as well as offering sign language interpreting services include among others:

1. Lack of knowledge on the issues surrounding deaf education.

2. In availability of services; provision of early identification services for example.
3. Lack of trained/skilled personnel in the area (professional Sign Language Interpreters).
4. There is no Sign Language Resource Book for Botswana as yet and regional variations in signs make communication in sign language across regions a bit challenging.
5. Lack of research on Sign Language and sign language interpreting to inform and guide policy makers.
6. Pending registration of the association of Sign Language Interpreters in the country.
7. Lack of funding to effectively provide appropriate services and engage specialized personnel.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I want to believe that this conference will assist us with the following in addition to the challenges outlined:

- New developments in sign language and sign language interpreting.
- Sign language interpreting as a vocation.
- The establishment of the association of sign language interpreters.
- Roles of sign language interpreters.
- How to involve and or utilize people who are deaf in sign language interpreting.
- Interpreting in a mainstream setting and for examinations.

Appendix

| NAME OF SCHOOL | ENROLMENTS BY YEAR | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
| Boyei Primary Unit | - | - | - | - | 15 | 15 | 15 | 16 | 14 | 14 | 17 |
| Francistown Centre for Deaf | 60 | 60 | 72 | 72 | 82 | 97 | 100 | 103 | 106 | 108 | 103 |
| Makolojwane Primary Unit | 11 | 16 | 18 | 17 | 12 | 12 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 6 |
| Masa Primary School | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 13 | 11 |
| Ramotswa Centre for Deaf Education | 97 | 99 | 104 | 108 | 94 | 98 | 106 | 115 | 119 | 124 | 120 |
| Gaborone West Junior Secondary School | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 |

| NAME OF SCHOOL | ENROLMENTS BY YEAR | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
| Ramotswa Junior Secondary School | 6 | 20 | 33 | 41 | 51 | 49 | 44 | 34 | 34 | 33 | 35 |
| Tashata Junior Secondary School | - | - | - | - | - | - | 16 | 26 | 26 | 18 | 32 |
| Maun Senior Secondary School | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 3 | 6 | 5 | 9 |
| Other mainstream Primary Schools | - | - | - | - | - | - | 5 | 5 | 7 | 10 | 12 |
| Other mainstream Junior Secondary Schools | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Other mainstream Senior Secondary Schools | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 |
| TOTAL | 180 | 195 | 237 | 239 | 255 | 271 | 293 | 301 | 324 | 346 | 338 |

References

1. UNESCO (1994) *Salamanca World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality*. UNESCO and the Ministry of Education, Spain. Paris: UNESCO
2. UNESCO (1990) *World Declaration on Education for All and Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs*. International Consultative Forum on Education for All. Paris: UNESCO

Ethiopia

Ethiopia is situated in the horn of Africa, currently with an estimated population of 77 million. According to a widely accepted statistic, 75 ethno-linguistic groups pre-dominantly inhabit Ethiopia, speaking as many as 200 different languages and dialects.

In addition to its rich ethno-linguistic diversity, Ethiopia is also home to seven important cultural and natural heritage sites, registered by UNESCO as world class wonders, and therefore enjoy the organizations protection.

Exact figures are difficult to come by regarding the number of deaf people in Ethiopia. However, it is roughly estimated that up to 1 million persons with hearing impairment live across the country. A National Association of the Deaf has been in existence for three decades. But the size of its membership is extremely limited, numbering no more than 5000. The country has so far not issued and adopted a disability specific policy and legislation, which ensures the legal protection and respect of the rights of the local disability community in general, much less for the deaf in particular. Education of the deaf in Ethiopia dates back to the 1970s reported to have been introduced by American Missionaries. Despite nearly 40 years of history, the state of deaf education is still in a poor state, only a dozen of deaf schools operating throughout the country, and serving a combined student population of a few thousand. Amharic is the official working language of the nation, with English also being used as a language of instruction and communication in higher educational intuitions and international organizations and business enterprises. The Amharic Sign Language that has been in use is based on American Sign, which means that it does not fully reflect the indigenous cultural, social and linguistic characteristics.

It is unfortunate that, regardless of the existing huge size of deaf population, the sign language interpreting service remains small, with no more than 40 interpreters known to be operating countrywide. As a result, it has taken a long time to create an association of sign language interpreters. NASLIE, (National Association of Sign Language Interpreters of Ethiopia) is a newly organized body, which came into being as with an aim to respond to the existing enormous demand for the interpreting service. Currently, it embraces 25 sign language interpreters as its registered members. Traditionally, sign language interpreting has been done by people who have taken training in the use of sign language. No curriculum has so far been developed and practiced specifically for the training of sign language interpreters.

The future goals of NASLIE include the development of sign language interpreters testing and assessment standard, accreditation and certification, and the standardization of Ethiopian Sign Language. More importantly, NASLIE aims to implement the establishment of an institute for the training of public service sign language interpreters. The institute will also serve as a sign language training center for teachers so that they will be able to meet the challenges of deaf education in the country.

NASLIE would like to take this opportunity to express its keen desire to cooperate with all interested bodies and personalities towards the achievement of its stated goals.

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Madagascar - Theodoric Rajaonary

1. What are the major challenges for interpreters in your country?

- Teaching new interpreters.
- Having a Malagasy Sign Language Dictionary.
- Establishing a National Association.
- Interpreting the National and Regional TV news.

2. What have been your important achievements?

2007:

- We have trained 13 new interpreters for ten regions of Madagascar. (Among 22 regions)
- We have published the first Malagasy Sign Language dictionary with a 3000 words and few story in sign language with exercises in a DVD/VCD of 60min.
- 3 TV stations accepted to interpret their TV news once a week.

3. How can WASLI assist?

We ask WASLI to assist us:

- By giving us a tutorial courses for new group of interpreter.
- By finding financial support for the future National Association and for the research of the Malagasy Sign Language.

4. How can you assist WASLI?

Ideas and suggestions?

Population

For Madagascar with 17,000,000 populations, the citizen is called Malagasy.

Capital City

Antananarivo is the capital of Madagascar. Now we have 22 regions.

National Association of the Deaf:

Madagascar has the “Federation of the Deaf in Madagascar” called “FMM” who start his work since 1972, regrouping 9 associations.

How many Deaf people?

We estimate the number of deaf person around 170,000. It’s the last statistic from WHO. But now, we know 2,000 deaf people educated and understood sign language since 1950.

Laws to protect their rights:

Since 1998, we have laws to protect the Deaf Education. But it stays written laws only. No act from the government.

We haven't laws to protect Sign Language.

How many interpreters?

Now we are 5 who have diplomas and 4 persons who work as interpreters.

And we will be 15 after august 2007, because the end of the training of the 11 new interpreters is on July 2007.

Do you have an Interpreter Association?

Now, we haven't. But we have intention to establish one. Actually we are a provisional member at WASLI.

How many members?

We are 4; in the near future we became 15.

Details of your Interpreter Training

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

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

Now, we are teachers at the FMM project and teach 20 news interpreters (2005-2007) in a special course too. But since this year, we work with a private university (ESTIIM) and we are teacher at this university for the end of study of these new interpreters.

Details of your Interpreter Testing/Assessment

No, we haven't testing system.

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

Details of your Interpreter Accreditation/Certification

For us, certification from the Malagasy Lutheran Church.

Now, from the Federation of the Deaf in Madagascar.

In the future, from the private university.

What have been the important events since 2005?

(2006-2007): Meeting to establish our National Association.

Start to elaborate the Malagasy sign Language Dictionary (3,000 words) and VCD/DVD for a story in Malagasy Sign Language with exercises.

(2006-2007): Continue the training for the new interpreter.

(2006): Visit for 10 regions to explain the work and how important for the deaf people to use interpreter.

(2006-2007): 3 Regional TV station accept to interpreting their TV news.

What are your goals for the future?

Continue to teach new interpreter.

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 as interpreter with reasonable salary.

Nigeria

140 Million people

Deaf People:

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION:

Nigeria National Association For The Deaf (NNAD)

Organisation for Deaf Business Men and Women in Nigeria (**ODBMWIN**)

Nigeria Deaf Sport Federation (**NDSF**)

Deaf Population:

Estimated about five million

Laws To Protect Their Rights:

None

Deaf Education:

In Nigeria, deaf education range from primary to tertiary Institution and various vocational Institutions throughout the nation. “**INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**” (**IE**) now available in one state of the federation: Lagos state.

Sign Language:

The formal Nigeria sign language is used (**NIGSL**). However, NIGSL was actually adopted from the American Sign Language (**ASL**) and is used in varying degree in Nigeria; therefore, Nigeria shares a common sign language with North America.

Spoken Language:

Nigeria has above 200 dialects but one Official Language – British English

Sign Language Interpreters:

Sign Language Interpreter population working in various settings freelance, Religion volunteer estimated at below 300.

Interpreter Training:

Informal interpreter training by interpreters clubs, religious institutions, and others. Formal interpreter training still underway by a collaborative efforts of GOSLIN, supported by The Department of Linguistics Macquarie University Sydney, Australia. Macquarie University would share interpreter training materials, curriculum, research etc with GOSLIN and also offer technical assistance. We are not sure when the institute will be established in view of the many financial challenges that are involved. and other important stakeholders like Association of comprehensive Empowerment of Nigeria with Disability (**ASCEND**)

Interpreter Testing/ Assessment:

Proposed Assessment to cover the following areas:

- 1 **Written Test (WT)**
- 2 **Performance Test (PT)**

1 Written Test

Interpreter will be presented with a number of questions to test his/her understanding of the code of professional conduct (CDC). At the same time interpreter's skill on written English: spelling, mechanics, and accuracy is also tested

2 Performance:

This part Involves testing an interpreter's interpreting skills. There are two Segments in this part:

I Sign to voice (SSTV) SIMULTANEOUS: Interpreter's skill to interpret signs to spoken English fluently and expeditiously is assessed. At the same time interpreter's ability in spoken English accuracy is assessed.

II Voice to sign (SVTS) SIMULTANEOUS: interpreters Skills on Finger spelling, vocabularies if applicable facial grammar, character movement, placement, facial contact and charity are assessed.

Accreditation/ Certification: (proposed) at the end of the assessment successful candidates may be issued with (Certificate of interpreting).

(COI) and certificate of transliteration (COT); presently interpreters wishing to obtain a certificate may undergo the interpreter screening test for GOSLIN members and will obtain the Screened Interpreter Certificate (SIC). The issuing of certificate of interpreting/ transliteration will not be obtainable until the formal interpreter training is fully established.

Important Events Since 2005:

Prior to 2005, the profession of sign language in Nigeria was absolutely inactive. After the WASLI conference in Worcester Cape Town, South Africa a wealth of information was gathered from WASLI. Thereafter, a lot of efforts were put in place by a group of interpreters who dedicated themselves to work together in developing the profession in Nigeria e.g. Oliver Francis

– Deaf Aid international Association, Ruth Hart – Member of the board of Directors: GOSLIN.
Uzoma Harold Edwards: Vice President Nigerian Deaf Sports Federation (NDSF).

Interpreter training materials: GOSLIN will welcome donation of training materials by any interpreter organization. Materials like: test books, VCD. CD ROMs, Computers, Laptops, DVDs, etc.

How WASLI Can Assist:

GOSLIN will appreciate donations of test books, DVDs, VCDs, CD ROMs, Computers, Laptops and any training materials by WASLI or from any interpreter organization, etc. We are also suggesting that WASLI establish a platform whereby interpreters from poor countries or countries where the sign language interpreting profession is not practiced can receive scholarships to get trained as interpreters and then return home to support the development of sign language interpreting in their various countries. An example of this kind of scholarship is the World Deaf Leadership (WDL) by Gallaudet University.

Assistance To WASLI

When able donate monetarily to WASLI, provide volunteers to work for WASLI, and share information/ research with WASLI.

To the following individuals and organisation that have supported GOSLIN in its work we send our gratitude:

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World Association of Sign Language Interpreters (WASLI)
Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID)
Conference of Interpreter Trainers (CIT)

ASIA

Cambodia

Introduction

Before the establishment of the Deaf Development Programme (DDP), deaf people in Cambodia did not have a formal structure of a community that included politics, language and culture. In fact, the Deaf community in Cambodia and Cambodian Sign Language (C.S.L) came into existence about ten years ago. Prior to this, there has been no evidence of Deaf families, or any deaf education or community in the history of Cambodia, even under French colonialism. The earliest dates of deaf people using sign language come from the era after the collapse of the Khmer Rouge regime at the refugee camps on the Thai border. The exposure of Cambodian Sign Language did not happen until 1996 when a mixture of deaf adults, children, females and males began to meet at Cambodian Disabled People's Organisation (CDPO) offices. They discussed deafness, what it means to be deaf and sign language. They were highly emotional times for many deaf people because the majority of them had never met each other, and most of them were very isolated within general society. It is still the case in Cambodia, that for most deaf people, they do not acquire any language or sense of community and deaf culture until they are adolescents or adults when they are "found" by various NGOs and referred to DDP or Krousar Thmey (the formal school for deaf students entering school as children).

General

The Kingdom of Cambodia, formerly known as Kampuchea, is a country in Southeast Asia with a population of almost 15 million people, with Phnom Penh being the capital city. A citizen of Cambodia is usually identified as "Cambodian" or "Khmer," which strictly refers to [ethnic Khmers](#). The country borders [Thailand](#) to its west and northwest, [Laos](#) to its northeast, and [Vietnam](#) to its east and southeast. In the south it faces the [Gulf of Thailand](#). The Cambodian economy continues to suffer from the effects of decades of war in Southeast Asia, including a [civil war](#), internal strife and rampant corruption. War and brutal totalitarianism under the reign of the Khmer Rouge in the 1970s created famine, and total devastation of intellectual and cultural institutions, including the deaths of most of the educated people and the destruction of most of the intellectual and spiritual knowledge and materials in Cambodia. The long-term effect has been a population that often lacks education with depth and breadth, and productive skills, particularly in the poverty-ridden countryside, which suffers from a lack of basic [infrastructure](#).

Deaf People

National Association of the Deaf

There is no National Association of the Deaf. DDP and Krousar Thmey are the only organisations that serve the Deaf community in Cambodia. DDP, funded primarily by Maryknoll and Finnish Association of the Deaf offer a range of services mainly for Deaf adults. Krousar Thmey provides formal education for deaf children through grade 10. Before 1996, there were no schools for the deaf, and as a result most deaf people have no language and cannot read and write.

The Deaf Development Programme currently has six different projects: a two year programme for basic education for deaf adolescents and adults who are not of school age; a skills

development project for deaf adults who have successfully completed the basic education programme, (including several options for training such as tailoring, carpentry, motorbike repair, hairdressing and cooking); a community development project; an interpreting project; social services; and C.S.L development.

How Many Deaf people?

There are approximately 250,000 Deaf and Hard of hearing living in Cambodia. DDP and the Krousar Thmey Deaf School combined only serve and/or reach approximately 1,200 deaf people.

Laws to Protect Their Rights

There is no law to protect disability rights including deaf people's rights. In fact, it is still against the law for a disabled person to become a teacher in Cambodia. A number of NGOs are working together towards eliminating discrimination against disabled people, and have drafted a law on the Rights of People with Disabilities. It is anticipated that the law will be adopted in the year 2008.

Deaf Education

According to the law, it is mandatory for children to attend school, but for many poor families school is not a reality because the children must work to help to support the family. For families of deaf children, as there is a lack of education and awareness about deafness, they are resigned to the label of deaf-mute, deaf and dumb, and the notion that deaf people cannot be educated. The Government in Cambodia does not address the needs of deaf children to gain access in education and has provided no resolutions. As a result, Krousar Thmey, an NGO was established to provide education for deaf children, and DDP (formerly CDPO) set up a classroom mainly for Deaf adults to learn Cambodian Sign Language, Khmer and basic mathematics, reading and writing. However, even for the deaf students who attend school, poverty and low expectations for the success of the students continue to be prominent factors in whether or not students stay in school. Often, students may be expected to work part of the year to help support the family, or even to leave school altogether for the same reason. Moreover, when school becomes difficult for a student, there is little expectation for the student to persist through the difficulties or to improve.

Sign Language(s) and Spoken Language(s)

For the majority of Deaf people in Cambodia, Cambodian Sign Language is their first and only language. Krousar Thmey uses A.S.L as an educational / language tool, and in fact, numerous C.S.L signs are borrowed and modified from A.S.L. and Auslan. Communication is not usually a problem between A.S.L and C.S.L users. In the general population, more than 90% is of [Khmer](#) origin and speak the [Khmer language](#), the country's official language. [Cambodian French](#), a remnant of the country's colonial past, is a dialect found in Cambodia and is frequently used in government. However, in recent decades, many younger Cambodians and those in the business-class have favoured learning English, as it is the prominent language among foreigners in the vast NGO and business sectors of Cambodia.

Sign Language Interpreters

How many interpreters?

For a few years, there was only one person, Ms Sinoun (a Khmer woman) who worked as a sign language interpreter and she also worked with the Deaf project at the Refugee Camps; this is where she learned sign language. The C.S.L interpreting profession officially started in 2006 after the implementation of interpreters' training program and the employment of the only six interpreters in Cambodia. Most of them are working full time as interpreters in the Skill Development Project leaving only one to serve the needs of other Deaf people.

Do You Have an Interpreter Association?

There is no interpreter association or organisation in Cambodia. Interpreting is one of the projects at DDP and we works on several fronts: 1) to train a group of interpreters in interpreting processes, 2) to raise the professional standard of interpreting in Cambodia, and to introduce a code of ethics for sign language interpreters, and 3) to raise awareness among general society of the importance of using sign language interpreters, including training deaf and hearing people on how to use an interpreter.

Details of your Interpreter Training

Our interpreter training program began in 2005. Liza Clews, a former project advisor at DDP was the trainer and she also developed the modulated training program. There are three trainees from my group who are now employed as full time interpreters for DDP. I am now the coordinator of the interpreting project at DDP, and I will begin training a new group of students in August of this year. There are two different groups one consists of students with no prior knowledge in C.S.L. They will learn a new language and start training as sign language interpreters. The second group consists of students with prior knowledge in C.S.L (DDP and Krousar Thmey staff) and they will receive interpreter training for a year. As the Deaf community here in Cambodia is approximately ten years old, there are no Deaf families and sign language is not used widely. Our interpreting students are mainly DDP staff or teachers from Krousar Thmey so our options are very limited.

Details of your Interpreter Testing/Assessment

There are three parts of the assessment: a set of questions about interpreting, both a spoken and sign language skills test, and interpreting practice in different scenarios.

Details of your Interpreter Accreditation/Certification

The course is accredited by DDP but it is not widely recognised. Hopefully, that will soon change.

What have been the important events since 2005?

- The introduction of interpreting training program
- Employment of six full time interpreters
- Employment of an interpreter coordinator

What are your goals for the future?

Our aims for the interpreters in Cambodia:

- For our profession to be recognised by the Government
- To improve the standards of interpreting services
- To provide new interpreter training every year
- To set up an interpreters' association and agency
- To increase the number of interpreters to meet the needs of the general public and Deaf people

India

Introduction

The concept of sign language interpreting as a professional service for deaf persons has yet to take hold in India. Most people including the Govt. agencies responsible for the welfare of deaf persons view sign language as a set of strange actions without any definite meaning and understood randomly by deaf people. They do not recognize sign language as a bona fide language and consider it a collection of gestures. The mystery surrounding deaf people and their mysterious communications gives rise to a number of misinterpretations of the facts as is prevalent across the world with deaf communities. Deafness being an invisible handicap leads to misunderstanding that is further exacerbated by their use of signs and lack of understanding of spoken languages. The main difference is that in India there has been a conscious effort to stigmatize deaf persons using sign language by all agencies involved in the rehabilitation of deaf persons.

This suppression of sign language and the subsequent chaos in the country, with each deaf school creating its own set of signs, has contributed greatly toward the “non-development” of the interpreting profession.

CODA's traditionally are involved in interpreting adding to the mystification of the language as one only understood by insiders. Unfortunately, due to the traditional arranged marriage system, the deaf-deaf marriage is still rare and new development in India. One study (Randhawa 2006) showed that close to 99% deaf children in India have hearing parents. There are few CODA's and most of them shun learning signs due to the stigma attached to it. Teachers are not required by law to know any signs at all and the teacher-training module actively discourages sign usage, advocating rather pure oral approach for the purposes of developing language in all deaf children regardless of their own capabilities and inclinations. Most deaf persons sign, however, and the need for interpreters is really great.

The Scenario Until 1980's.

Organisations of deaf people have also failed to advocate with the govt. for interpreting services and the development of sign language. The entire country's population of about 6-7million deaf persons has been dependent on the availability of a suitable CODA in their own family or a friend's family who would help with interpreting in serious emergencies. This “interpreting” is

usually limited to a summary of ‘he says...’ and the deaf person may get only an edited, censored and politically correct version of what is going on. The quality of life and the opportunities for the deaf were dismal.

In this scenario, the first acknowledgement by the govt. of the need for a sign language came with the advent of a 10 min weekly news broadcast in ISL. This was in the year 1988. The persons used to sign on TV were arbitrarily taken from the staff of a major organisation for the deaf—A kind of governmental neopotism widely practiced in India. The number of TV signers was increased from 2 to 7 in 1994, at which point I was included with 3 CODA’s and one other interpreter who was attached to the earlier organisation.

The signs were largely not understood by deaf persons across India earlier and the persons doing the program were transliterating rather than signing and using a lot of finger spelling. The concepts were not clear and since large numbers of deaf persons do not know English the fingerspelling was seen as a negative point. After the addition of the new inductees the program received a far better response and is still being watched regularly.

The Rehabilitation Council Of India Orientation Course:

The RCI was established by an Act of Parliament in the 1980’s to regulate and oversee the various programs and teaching courses for rehab sciences.

In the late nineties a major training initiative by the RCI was initiated to regularize untrained staff working in disability by having them participate in a bridge course of 30 days duration. Taking this opportunity my Delhi based NGO initiated the efforts to start a training program for interpreters/teachers in the basics of interpreting. The idea was well received and a two-week course was developed by myself and a colleague.

We have a saying in India which says “ Among blind men the guy with one eye is king”. We are two people with no training in interpreting, no experience even seeing interpreters in action. All we had to work with were text books on interpreting we had studied ourselves and the experience of about 10 years each of being interpreters. We created something in counsel with a deaf friend in the USA, Dr. Madan Vasishtha, himself a pioneer researcher of ISL, and got some inputs from Dr. Daniel Burch.

The initial course had 9 students of which one was the hearing wife of a deaf person and the others were teachers and social workers. The sign proficiency of each was tested and the unique problem of a multilingual country was evidenced for the first time and the need for multiple language ratings was seen. There are about 18 official languages of communication in India and 3300 others. Many Indians are multilingual at varying degrees and so their ISL skills and their spoken language skills in many languages would need to be gauged. Someone with high ISL skills may have equal skills in only one language and have much lower skills in other languages. Hence the need for a multilingual grading system.

Two more such courses were held over the years and the idea of doing these on a regular basis was scrapped in 2001 with the creation of the ISL cell.

The ISL Cell

The efforts of deaf organizations resulted in a “National Seminar On The Role Of Sign Language In Education And The Bilingual Method”. The proposal was drafted and the seminar was structured by Dr. Vasishta, with the late Mr.J.S.K.Rao, my colleague who worked with me on the interpreter orientation course earlier that year. Subsequent to this seminar, the National Institute of Hearing Handicapped initiated the Indian Sign Language Cell. It was the academic equivalent of giving the fox the responsibility of the hen house. The NIHH has been vehemently and emphatically opposed to sign usage by children and teachers. The heads of this organization have traditionally been speech therapists and audiologists who “believe” in a purely oral approach. The fact that the ISL cell was handed over to them was a ministerial decision and thus they were saddled with the job. Both Mr J.S.K Rao and myself were offered the job but we were too involved with other activities to be involved full time. The cell was then handed over to the capable hands of Mrs.Seethna a Gallaudet alumna in linguistics and Interpreter. The course material for the ISL teaching process was prepared by an excellent linguist and researcher Dr. Mrs. Ulrike Zeshan. Ms Zeshan researched Indian Sign languages and created a book on ISL Grammar to be used to teach the deaf as well as hearing persons ISL. Earlier in the 70’s Dr.James Woodward and Dr. Vasishta had done a similar exercise and shown that ISL was indeed a bona fide language.

The Signs to be used were taken from the first book of ISL created by Dr.Vasishta in 1976. Subsequently there was another Indian Sign Language Project in the Rama Krishna Mission funded by the Christoffel Blinden Mission. I was part of the working group and a large number of signs were gathered and collated from all over India. With this base information the ISL cell was created with a view to teach sign language to hearing persons and thus create interpreters. The leadership of the ISL cell was taken over by Dr. Zeshan who was a consultant and still is, and Mrs. Sethna who is still working at the ISL cell. They have been a very capable Team under their circumstances. The cell began work in 2001 and trained deaf persons to teach sign language. There are 3 grades/levels defined as A, B, and C and last for 3 months (fulltime) or 6 months (part time) each. The cell is now operational in 3 cities and an estimated 150 persons— BOTH DEAF AND HEARING-- have completed the A level course in the past 6 years. The figures for “B” is 15 and there are only 2 “C” level, one deaf and one hearing. This model was used for a time at the International Human Resource Development centre, Coimbatore where the dictionary was developed but is now been stopped. A new centre is currently being started in a city in central India by one of the “C” level graduates.

However, the interpreting portion of the original training course is more or less lip-service. No trained interpreter was involved in design and delivery of this training.

The Work Of Deaf Way

THE DEAF WAY, a voluntary organization has been instrumental in creating series of organizations of deaf persons across the country. Called Deaf Friendship clubs these groups of deaf persons meet weekly and interact on a social level. Thru these clubs THE DEAF WAY has been promoting sign usage and interpreting in the interior of India. Deaf people in the clubs participate in national and state level and of course local events such as camps, pleasure tours, leadership seminars, Aids awareness workshops and so on. All the activities are in sign language; INDIAN SIGN LANGUAGE. The members are encourage to bring friends and family to social

events particularly giving exposure to sign usage and a positive image reinforcement to the parents or others who attend. Each club is encouraged to develop local sign language talent among HEARING friends and CODAs and spouses to form a pool of signing hearing people who are conversant with the local VARIATION of ISL. These hearing people are then used to interpret at events conducted by the club and The Deaf Way. Having an interpreter and continuously highlighting their role and importance at all times and all occasions raises the profile of the interpreter and also encourages the ones who do participate in interpreting. THIS UNOFFICIAL "TRAINING" PROGRAM FOR INTERPRETERS HAVE BEEN MUCH MORE EFFECTIVE AND HAS PRODUCED ABOUT 100 INTERPRETERS AROUND THE COUNTRY.

The Work Of Disabled Rights Group (DRG)

The DRG is composed of a number of DPO's who have come together to advocate for the rights of the disabled people of India. The DRG has been advocating for interpreting services for the deaf in all for a where the rights of disabled persons are discussed. Providing interpreting services at all meetings of the DRG and all partners being encouraged to have ISL interpreting services for all meetings and events that they conduct. As a result now in Delhi, at least, the request for interpreters outstrips availability.

The Association of Sign Language Interpreters (ASLI) in INDIA

This is a fledgling organization formed by persons both deaf and hearing with a view to create and improve interpreting services to the deaf community. With a wide diversity of signs and a large number of rural deaf persons using rudimentary home signs it was decided at the outset that deaf interpreters would be given a prominent role in the work of the organization. The founding members have also made a concerted effort to be national in their approach and have inducted a board comprising 5 states of India as the initial governing body. With more posts to be included as time goes on and the organisation has an increasingly important role to play in the rehabilitation work of the country.

To this end the ASLI wishes to create a South Asian Region to encourage regional solidarity and cooperation between countries with similar backgrounds and similar cultures and similar problems.

A complex certification system is being put into place at ASLI which takes into account the critical role which has been played by a large number of interpreters who are serving deaf people and organizations across the country with no formal interpreter training and no sign language training. Notable among these is the CODA/SODA population and certainly there is an important role still to be played by them as advocates of the deaf community. Still further to this is the absolute necessity of dealing with the multilingual nature of India and the assessment of spoken and signed languages among the interpreters. With most Indians speaking 3 or more languages, especially in south India, there is a unique situation to deal with.

The membership of the ASLI is expected to be in hundreds in a comparably short time and yet the need for training will be very great.

At ASLI we are contemplating a knowledge sharing partnership with an interpreting school/university program to enable us to create master trainers to set up our own short-term training programs. We will also be advocating alongside the Indian NAD for the creation of the position of “Sign language interpreter” in the Govt. service and this will give the profession a serious and much needed boost. There is currently no recognition of the profession of interpreting and as such the Government does not hire interpreters for any language, let alone sign language. Hearing persons who do not understand the language of the court, for example, have no recourse to interpreting services. Any one may stand trial in court where the proceedings are in a language he does not know, which would be translated (sic) into his own language for his benefit at the whim of the company he is in.

As I said at the outset, interpreting profession is in its fetal stage or rather in zygote stage. We have to go a long way, however, we are making rapid progress. With the economic boom in India and our efforts resulting in getting attention of the government for recognizing ISL, we feel confident that within the next decade, India will see a huge rise in interpreting profession.

Needs: the greatest need in the area of interpreting in India is, of course, training. We do not want to reinvent the wheel and would prefer to borrow one to save time and energy. We hope that in the future some of you will play a major role in this area.

Whenever you plan to travel abroad, include India in your itinerary. Most people get scared when the word India is mentioned. It is not an easy country to visit. It is not for the faint of heart. But it is a country with rich cultural and historical background. Once you get past the facade of heat, humidity, noise and crowd and cows, you will see infinite pleasure in visiting India.

If and when you are visiting, please let me know. I will have a place for you to rest your weary body and food to nourish your body and soul. In exchange, all you will have to do is spend a day or two in training some of us. Your efforts will help the zygote develop fast and the time is not far when the umbilical cord will not be necessary.

Written by Arun C. Rao

Japan (NRASLI)

1. What are the major challenges for interpreters in your country?

1. Establishment of Work of Sign Language Interpreters as Profession rather than Volunteering

There are two main sign language interpreting service systems in Japan. Both of them are provided by local governments.

1. Registered interpreters in local autonomies:

86% of the local governments dispatch their registered sign language interpreters (SLIs) to deaf persons who have requested services. However, the governments still regard the

SLIs as "volunteers" with poor working conditions such as low payments, insecure insurance policies and insufficient on-the-job training. This situation should be changed for the SLIs to work as professionals.

2. Employees at public institutions:

Only 36% of the local governments employ sign language interpreters at public places such as city offices and the centres for disabled people. And 82% of the employed are part-time workers with poor working conditions. Moreover, they are authorized to provide their services only to the visitors in their workplaces and just a few of them are allowed to interpret outside the offices, let alone to visit deaf people in their homes or workplaces to help them find a solution to their unique problems.

2. Better Working Conditions for Sign Language Interpreters to Keep Working in Good Health

More and more sign interpreters have been coming down with health problems resulting from the insufficient working conditions as above mentioned, little understanding of both the employers and the SLIs themselves about their health problems. It is necessary to improve the working environments by increasing the number of employees that have regular medical check and learn through the manuals for prevention to keep on working in good health.

3. Establishment of Sign Language Interpretation Services to Ensure Deaf People's Rights

Deaf people had not had to pay for sign language interpretation services before a new law was enacted last year. Now several local governments have decided to charge 10% of the costs to provide sign language interpretation services to deaf persons who have made requests to get services.

We have to work hard to establish sign language interpretation services without deaf people paying for them, continuously appealing to the society that it is a fundamental human right for a deaf person as well to get full access to communication in order to fully participate in all areas of activities in society.

2. What have been your important achievements?

1. Activities with Japanese Federation of the Deaf

We have had partnership with JFD, treating each other equally and participating in the activities of deaf people and contributed to the improvement of welfare for deaf people, such as the establishment of their human rights and sign language interpretation services.

2. Management of National Sign Language Training Centre

With JFD and Japanese Association of Sign Language Interpreters (JASLI), we established and manage the National Sign Language Training Centre in Kyoto, which has the facility for researching sign language, training sign language interpreters, with hotel accommodations.

3. Nationwide Organization

Our membership is more than 10,000 and we have an affiliated chapter in every one of all the 47 prefectures nationwide.

3. How can WASLI assist?

We hope WASLI will provide us with worldwide information on SLI training systems, SL interpretation services, etc.

4. How can you assist WASLI?

We would like to do what we can to assist such countries in Asia as are interested and willing to develop and establish a system to train SLIs, a system to provide SL interpreting services and an association of SLIs.

General information on Japan

Population : 127 million

Capital: Tokyo

Deaf Association: Japanese Federation of the Deaf (JDF) <http://www.jfd.or.jp/en/index.html>

- Membership: 23,905 (Fiscal Year 2006)

Legislation to protect the Deaf

The Constitution of Japan on top of it all with such laws as follows: Disabled Persons Fundamental Law , Disabled Persons Welfare Law, Social Welfare Law, etc.

Education for the Deaf

Schools for Deaf Children =106 across the nation

Sign Language

Japanese Sign Language

Spoken Language

Japanese

Sign Language Interpreters

The Number of Sign Language Interpreters:

- Interpreters as a Profession: 1,376 (research by NRASLI, 2005)
- Registered Interpreters: about 10,600 (2002)

Interpreters' Associations: (nationwide)

- The Japanese Association of Sign Language Interpreters (JASLI) <http://www.jasli.jp/>
Membership 1,281 (2006)
- The National Research Association for Sign Language Interpretation (Zen-tsu-ken)
Membership 10,600 (2006) <http://www.zentsuken.net/en/index.html>

Education of Sign Language Interpreters

1. At Academic Institutions

One College (4-year course), 3 Technical Schools (1 State-funded, 2 Private)

- Periods vary from 2 to 4 years.
- Curriculum differ among the schools

2. Training Courses Open to the Public:

Conducted in every one of the 47 prefectures throughout the country

- (In some cases partly) Funded by the national or the local governments
- Produced and directed by the local deaf associations
- Curriculum consists of three stages (Basic, Applied and Business Practice) with 12 hours of lectures and 78 hours of training, adding up to 90 hours.

Accreditation and Certification in Detail

Accreditation for National-level Sign Interpreters (approved by the Minister of Welfare and Labour since 1990) started and systematized by the Ministerial Announcement 108 “Regulations for Certification of those who are engaged in sign interpreting, as to examination and certification of their skills and knowledge”.

Certification for Local-level Sign Interpreters (authorized by the governors since 1999)

- Conducted in 39 of the 47 prefectures of the country as “Unified Examinations”

National Sign Language Examinations (since 2006)

- Assessment of communication skills of Sign learners
- 6 Grades

Future Goals

- Building up of Training Curriculum in Higher Institutions
- Establishing Sign Interpreting as a Profession; Increasing the Number of Interpreters with Good working Conditions
- Guaranteeing Communication in Education for Deaf People

Korea

1. What are the major challenges for interpreters in your country?

The most challenge which is important this time in Korea Arrangement magnification of activation of the National Sign Language interpreters Association (WASLI-ASIA-SKO-KASLI).

1. Activation of the Korea Association of Sign Language Interpreters.

Sign Language Interpreter activation of organization is the important development of interpreter for Deaf such as professionalism and occupational vision etc. but the Korean Association of the Deaf against a systematization of Sign Language Interpreter Association with negative opinion.

(As of 2006, the National Sign Language Interpreter Association necessity was proposed and negotiated with Korean Association of the Deaf but it was broken off. However, the regional community build up at this time.)

Therefore, with the persons total 9 who are intention organization about under starting there is to a plan which national sign language association of interpreter will magnify with organization. The WASLI will be held in Spain, Currently this time conference that is being held in, informs the world-wide tendency of SLI with opportunity, what the reason of organization is that KASLI and Deaf need to share of discussion.

2. To be Arrangement of KASLI Magnify.

Korea Interpreter system the area as cities, local district of interpreter centre total 4 regular employee are working in the centre. Other part-time service work as freelance interpreter. Interpreter allowance system free in principle for Deaf. When the government bodies in public offices and the agency of broadcasting station request for interpreter and then pay an allowance. In fact of the Centre, the place where all craving of the Deaf with satisfaction too difficult for interpreter, due to lack of provided for interpreter almost all government body public offices and hospital that is why the Deaf are hard to access of various facilities as interpreter.

Currently, access of promotion of disabled person from 1997 actively in Korea, was discussed about sign language interpreter is **not an article of liability but for an article of recommendation**, the most of all public offices look away the employment of interpreter. In result of interpretation becomes intensively in regular interpreter of the centre, from working of interpreter burden to be caused by and leaving their job's rate is frequent. Occupational vision of interpreter it is the actual condition which is coming to be low as well very, because freelance interpreter is not able to maintain a livelihood hence the problem which confronts to the interpreter must be provided for every government of public offices, it enact a law immediately.

2. What have been your important achievements?

The sign language interpreter realized important result of professionalization with future in Korea.

1) Korea Association of Sign Language Interpreters has established.

Now, the people who are intention together for KASLI establishing, professionalization of sign language interpreter, Educational sign language, international sign language etc toward the various ways of working.

2) SLI of Korea, developing internet environment which Korea advances the various sign language educational video in computer voluntarily.

3) KASLI has an interest of Korea Sign Avata, meaning computer animation which the enterprise it makes through sign-video (movies) on internet from KASLI.

Re : www.ex.co.kr web-site, right 'ON AIR', right '수화방송 Sign Broadcasting' click.

3. How can WASLI assist?

We need to get various information. The type of information are:

- 1) How come interpreter will be professionalization,
- 2) What kind of methods for cultivation of interpreter,
- 3) Refer to interpreter, what kind of service for dispatching,
- 4) What rate of allowance, an hour, per-week, per-month normally?
- 5) What is whole case-study of system?
- 6) What do you think of cultivation for International Sign Language (ISL) ?
- 7) Do you still cultivate (teach) for ISL ? And how?
- 8) In china, use an Avata, how many countries use like this in real?

The various information of WASLI will lead our Korea sign language interpreter's professionalization and the place to contribute on a large scale in Korea.

4) How can you assist WASLI?

We can help the Web-site opened for the reason of development community of WASLI. The best technique of Internet in Korea, KASLI has to support the web-site, the main is to make all of video (movies) on the internet web-site. So, WASLI and KASLI be promoted to develop for communication smoothly. Please do not hesitate to contact with us if you wish to receive the best technical supporting, as long as we can assist and we do the best.

General

Population: 4 million 8 hundreds fifty thousands.

Capital City: Seoul

Deaf People

National Association of the Deaf:

Organization: National Association of the Deaf and Big city among province 16, Local branch of Association 138.

Member: Deaf and Hard of Hearing (No applicable hearing)

How many Deaf people?

204,231 (As of end of March, 2007 from Ministry Welfare and Health)

(In result of disabled actual condition survey 2005, Deaf / hard of hearing 66% of real registration)

Laws to Protect Their Rights.

- Welfare act of Disabled
- Access to the facilities promotion act of Disabled, Senior, pregnant woman etc.
- Special Education act of Disabled etc.
- Employment Promotion and vocational rehabilitation act of Disabled.
- Korean Disabled Discrimination Prohibition and Right relief act.
- Enterprise activity promotion act of Disabled.

Deaf Education

Deaf Education school: (as of 2006 present, number of class)

| Section | Special School | Mainstreaming | | total |
|-------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|-------|
| | | Special class | mainstreaming | |
| Deaf | 1,526 | 728 | 552 | 2,806 |
| Language disorder | 23 | 127 | 151 | 301 |

* Annual report of Special Education, Sept 2006.

Sign Language(s) condition from present.

- Use sign language (Deaf): 3.9% (whole 291.487)
- Use sign language (Language Disorder): 4.7% (whole 233.903)

Spoken Language(s)

Korean Language

Sign Language Interpreters

Total 960 interpreters.

Do you have an interpreter Association?

Yes, KASLI established on Nov 22, 2006 last year.

How many members?

Total 9 members.

We will share the information together, will expand the members step by step.

Details of your Interpreter Training

KASLI will be in process.

Details of your Interpreter Testing/Assessment

National Association of the Deaf (NAD) manage for a year Written exam and Practical exam as Sign Language Interpreters certificate of qualification.

KASLI will provide for qualification and evaluative course in the field of study, different from NAD.

Details of your Interpreter Accreditation/Certification

National Association of the Deaf managed for their certification from 1997.

From 2006, the certificate of official recognition under National is called national certificate of people's qualification.

What have been the important events since 2005?

The vary of work for sign language interpreter VIDEO conference in KASLI.

What are your goals for the future?

Sign Language Interpreter occupational vision though quantitative and quality for developing. The important point is to build up their occupational vision.

On April 1st of 2008, will take effect 'Korean Disabled Discrimination Prohibition and Right relief act ' so KASLI will arrange to do the best for these if the Deaf are in need of interpreter.

What to do now?

Now, KASLI has to reinforce an organization for members and inform in the public.

Taiwan

My name is Chiu,Chin-Chih. (Sign Name is CAT).

The Challenges of Taiwan

There's no formal association of sign language interpreters now in Taiwan. We wish to establish a sign language interpreters association of Taiwan as soon as possible.

There are three specific schools for the hearing impaired students in Taipei City, Taichung City and Tainan City. All the schools use Taiwanese Sign Language; International Sign is not quite as popular.

The Achievements of Taiwan

A qualification test for interpreters has been held by the National Labour Institution. Those who pass level "C" are able to handle interpreting. Both hearing and deaf testers are included.

There are approximately 100 people who passed test spread throughout Taiwan; however, most of these are in northern Taiwan (around 40 people).

How Can WASLI Help Us and Vice Versa?

We hope WASLI can help us to contact sign language interpreters from all over the world to support the 21st Summer Deaflympics.

Finally, I'd like to give my best wishes and greetings and invite you all to Taiwan to join us for the 21st Summer Deaflympics.

AUSTRALASIA AND OCEANIA

Australia

Auslan (Australian Sign Language)/English Interpreting

1. The Australian context

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 | [Australian] Population in millions | Signing deaf community | Implied prevalence rate [in 1/1000 of population] |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|---|
| 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 Society of New South Wales, 1989 | 16.6 | >15,000 | 0.89 |
| Hyde & Power, 1991 | 17.2 | >15,400+ | 0.89 |
| Deaf Society 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 enrolments and National Acoustic Laboratory records, Johnston (2003) estimates the signing deaf population in Australia to be approximately 6,500.

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*.)

Australian Sign Language

The sign language used within the Deaf community in Australia is Australian Sign Language (Auslan). Across Australia there are several distinct dialectical differences to be found within Auslan. However, these dialectical differences do not impact greatly on successful communication between signers from different regions. Generally the dialectical 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 "transliterators"* 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 (O'Reilly, 2005).

Education for deaf people in Australia

As reported in the Australian 2006 country report, 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-enrolment approach whereby deaf and hearing students are educated in the same classroom through a team of a regular

* The term "transliterators" 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 "transliterators" we can more clearly distinguish them from Auslan/English interpreters who have achieved formal accreditation.

classroom teacher and a qualified teacher of the deaf using both sign language and English (Kreimeyer, Crooke, Drye, Egbert, & Klein, 2000).

The NSW Department of Education's so-called bilingual program for primary- and secondary-level deaf children in two state schools, which is in effect an inclusion program using interpreters in the classroom, has received criticism for ineffectiveness, and there is talk that the program may be closed down.

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.

Amendments to the Disability Discrimination Act (1992) have introduced "Disability Standards for Education" (2005), which protect the rights of individuals with disabilities in the following areas: enrolment; participation; curriculum development, accreditation and delivery; student support services; and the elimination of harassment and victimisation.

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 that 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, outsourcing, 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 that 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 that 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.

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 ensuring 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.

The interpreting profession

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 still an apt description of the Australian 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 (Bontempo & 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), Leneham and Napier (2003); Napier and Barker (2003; Napier & Barker, 2004); Banna (2004); Conlon and Napier (2004); Napier and

Cornes (2004); Leneham (2005, 2006); Napier (2002, 2004, 2005); Bontempo & Napier (in press) and a region specific textbook (Napier, McKee & Goswell, 2006) 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 postgraduate University degree program specifically for accredited Auslan interpreters, to further advance their skills and qualifications, at Macquarie University in New South Wales, Australia. 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 accredit 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.

A profile of the profession

As at 31 July 2006, NAATI had accredited a total of 782 Auslan/English interpreters in Australia since testing commenced in November 1982. Of these, 678 were accredited at Paraprofessional level; and only 104 practitioners at Professional Interpreter level (Bell, S, personal communication, 2006). 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 above figure of 782 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. Practising qualified interpreters are estimated to be in the region of 250-300, although it is impossible to accurately pinpoint this figure. Additionally, 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 training 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.

A more recent survey distributed by Bontempo and Napier (in press) received responses from 110 NAATI-accredited interpreters. 67.3 percent of respondents were accredited at the paraprofessional level, and 32.7 percent were accredited at the professional level. This demonstrates that the 70:30 ratio found by Napier and Barker (2003) still applies. Of the total number of respondents, 77.3 percent reported practising either full time or part time in the profession. The remainder worked in some other capacity, typically as a teacher of deaf students, a booking clerk for an interpreting agency, a community worker, and so on. A majority (74.5%) of the respondents were between thirty and forty-nine years of age (83.5 percent female and 16.5 percent male). One interesting difference between the Bontempo and Napier survey and the Napier and Barker survey is that more than 86 percent of the respondents held postsecondary qualifications (9% more than cited by Napier and Barker). This may be due to the fact that a university interpreter training program was established at Macquarie University soon after the Napier and Barker survey.

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 counselling; 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 (deafblind; 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 profile outlined 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.

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 national curriculum is currently under review, with the Federal Department of Education beginning a consultation process to address who should develop the curriculum, and what competencies should be addressed.

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.

Recent achievements and future goals

Annual Conference

A traditional annual event of ASLIA, the *ASLIA National Winter School*, which was traditionally focused on hands-on practical workshops has transformed into a national conference with invited international speakers. The conferences cover an impressive range of issues in Auslan/English interpreting. In 2006 the conference was held in Perth, Western Australia and the keynote speaker was Dr Elizabeth Winston from the USA. The 2007 conference will take place in Sydney in September, with the keynote address from Dr Rachel McKee of New Zealand.

In 2006, ASLIA National hosted an Interpreter Trainer Workshop (ITW), where interpreter educators from all over Australia came together to exchange ideas for teaching activities and curriculum assessment. This followed on from the first workshop, which was held in 2003, which was proposed by Jemina Napier after regularly attending conventions of the Conference of Interpreter Trainers. The 2007 conference will also host another ITW.

Discussions are underway with SLIANZ at present regarding the possibility of coordinating a regional "online" conference.

ASLIA-NABS Deaf Relay Interpreter Certification

ASLIA National was commissioned by the National Auslan Booking and Payment Service (NABS) at the end of 2005 to develop a national certification test for deaf interpreters. NABS identified a particular need for assessing deaf interpreters as they are often required to provide deaf interpreters in medical appointments. Della Goswell was appointed as project officer, due to her experience as an interpreter, interpreter educator, examiner, and expertise in testing and curriculum development. Based on a review of literature, consultation with deaf and hearing interpreters worldwide, and a pilot process, Phase 1 of the project is complete. A test has been devised which corresponds to the equivalent NAATI paraprofessional test for hearing interpreters. We have now entered Phase 2 of the project, which is the roll out of the test. We have received over 80 expressions of interest from deaf people who would like to sit the test. It is envisaged that by the end of 2007, we will have a pool of certified deaf interpreters. ASLIA

National has already approached NAATI with a view to them adopting the test for deaf interpreters, and incorporating it into their accreditation system. NAATI has indicated willingness to consider this proposal on completion of the testing and an evaluation of the whole project. This is a significant advance, not only for Australia but potentially for deaf interpreters worldwide.

Re-branding

ASLIA National engaged in an extensive process of re-branding, and updated the website, stationary, business cards and name badges accordingly.

Sponsorship

In 2007 ASLIA National was in a position to provide sponsorship to the Critical Link 5: Interpreting in the community conference, which took place in Sydney in April. All delegates were provided with an ASLIA National lip balm and an information sheet about the activities of ASLIA National.

Policy development

ASLIA national has developed policies and guidelines as follows:

- Transfer of knowledge document for hosts organising the annual ASLIA National conference;
- Legal interpreting policy and guidelines;
- Pro-bono interpreting policy;
- Donations policy
- Remuneration policy
- Joint PD log book with AUSIT and NAATI
- Mental health interpreting guidelines (adapted from those developed by ASLI, UK)

We are currently revising our Code of Ethics, following the Canadian AVLIC model of adopting a rights based approach. A draft has gone out to all stakeholders for consultation and feedback, with a view to adopting the new Code at the conference in September.

St Jerome Awards

Following a recommendation and an event hosted by ASLIA (WA) and the WA Deaf Society, ASLIA National has developed an award scheme to recognise the achievements of Auslan/English interpreters throughout the country. The awards have been named after St Jerome, who was born sometime between 340 and 347 AD in Stridon, a town on the border between the Roman provinces of Dalmatia and Pannonia (now on the Italian side of the modern Italian-Croatian border). St Jerome translated the Old and New Testaments into Latin. This translation was recognised eleven centuries later by the Council of Trent as the official version of the Bible. ASLIA National feels that interpreters are often an unsung group of dedicated professionals who provide communication access for clients with whom they work. The work, professional responsibilities and roles of Auslan interpreters are frequently misunderstood, with work environments at times being demanding and challenging. Thus states have been requested to

organised state-based awards, with winners going towards the final national awards coinciding with the national conference in September. Nominations are called for in the following categories: Community interpreter, Interpreter Advocate, Pre/Primary Interpreter; Secondary interpreter; Tertiary interpreter; Interpreting organisation. A comprehensive set of guidelines has been developed by ASLIA National to assist state branches in conducting local awards events.

New Zealand / Aotearoa (2007)

Report prepared by Alan Wendt, George Major, Delys Magill

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|-----------------------------|---|
| Population | 4.18 million |
| Capital | Wellington / Te Whanganui-a-Tara |
| Official languages | de jure Te Reo Māori (Māori Language Act 1987) New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL Act 2006) |
| | de facto English |
| National Deaf association | Deaf Association of New Zealand www.deaf.co.nz |
| SL Interpreters association | SLIANZ www.slianz.org.nz |

Sign Language interpreting SLIANZ MEMBERSHIP

Our association has 4 membership categories:

- Ordinary (52): Full members who are qualified (either in New Zealand or with a recognised overseas qualification, usually from Australia or the UK).
- Associate (6): Can be anyone who supports interpreters and the interpreting profession, including Deaf people, communicators, etc.
- Associate corporate (5): Professional, educational or corporate bodies that support interpreters and the interpreting profession, for example tertiary institutions and Deaf organisations.
- Honorary (3): Individuals or organisations that have given exemplary and generous service to SLIANZ, its members and the interpreting profession.

Interpreter Training

Professional training for NZSL interpreters has been offered since 1992 through the Diploma in

Sign Language Interpreting (DipSLI) program at Auckland University of Technology. This is a two-year full time undergraduate course, with an entry requirement of basic NZSL proficiency as well as standard university entrance requirements. Since the Diploma's introduction, it has become clear that an adequate level of bilingualism and interpreting competence takes a longer period of formal study; it is hoped this training course will be expanded into a three-year programme, whether as an interpreting degree or as a major within a more general Bachelor's degree. Negotiations are currently underway for the Postgraduate Diploma in Auslan/English Interpreting from Macquarie University to be offered locally in New Zealand, in collaboration with Victoria University, Wellington.

Details Of Your Interpreter Accreditation/Certification

There is no independent system for accreditation of signed or spoken language interpreters within New Zealand other than the Māori Language Commission's registration system for Māori/English interpreters and translators. Some spoken language interpreters therefore apply for Australian NAATI accreditation; however, as NAATI's sign language accreditation is specific to Auslan, it is not available to NZSL/English interpreters. Although there is no national interpreter accreditation body, the Diploma of Sign Language Interpreting (DipSLI) is recognised as the minimum standard of qualification to work as an interpreter in New Zealand.

Interpreter Testing / Assessment

After graduation, there is no independent system for testing.

Interpreter Statistics

There is no mechanism to calculate the number of qualified sign language interpreters in New Zealand, though an educated guess can be made. According to the current Programme Director of the AUT interpreter training programme, 93 students have graduated from the programme; there have also been overseas trained interpreters (typically from Australia and Britain) living and working in New Zealand, a handful of whom still live here. We estimate there to be approximately 93-95 qualified sign language interpreters in New Zealand though we know that not all work as interpreters; at least 60 work in some capacity as interpreters, both full-time and part-time.

In New Zealand there is also a high number of communicators (unqualified) interpreting in both the community and, as teacher aides, in mainstream education settings.

What Are Your Goals For The Future?

We also have two strategic goals mandated by our membership for the 2006-2008 term:

1. To develop a structured system of professional development.
2. To undertake a comprehensive and nationally consistent promotion of safe working conditions, co-working and OOS prevention.

BALKANS

Croatia

I come from the capital city of Croatia, Zagreb. Croatia has the population of 4.5 millions citizens. The Association that I am president of is Croatian Association of Deafblind Persons DODIR.

Croatian Association of Deafblind Persons DODIR founded an interpreting service, Support Service DODIR in 2000 using the model of European and world interpreting services with a long work experience, especially the Swedish service of interpreters, AB Stockholmstolkarna.

Support Service DODIR is currently the only professional service in Croatia, which provides interpreters for deafblind and deaf users and other associations and institutions (police, court of law, schools, theatres, etc.). There are 26 interpreters in our Support Service.

We give a free communication support, access to information and help in orientation and mobility for all deafblind and deaf users. The evidence of our good work is the constant arrival of new clients.

Our biggest achievement has been forming the Support Service considering this is the first professional service of that kind. Furthermore, we were the first who started with the education of interpreters for deaf and deafblind. Educational interpreters in universities, high schools and primary schools are also one of our great achievements.

Unfortunately the Support Service doesn't have a formal status in Croatia so we have problems with financing. Although our Service has been recognized and declared the best Support Service in the area of southeast Europe, our government still hasn't developed a financial system that would ensure access to interpreters to a wider population and adequate fees for the interpreters. WASLI could help us by ensuring an educational support. You could send professional interpreters who would give additional education to our interpreters. Our goal is that our non-formal but professional education becomes formal on a national level. WASLI can offer new models of interpreting services and can help us to improve our Support Service; we can learn a lot from your rich experience and problems you have encountered.

We can offer our experience in forming the Support Service in the area where it had never existed before. We can talk about our financial problems and how we deal with them. Together we could share our knowledge, and help other associations, especially in the southeast Europe considering we know the mentality of the area and the fact that a lot of countries have already asked for help. We could also work on common projects for deafblind and deaf people and organize scientific -professional seminars.

Serbia

The Republic of Serbia is a country in the western Balkans, it covers an area of 88,361 sq. km. With population of 7,498,000 inhabitants. Capital city is Belgrade.

People from the Association of Deaf and Hard of Hearing of Serbia say that there are no real databases so we cannot tell the exact number of Deaf people in the country. But the assumption is that there are 30.000 Deaf and 50.000 Hard of Hearing, and that 90% of the deaf population uses Sign language.

Sign language is not legally recognized yet. The National Association is working on that and they hope it will happen soon.

The method used in Deaf schools is mostly Total Communication. Though most of the teachers would say that they use Sign language, their signing is in a very low level. Few years ago Sign language has entered in the curriculum for Deaf teachers but it is a short course and students learn just basic communication in Sign language. There is a strong impression that none of the stakeholders (teachers, Deaf people, parents etc) have accurate information regarding bilingual education.

There are 44 interpreters in the country and 95 translators (people whose skills are in a lower level but they are still capable of doing some kind of interpreting, mostly in non-official situations). Everyone who gets the certificate (for interpreter or for translator) from the National Association of Deaf and Hard of Hearing automatically becomes the member of the Section.

However only few of them really work. Since being SL interpreter is not a recognized profession and it's not possible to make the living out of it, most of the interpreters have to find some other job and therefore are often not available for interpreting. They also lose the contact with Sign language and they don't have chance to improve their skills in some other way. Of those 44 interpreters only 13 are interpreters under oath, which means they can work in the court. There is only one full-time interpreter who is employed in one of the local associations of Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Serbia. All these figures include Montenegro as well.

The only organization of Sign Language interpreters in Serbia is in fact the Section within the National Association of Deaf and Hard of Hearing. It was founded in 2003 when it was within the association of Deaf and Hard of Hearing of Serbia and Montenegro. Since these two countries have separated, the Section will probably become the part of the Association of Deaf and Hard of Hearing of Serbia. Though there is an idea to transform the Section into an independent Association, many interpreters think that it should stay within the Association of Deaf and Hard of Hearing since it would be financially very difficult for that kind of association to work independently. Final decision will be made on the next meeting, which should be held in October.

Sign Language interpreters are mostly children or some relatives of Deaf people, teachers for Deaf children or people who work with Deaf people. So the way to become a Sign Language interpreter in our country is to be in contact with Deaf people.

There is a committee appointed by the Association of Deaf and Hard of Hearing which decides who will get the certificate that enables one to work as an interpreter. The exam is usually being

held after a Seminar of Sign Language, which lasts 7 days, and it happens more or less every year. Participants in the Seminar are both people who never signed before and those who already know Sign Language, in some level. So there are two groups - the “elementary” group and the “advanced” group. The whole seminar is based on learning Sign language. There is also a theoretical part of the Seminar where the participants learn some basic things about Deaf and deafness, about Code of Ethics and some general things regarding interpreting and Sign language, but this part is not included in the final assessment for SL Interpreters. Final exam lasts 5 to 10 minutes and it is consisted of sign to voice and reverse and short conversation with Deaf person. The validity of the Certificate for SL Interpreters is 4 years and should be reconsidered after that.

In last few years Sign Language has become more “popular” in public, more and more people who never had any contact with Deaf persons before, are willing to learn Sign Language and to know more about it. Sign Language is still not recognized but the public is getting more aware of it.

It’s been 2 years that National TV Company is broadcasting News in Sign language. They also produced 3 TV series dedicated to Sign language.

One of the most important goals of SL interpreters is to set up a national interpreters’ association that would work in close cooperation with the Association of Deaf and Hard of Hearing on all the issues related to Sign language and interpreting.

The interest for Sign Language has increased, but there is still a great problem of methodology for teaching Sign Language because no one has ever studied it. So, for the time being it’s a pure improvisation. The same goes for the training for SL interpreters. We hope that WASLI could support us in setting up proper trainings for SL interpreters. That, together with setting up a national association, could eventually lead us to the position where we could also be of a greater support for WASLI itself.

We are making our first steps in trying to know the situation about Sign Language and about the interpreters’ services in other countries. We are ready to learn and to exchange and therefore we would be very happy to be in touch and to cooperate with all of our colleagues from all over world.

Vera Jovanovic and Desanka Zizic
Sign Language interpreters from Serbia

EUROPE

The Association of Sign Language Interpreters for **England, Wales and Northern Ireland**.

Developing the interpreter: Developing the profession.

General

According to government statistics (www.statistics.gov.uk) the mid-2005 population of the constituent countries of the United Kingdom is estimated as follows:

| | Capital | Population | Percentage of total UK population |
|------------------|-----------|------------|-----------------------------------|
| England | London | 50,431,700 | 83.8 |
| Wales | Cardiff | 2,958,600 | 4.9 |
| Scotland | Edinburgh | 5,094,800 | 8.5 |
| Northern Ireland | Belfast | 1,724,400 | 2.9 |
| | | | |
| United Kingdom | London | 60,209,500 | |

Deaf People

The national association of the Deaf in the UK is the British Deaf Association¹. BSL was recognised as an official British language by the UK government on 18th March 2003, but it does not have any legal protection. According to the BDA website British Sign Language (BSL) is the first or preferred language of around 250,000 Deaf people in the UK.

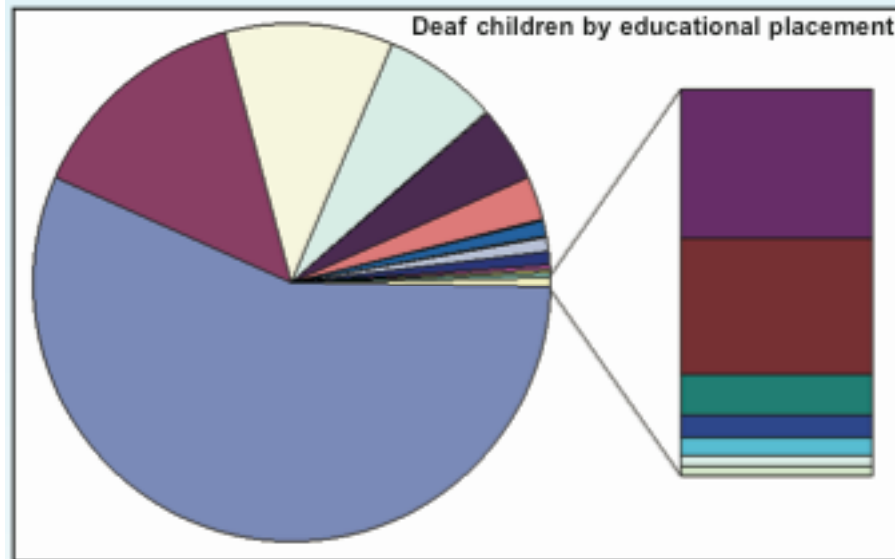
Laws to protect their rights:

Whilst there is no sign language act there are several pieces of legislation that can be used to ensure sign language using Deaf people gain access via BSL media or interpreters. To access the goods and services of governmental and non-governmental organisations and businesses there is the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 and 2005. The 1996 Education Act made provision for the publication of a Special Educational Needs Code of Practice. The Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) and the PACE Codes of Practice provide the core framework of police powers and safeguards around stop and search, arrest, detention, investigation, identification and interviewing detainees. It ensures that Deaf people have the right to an interpreter. Finally the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA), which incorporates the rights contained in the European Convention of Human Rights (the Convention) into UK law, is also relevant in challenging discrimination.

¹ www.signcommunity.org.uk

Deaf Education

According to the BATOD² report there were 569 establishments (Schools for the Deaf, services and units) educating 25020 deaf children in 2000.



| | |
|-------|---------------------------------------|
| 15875 | Mainstream |
| 4010 | HI unit attached to mainstream school |
| 2989 | Other special school |
| 2056 | School for the deaf |
| 1305 | Pre-school home visits |
| 810 | Nursery/playgroup |
| 310 | Other special unit |
| 215 | Further Education College |
| 196 | Private/Independent mainstream |
| 121 | Deafblind unit/Hi unit special school |
| 73 | School for the deaf FE dept |
| 71 | Resourced FE college |
| 59 | Not identified |
| 54 | Education otherwise |
| 16 | College for the deaf |
| 9 | Vith form college |
| 7 | Multiple disabled VI school |
| 4 | Higher Education |
| 4 | Special FE college |

Indigenous Sign Language(s): BSL and ISL

Although BSL is the main sign language of the UK, in Northern Ireland, Irish Sign Language is also used and there is a settled ISL using community in London. No other information is available on other signed languages, although some hearing and Deaf interpreters regular work into other signed languages for Deaf immigrants (ASL and Czech Sign Language requests have been received by the ASLI office.)

² www.batod.org.uk

Indigenous Spoken Language(s): English, Welsh, Scottish Gaelic, Lowland Scots, Cornish, Irish

The Welsh Language Act 1993 establishes in law the equality of the Welsh and English languages in Wales. It places an obligation on the public sector to treat the Welsh and English languages equally in the provision of services to the public in Wales. According to the 2001 census results 582,368 persons age three and over were able to speak Welsh - 20.8% of the population of Wales. The 2001 census recorded 65,674 people aged three or over as being able to speak, read, or write Scottish Gaelic - 1.3 per cent of the Scottish population. Lowland Scots is spoken by 30% of the Scottish population according to the 1996 estimate of the General Register Office for Scotland (approximately 1.5 million speakers). In Northern Ireland, about 7% of the population speak Irish according to the 2001 census (around 110,000 speakers) and 2% use regional forms of Scots according to the 1999 Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (around 30,000 speakers). Cornish is spoken by roughly 3,500 people as a result of a revival started in 1903. Since 2002, Cornish has been recognised as a minority language by the UK government, under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

Main immigrant language: Punjabi; at least 300 other languages

According to Hansard, 7th March 2000, Punjabi has an estimated 1.3 million users; this is probably the second most commonly used language in the UK. According to the language trends 2005 report by CiLT in Scotland at least 11,000 children speak at least 104 languages; in Wales, at least 8,000 children speak at least 98 languages; in England, at least 702,000 children speak at least 300 languages. London is the most linguistically diverse area but, even outside London, at least 196 languages are spoken (and the actual figure is likely to be much higher than this.)

Sign Language Interpreters

How many interpreters?

It is always difficult to assess how many people are working within the community and in educational settings. ASLI has a membership of interpreters who have successfully completed qualifications (Associates and Full members), those working towards qualifications (Student members) and supporters of the aims of our Association (individual, corporate and educational affiliates).

| ASLI Members | May 2007 | ASLI Affiliates | May 2007 |
|----------------|------------|--|------------|
| Full | 313 | Individual | 99 |
| Associate | 108 | Corporate | 25 |
| Student | 35 | Education | 4 |
| Total | 456 | Total | 128 |
| IRP registered | April 2007 | Total number of IRP registered and/or ASLI members | |
| MRSLI | 324 | | |
| TI | 58 | | 569 |
| JTI | 59 | | |
| Total | 471 | | |

As the professional association we do not hold the register for BSL/English interpreters for public service interpreting, although many of our members are registered with the IRP. The register is administered by the Independent Registration Panel³ (IRP) on behalf of the Council for the Advancement of Communication with Deaf people (CACDP). The IRP is comprised of a variety of stakeholders including ASLI, the BDA, ABSLT (sign language tutors association), representatives from universities, from other training providers and from agencies. It is unknown how many unregistered non-members are working as interpreters but this could at least equal those registered with the IRP and/or members of ASLI.

To become an interpreter you need to conform to the National Occupational Standards⁴ established for both spoken and signed languages. These standards define three areas required for an interpreter: theoretical knowledge, language and practical interpreting. There are three different levels of BSL/English interpreters who can register with the IRP.

This system allows for interpreters to either follow a university qualification or to compile an individual portfolio under the National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) system of assessment to meet the national interpreting standards' requirements.

Levels of Interpreter Training

Those who are acquiring theoretical knowledge in accordance with the national interpreting standards and have the equivalent of NVQ 3 BSL can register as Junior Trainee Interpreters (JTI) with CACDP via the IRP. JTIs are eligible to join as Associate Members of ASLI when they have successfully completed an approved course.

Those who have proven knowledge in accordance with the national interpreting standards and the equivalent of NVQ 4 BSL can register as Trainee interpreters (TI with IRP/CACDP) and are eligible to join as Associate Members of ASLI if they have successfully completed an approved course

Those that have proven knowledge that meets the national interpreting standards, plus NVQ 4 BSL, with proven practical interpreting meeting the national interpreting standards, are eligible to be Full Members of ASLI (MASLI) and are eligible to apply to the Independent Registration Panel (IRP) to become Members of the Register of Sign Language Interpreters (MRSLI).

Initial University Training

The University of Bristol Centre for Deaf Studies has a 3 year BSc (Hons) degree in Deaf Studies with an interpreting stream. If a student successfully completes the interpreting stream with a minimum of 45% in the Advanced BSL for Interpreters module, s/he is eligible to become an Associate Members of ASLI and a JTI. Passing the interpreting stream with 65% Advanced BSL for Interpreters means that a student is eligible to be an Associate Member of ASLI and a TI. The student is expected to have passed the degree overall and the interpreting stream modules.

³ http://www.cacdp.org.uk/Directory/Scripts/irp_index.asp

⁴ <http://www.cilt.org.uk/standards/index.htm>

Heriot-Watt University currently offers a Certificate Course in Interpreting Studies and Skills (BSL/English) as a part-time course over a 2-year period. A successful graduate can apply to be a Junior Trainee Interpreter if they also have BSL Level 3. This is one of the criteria for Associate Membership with or without a BSL qualification.

The University of Wolverhampton offers a foundation year for students with no knowledge of BSL and then a 3 year, or part time equivalent, BA (Hons) Interpreting (BSL/English) degree. If a student successfully completes the BA (Hons) s/he is eligible to become an Associate Member of ASLI. The student is eligible also to become a TI (CACDP).

The University of Central Lancashire offers a BA (Hons) in Deaf Studies. If a student successfully completes this course (including all of the Graduate Diploma modules) then s/he is eligible to become a JTI and an Associate Member of ASLI.

Durham University offers the 'Postgraduate Diploma in Interpreting with the Deaf Community' (in alternate years). This one-year part-time course introduces students to BSL/English interpreting. The qualification (with external experience) allows eligibility for Associate interpreter membership of ASLI and Trainee Interpreter status with CACDP.

Advanced University Training

The University of Central Lancashire offers a part-time postgraduate diploma in BSL/English interpreting and translation. If a student successfully completes this diploma, they are eligible to become a Full Member of ASLI (and to become MRSLI via the IRP/CACDP)

SLI/UCLAN offers a part time postgraduate diploma in BSL/English interpreting. If a student successfully completes this diploma, they are eligible to become a Full Member of ASLI (and to become MRSLI via the IRP/CACDP).

The University of Leeds offers a postgraduate diploma and an MA in Interpreting and Translation Studies: BSL/English. If a student successfully completes the diploma or the MA they are eligible to become a Full Member of ASLI (and to become MRSLI via the IRP/CACDP).

ASLI's achievements and goals

What have been the important events since 2005?

Establishing a full time office with support staff.

What are your goals for the future?

Increasing the support we offer interpreters via post-qualification professional development courses; increasing the number of Deaf interpreter members; providing more mentors; offering greater support for interpreters being taken through a complaints procedure; having a greater influence at a national policy level.

1. *What are the major challenges for interpreters in your country?*

Ensuring regulated interpreters are employed within public service domains and are undertaking professional development to meet the growing needs of the Deaf community. To maintain good relations with the Deaf community as it's structure and our profession changes.

2. *What have been your important achievements?*

Establishing an office to maintain the organisation of professional development courses; our annual conference; gaining a greater public presence and answering a greater number of enquiries.

3. *How can WASLI assist?*

Providing us with a network of interpreter organisations to discuss ideas and offer models for developing the work we do.

4. *How can you assist WASLI?*

We have a range of information and services available on our website. We also have a willing and active National Executive Committee and several working groups able to support other interpreting organisations with professional development, interpreter mentoring, specialist areas such as legal, employment and educational interpreting, Deaf interpreting and a variety of trainers with vocational and academic experience.

Denmark

The small country Denmark has a population of 5.4 million people.

In the little green country only 20% is build-up; the rest is used for farming and enjoyed as pure nature with a large number of beaches.

The capital city is Copenhagen and around 600.000 people live in Copenhagen. This is also where you can visit the Danish Deaf Association (DDL) and KC the school where they educate Sign Language interpreters.

The spoken language is Danish, and most children learn English in school and also typically German, Spanish or French.

There is app. 5000 Deaf using sign language in Denmark.

Deaf-schools have existed in Denmark for many years and we are fortunate that a lot of deaf are educated as teachers and work in these schools.

Also there are several centre-schools where children with special needs for example hard of hearing children are attending school in separate groups. Since the introduction of CI the number of students in the deaf-schools is declining. This year not a single child starts school in a deaf-school. Doctors in Denmark warn parents that the use of sign language will ruin their children's benefit from their CI. This situation of course will affect our employment within the next ten years. Most children are now in centre-schools ore even integrated alone in a mainstream school.

Deaf people in Denmark have the right to have an interpreter for educational purposes, for work related activities, in hospitals, meetings with the “public Denmark”, in various legal settings and also they can apply for a social interpreter for any other activity.

There are funds set of to produce television programs for the Deaf every year. The production company “Deaf-film” produces 46 hours pr. year and a 10 min. news program 5 days a week. Last year a digital channel was introduced with 2 hours interpretation of news and news-related programs every night.

Since 1984 there has been an education for Sign Language Interpreters. Today it is a 3 ½ years education if you start from scratch not knowing any sign language. Just this year KC the school training sign language interpreters has joined the very large school for further education for teachers and employees in preschool. This we hope will result in an upgrade of our education so that we can achieve a Bachelor degree.

The Association for Sign Language Interpreters (FTT) has existed since 1977. We have today 191 members but in total we think that there are 250-300 interpreters working in Denmark. Almost all interpreters working have past the official exams from KC and there is no other certification or accreditation in Denmark. Most of the public funding covering the cost of sign language interpretation is given though only to interpreters with the official education which protect us somehow in relation to the problem of self-taught interpreters. We may soon need a register of educated interpreters though since more small companies and independent interpreters emerge.

For many years the challenge in Denmark for sign language interpreters has been to stay healthy meaning that work-related illnesses were very common 10 years ago. We, our union and the company employing interpreters, focused on this, and made some regulations on the number of interpreter hours per day and per week. The number and length of breaks during the day was defined and some definitions on assignments suited for one interpreter or two interpreters were changed. Also the company employed a physiotherapist and that is a thing we can recommend.

Now our challenge is to maintain this protection of the interpreters working conditions within all the companies unfortunately competing on “price”!

Also most companies are reluctant to employing the interpreters on a regular basis but tend to use a large number of freelancers now. This we find is an unfortunate development. The development of our trade benefits from companies willing to invest time and money in their employees. Interpreters not sure of a regular income tend to find other jobs and leave our trade. The competition within such a small group makes you lonely and self-centred and unwilling to work for the development of our trade and organisation. It is a big challenge for us now to stand united as interpreters. Our loyalty is a bit challenged. Do we stay loyal to ourselves, our employer, the Deaf or our trade?

We observe an increased demand for signed Danish interpretation, interpretation for deaf with additional disabilities and for interpretation from English. At most universities now the lectures are in English.

On behalf of FTT, Denmark
Johanne Smerlov

Estonia

General:

Population: 1 315 912 (July 2007)

Capital city: Tallinn

Deaf people:

National Association of the Deaf: Estonian Association of the Deaf (Eesti Kurtide Liit) was founded in 1922.

Number of Deaf people: approximately 1500

Laws to protect their rights:

Estonian Sign Language is recognised since March 2007 by Estonian Language Law. Sign Language interpreting services are provided based on Social Care Law.

There are two schools for the Deaf – Tallinn Helen's School is a bilingual school and Tartu Hiie Kool provides oral education. Deaf students may also study in a mainstream school.

Sign Languages: Estonian Sign Language

Spoken Language: Estonian

Sign Language Interpreters:

There are 28 qualified Estonian Sign Language interpreters. Estonian Association of Sign Language Interpreters (Eesti Viipekeelee Tõlkide Ühing) was found in 1989 and has 23 members. EVKTÜ is currently also a full member of EFSLI. Since September 2006 Estonian Sign Language Interpreter training started in the University of Tartu (three-year full time training, vocational higher education diploma). Sign Language interpreters are qualified according to the National Qualification Standard for sign language interpreters.

The most important event since 2005 has been the start of interpreter training in the University of Tartu.

Finland

1. What are the major challenges for interpreters in your country?

Rapid, new arrangements in Sign Language interpretation field started in year 2005. Prior to this it was often unclear who the interpreters were working for. It was not clear whether the freelancer interpreter was self-employed, employed by the Deaf client or by a municipal interpreting centre or the municipality / city paying the salary as stated in the social services law on behalf of the Deaf person.

A clarification for this confusing state of affairs was much needed as the previous situation caused frequent problems especially in issues such as salary and working conditions. Therefore the new system already implemented in the capital area and in the central western area around the city of Tampere was a positive development. In those areas all of the interpreting services have been divided to private and municipal interpreting agencies according to bidding. The agency that has won the bidding of certain type of interpreting service such as educational or community interpreting receives the highest amount of interpreting assignments. All of the interpreters are employed by an agency, meaning that their employment status is no longer unclear. During this process many interpreters have taken the opportunity of establishing agencies of their own. As a result of this new tendency entrepreneurship is quickly increasing in the interpreting services.

Another challenge for interpreters is to provide quality service for our higher educated Deaf clientele. As we now have more Deaf students studying for their BA and MA degrees the skill and education levels of the interpreters working in various academic circumstances need to be upgraded.

2. What have been your important achievements?

Most important events for the situation of Sign Language interpreters in Finland are:

- The recognition of the national Sign Language in 1995
- The recognition of the profession in university level in 1998 (Humanistic University of Applied Sciences was recognized as university in 1998)
- The creation of the Code of Ethics for Community Interpreters with following parties: The Finnish Association of Translators and Interpreters, The Finnish Union of Translators, The Finnish Association of the Deaf, the Finnish Association of Sign Language Interpreters, Helsingin seudun asioimistulkkikeskus [Community Interpreting Centre for the Helsinki Area], Turun seudun tulkkikeskus [Interpreting Centre for the Turku Area] and Lingua Nordica Oy
- Joining the Federation of Special Service and Clerical Employees (ERTO) (labour union) in 1986 and later changing to Akava (the Confederation of Unions for Academic Professionals in Finland) Special Branches in 2006
- First collective agreement for Finnish Sign Language interpreters by Via Sign Language Sector Cooperative
- The Spring meeting 2006 of the Finnish Association of Sign Language Interpreters decided to change the trade union from Federation of Special Service and Clerical Employees (ERTO) to Akava Special Branches (<http://www.akavanerityisalat.fi/index.php?lang=en&id=1683>).

- Interpreting Co-operation Seminar in Helsinki last spring – a seminar together with spoken language interpreters. The theme of the conference dealt with securing the profession title interpreter.
- Annual Valentines Day campaign, “For your mate as well” funded EFSLI’s Special Attendance Fund.
- SVT organized a trip to Denmark for interpreters in the summer of 2006. The goal of the trip was to find out the situation of Danish interpreters and their services.
- Another recent achievement is the development of the interpreter training. The training is currently operating in Universities of Applied sciences, in other words in academic level. The BA degree takes four years of full time. The first trainings we had in operated at secondary level and lasted only for few weeks. We have come a long way since.
- The new structure of providing interpreting services, which was described more closely in the first question, already implemented in Helsinki and Tampere areas is an important accomplishment as well. We now have a clear model for interpreting service in terms of employer, employment and client statuses. Each party now knows what their rights and responsibilities are. We are hoping to see the same service structure spread all over Finland.
- One more achievement is the empowerment of the Finnish Association of Sign Language Interpreters. The Association has had a highly active board for several years now. As a result we have had many service improvements for the members of the association. The newsletter has been redesigned, domestic support for the interpreters has improved, international cooperation has been brought closer to interpreters working in the field, labour union works closely with the association and many useful and important events have been arranged and taken part both in Finland and abroad. The association is now seen more than ever as a body that looks after the interests of Finnish Sign Language interpreters in all of the matters related to the profession.

SVT’s goals for the future are:

- The 25th anniversary year (2007) of SVT emphasises public relations, the theme of the year is informing about Sign Language interpretation as a profession
- Setting up an effective salary revision for the next period and working with the Trades Union in order to negotiate the Terms and Conditions of Employment for the Finnish Sign Language Interpreters (National Collective Agreement)
- Continuing of the work of securing the profession of interpreter together with the spoken language interpreters
- Updating the webpage www.tulkit.net

3. How can WASLI assist?

Quite often we arrange seminars and conferences that deal with different issues related to the interpreting field. We would much appreciate if WASLI looked into arranging a lecturer / plenary speaker contact list or a pool of people interested in doing such work. It would be a great information source for us to have international SL and interpreting researchers lecturing on their work in various events. Likewise it could be a useful channel for the researchers to inform the people working in the interpreting field about their research.

Every now and then we need native or otherwise skilled English speakers to check the spelling of the texts produced by our non-native English speaker members for various international purposes.

4. How can you assist WASLI?

We have an annual way of supporting WASLI financially. Valentines Day campaign, "For your mate as well" raises money from our members and from people who in general have an interest in supporting interpreters internationally. The money collected is every year donated to EFSLI Special Attendance Fund and to WASLI.

We are happy to cooperative in the dissemination of information related to Sign Language interpreting field. Any information requests and surveys are welcomed and replied as soon as possible.

General Population

Population of Finland is aprox. 5 260 000 (in 2007)

Capital City

Helsinki, in the southern Finland by the Gulf of Finland (Baltic Sea)

Deaf people:

National Association of the Deaf

The Finnish Association of the Deaf (FAD) The FAD is the central Deaf organisation in Finland. It was born out of the needs and desires of Deaf people and their families to work together for the welfare of all people in a similar situation. Founded in 1905, FAD has a long tradition of advocating on behalf of Deaf people. During its history, it has worked to ensure full human, linguistic and social rights for Deaf people and an environment in which they can be proud of their heritage, language, history and culture. FAD has celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2005 with many events at the local, regional, national and international levels. (www.kl-deaf.fi)

How many Deaf people?

5000 Deaf (about 0,1% of population are Deaf)

Laws to protect the rights of Deaf people in Finland

Sign Language has been officially recognized in your country since 1995.

The Constitution of Finland (731/1999)

§ Section 17

... The rights of persons using Sign Language and of persons in need of interpretation or translation aid owing to disability shall be guaranteed by an Act.

Law on basic education (628/1998)

§ Section 10, subsect. 1

The language of instruction and the language used in extracurricular teaching shall be either Finnish or Swedish. The language of instruction may also be Sami, Romany or Sign Language.

subsect. 2

... Pupils with impaired hearing must be given teaching in Sign Language, when needed.

§ Section 12, subsect. 2

As mother tongue, the pupil may also be taught the Romany language, the Sign Language or some other language which is the pupil's native language.

Law on upper secondary school (629/1998)

§ Section 6, subsect. 1

The language of instruction in the upper secondary school is either Finnish or Swedish. The Sami, Romany or the Sign Language can also be used as a language of instruction...

§ Section 8, subsect 2

On the basis of the student's choice, also the Romany language, the Sign Language or other mother tongue of the student can be taught as a mother tongue.

Law on vocational education (630/1998)

§ Section 11, subsect. 1

In vocational education, the language of instruction is either Finnish or Swedish. The Sami, Romany or the Sign Language can also be used as languages of instruction...

§ Section 12, subsect. 3

On the basis of the student's choice, also the Romany language, the Sign Language or other mother tongue of the student can be taught as a mother tongue.

Law on the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland (591/1996)

§ Section 1, subsect. 2

Among the duties of the Research Institute is also to take care of research and the preservation of the purity of the Sign Language and the Romany language.

Decree on the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland (758/1996)

§ Section 1

The duties of the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland include:

- 1) studying Finnish and Swedish, Sami (Lappish) and other related languages as well as the Finnish Sign Language and the Romany language;
- 2) developing and preserving the purity of Finnish, Swedish, Sami (Lappish) and the Finnish Sign Language and the Romany language;

§ Section 9

The expertise organs for the Research Institute are the Boards for the Finnish, Swedish and Sami languages and the Boards for the Sign Language and the Romany language. The Board of Directors invites to each Board for a period of three years at a time at least four and at most seven members, one of which belongs to the personnel of the Research Institute. The Board of Directors appoints each Board a President and a Vice-President from among the members of the Board.

The task of the Board is to decide upon recommendations of principal or general nature in its field.

Language Act (423/2003)

§ Section 37 – Report on the application of language legislation

- 1) Each electoral period the Government reports to the Parliament, as supplemental material to the Report on Governmental Measures, on the application of language legislation and on the securing of linguistic right and, as necessary, on other linguistic conditions.
- 2) The report deals not only with Finnish and Swedish but also with at least Sami, Romany and Sign language.

Act on Yleisradio Oy (National broadcasting company) (746/1998)

§ Section 7

- 4) ...to treat in its broadcasting Finnish and Swedish speaking citizens on equal grounds and to produce services in the Sami and Romany languages and in Sign Language as well as, where applicable, also for other language groups in the country;

Services and Assistance for the Disabled Act (380/1987)

§ Section 8

... The municipality shall provide severely disabled persons with reasonable... interpretation services... if, because of his disability or illness, he must of necessity have assistance in order to manage his everyday affairs.

§ Section 14

No charge shall be made for... the interpretation services...

Support and Assistance for the Disabled Decree (759/1987)

§ Section 7

Interpretation services comprise all interpretation in Sign Language or other methods for clarifying communication needed for work, studies, social participation, recreation or any other corresponding purposes.

§ Section 8

In agreement of interpretation services, a person shall be considered severely disabled if he is severely disabled aurally, aurally and visually, or he has a severe speech defect.

§ Section 9

Interpretation services shall be arranged so that a severely aurally and visually disabled person has the possibility of receiving at least 240 and any other person referred to in section 8 at least 120 hours of interpretation services during a calendar year.

However, as an exception to the provision of paragraph 1, interpretation services related to studies shall be arranged to the extent needed by the person concerned for coping with his studies.

Act on the Status and Rights of Patients (785/1992)

§ Section 3

The mother tongue, individual needs and culture of the patient have to be taken into account as far as possible in his/her medical care and other treatment.

Law on the position and rights of the social welfare client (812/2000)

§ Section 4

...When executing social welfare, the wishes, opinions, interests and individual needs as well as the mother tongue and cultural background of the client must be taken into account.

Amendment to the law on pre-trial investigation (427/2003)

§ Section 37, subsect. 3

Other than a Finnish, Swedish or Sami speaking person to be heard in a pre-trial investigation has the right to an interpreter free of charge, unless the authority responsible for the pre-trial investigation provides the interpretation services. The authority is obliged to provide interpretation if need arises. As needed, interpretation services shall be provided correspondingly if the person to be heard suffers from a sensory handicap or a speech defect.

Administrative Procedure Act (434/2003)

§ Section 26

The authority shall arrange for interpretation and translation in a matter that can become pending on the initiative of the authority, if:

- 1) a party using the Romany language, Sign language or another language does not know the language, Finnish or Swedish, used in the authority; or
- 2) a person who owing to a handicap or illness cannot be understood.

Nationality Act (359/2003)

§ Section 13 - General requirements for naturalization

6) he or she has satisfactory oral and written skills in the Finnish or Swedish language, or instead of oral skills similar skills in the Finnish Sign language (language skills requirement).

Deaf Education

FAD states that their aim in Deaf education is providing FinSL throughout the educational process. Its most recent projects include a virtual school in FinSL (www.viivi.fi and www.kl-deaf.fi/virtuaali!indez.html) and a centre for vocational orientation (www.virtuopo.fi). Along with the international partners, FAD has developed language teaching in vocational education of the Deaf by utilizing information and communication technology.

FAD also runs the Finnish Folk High School for the Deaf, which offers programmes and courses for FinSL-using students. Its curriculum is organized in cooperation with universities and polytechnics. (www.kl-deaf.fi)

Other recent internet sources designed to assist Deaf education are a website on arts and moviemaking. The language of the sites is Finnish Sign Language along with written Finnish. The target groups for the arts site are Deaf children and for the moviemaking site Deaf teenagers, young adults and adults.

There are 11 state Deaf comprehensive schools in Finland. Two high schools offer education in Finnish Sign Language either by using interpreters such as Eira High school or providing the

instruction is FinSL. There are also some vocational education options for Deaf students. In addition Jyväskylä University in central Finland has three training programs aimed for Deaf students and other fluent signers. The training programs provided are in the field of linguistics and education. Another option for Deaf pupils and students is to study in any school with hearing students by using a Sign Language interpreter.

Children with cochlear implants either go to Deaf schools or to mainstream schools with possibly some extra help depending on the child's individual needs.

Sign Language(s)

Finnish Sign Language (FinSL) and Finnish-Swedish Sign Language used by the minority of Deaf people within the Finnish Deaf community. This minority has Swedish as their written language.

Spoken Language(s)

Finnish, Swedish. Two minority languages spoken in Finland are the Sami and the Romany languages.

Sign Language Interpreters:

How many interpreters?

The number of educated sign language interpreters is approximately 650 (active Sign Language interpreters 450, full-time interpreters 200-250). Every year there are about 50 new graduates.

Do you have an Interpreter Association?

The Finnish Association of Sign Language Interpreters (SVT) was established in year 1982.

How many members?

There are about 400 members in The Finnish Association of Sign Language Interpreters (SVT) (www.tulkkit.net).

Details of your Interpreter Training

Humak University of Applied Sciences: (www.humak.edu/english) In Humak there is one Sign Language unit which is divided into two campus areas where you can study Sign Language interpretation: campus in Kuopio and other one in Helsinki. The Sign Language Interpreter Degree Programme is 240 ECTS.

Please contact to the international coordinator Marjukka Nisula (marjukka.nisula@humak.edu) or the program director Pirkko Mikkonen (pirkko.mikkonen@humak.edu).

Diaconia University of Applied Sciences: (<http://www.turku.diak.fi/> in_english)

In Diak sign language interpretation can be studied in Turku. The Degree Program in Sign Language Interpretation in Diak is also 240 ECTS.

Please contact to the international coordinator Sanna Ketonen-Oksi

(sanna.ketonen-oksi@diak.fi) or the principal lecturer of sign language is Terhi Rissanen (terhi.rissanen@diak.fi).

Details of your Interpreter Testing/Assessment

Interpreting students are in general tested in the end of each course. Courses vary in the amount of work required from the student from five to one ECTS. In addition to this constant assessment in the end of each course the students need to pass their final exams in order to graduate as interpreters. In the final exams the interpreter students are tested for example in professional ethics, professional knowledge, language skills and interpreting skills in various settings interpreting FinSL-Finnish and Finnish-FinSL.

Details of your Interpreter Accreditation/Certification

So far there is no nationwide Interpreter Certification. Trained interpreters sign up for the interpreting registry upon graduation. Once one is in the registry she/he is free to work as an interpreter. One of the private interpreter agencies, Via Sign Language Sector Cooperative is currently involved in ground breaking quality assessment work within the company with the aim of providing an interpreter quality assessment certification steps for the employees.

Lithuania

General

Capital City of Lithuania is Vilnius, and the population is about 3million people.

Deaf People

National Association of the Deaf: There is a Lithuanian Community of Deaf people (LKD)

How many Deaf people?

We have about 8000 of deaf people in our country.

Laws to protect their rights

There is a confirmed law in Lithuania, saying that Lithuanian sign language is national sign language of Lithuania.

Deaf Education

Deaf people are getting different types of education, starting from only having graduated secondary school and finishing with high University diploma.

Sign Language(s)

Lithuanian Sign Language

Spoken Language(s)

Lithuanian

Sign Language Interpreters

How many interpreters?

We have about 70 sign language interpreters

Do you have an Interpreter Association?

Yes. It is called Association of Lithuanian sign language interpreters.

How many members?

There are 54 members.

Details of your Interpreter Training

Sign language interpreters are being trained in Vilnius College.

Details of your Interpreter Testing/Assessment

We do not have such.

Details of your Interpreter Accreditation/Certification

Qualification of sign language interpreters is being raised in a separate centre by Lithuanian Deaf Community.

What have been the important events since 2005?

Since 2003 there has been one sign language interpreters centre established in each largest city of Lithuania. And those centres belong to districts of the largest cities.

What are your goals for the future?

To improve work of a sign language interpreter, to achieve (with the help of our laws) that sign language interpreting would be considered as a separate profession. We also would want to prepare (teach) people work as sign language interpreters' practise guides.

Sincerely,
Indre Kelly
English-Lithuanian Translator

Germany

General information

80 million inhabitants, capital is Berlin.

Deaf People

National Association of the Deaf: Deutscher Gehörlosen-Bund (www.gehoerlosen-bund.de)
There are about 80,000 – 100,000 persons using German Sign language.

Laws to protect their rights

In Germany, Deaf persons have the right to use German Sign Language or Signed German or other means of communication if they have to deal with the government. They shall not be discriminated because of their handicap and be treated equally compared to non-handicapped people. The areas in which this leads to fundamental empowerment are however limited. In the following settings, the fees of the interpreters are funded by government (or other):

- working situations (limitations though)
- education (limitations though)
- medical (during medically necessary treatment, not in all settings though)
- legal (in Court, but not if you are Deaf and need to talk to your lawyer)

Link to homepage where you can find out more about German laws regarding Deaf rights (in German only):

<http://deutschedesellschaft.de/modules.php?name=News&file=categories&op=newindex&catid=7>

Deaf Education: mainly non-mainstream, more and more schools for deaf children and schools for hard-of-hearing children are put together as there are not enough deaf-only children. Good access to fully-signed lessons and education, especially in higher education and professional trainings, is still not obvious.

Sign Language(s): German Sign Language, Signed German.

Spoken Language: German.

Sign Language Interpreters

Part-time and full-time together, maybe about 600, but not all of these are recognized as interpreters, there are still interpreters without formal training.

We have an Interpreter Association on national level, several on state level.

Name of the national association, established in 1997 (as association, before working group):

Bundesverband der GebärdensprachdolmetscherInnen Deutschlands e.V.

(BGSD e.V.)

President: Susanne Guenther-Wick

Address: Geschaeftsstelle Karolinenstr. 12b

Town: 99310 Arnstadt

E-mail: vorstand@bgzd.de

Web site: www.bgsd.de

Interpreter Training:

Full-time trainings (there are part-time ones for people who already worked as a sli, we wish them to be unnecessary one day, but it is not easy to convince people that university studies should be the base of every interpreter training):

| | Program 1 | Program 2 | Program 3 | Program 4 |
|-----------------|-----------|------------------|-----------|------------------|
| Name program | Diploma | Bachelor of Arts | Diploma | Bachelor of Arts |
| City | Hamburg | Magdeburg | Zwickau | Berlin |
| Number of years | 4 | 3,5 | 4 | 3 |

About 90 of the currently working interpreters graduated from a full time interpreter training program (first one having started in the year 1993).

Details of our Interpreter Testing/Assessment/Details of our Interpreter Accreditation/Certification:

4 full-time training programmes for sign language interpreters at degree level (diploma). Other part-time courses allow interpreters who already have some work experience to prepare for an interpreting exam, the so-called “Staatliche Prüfung” (state exam). By passing the exam, they obtain a certification as Sign Language Interpreters recognized by the State. Some regional associations demand that their members go to a certain number of retrainings over a certain period of time so they can stay member, but there is no assessment of quality of interpreters by the national association so far (but there was one of the quality of trainings).

Important events since 2005? Goals for the future?

One of the challenging tasks still is the negotiation with our members and with some representatives of national health insurance organisations (concerning e.g. the area of interpreting fees for doctors’ appointments). These talks are still under way, now enforced by a consultant (lawyer).

The Board meets about 4-5 times a year to deal with the more complicated matters, e.g. definition of terminology (what exactly is a “real time reporter” and may they be called “interpreter”), taking care of individuals or institutions who from our point of view act against the principles of our profession, and so on.

In most Federal States new legislation concerning deaf people’s right to use Sign Language when dealing with authorities has been implemented or still needs to be ratified, but there still is a lot of diversity about how these guidelines are used and how well they are known, and they differ from State to State. So interpreters still have to fight and inform customers continuously to obtain - still insufficient - fees. We notice that States and institutions contact each other in order to get information about how they should go about with our services. In a lot of settings, the working of teams of interpreters now is accepted, although this still varies from region to region.

Goals of our association for the coming year(s)

The goals for the BGSD for the coming years are to:

- go on discussing our position in dealing with working conditions and payment of sign language interpreters with relevant institutions,
- implement our new department “Mentoring” to improve the situation for students, interpreters and beginners (we discussed the topic of students staying with an

experienced interpreter for a certain time during their studies on last year's working conference in October),

- review our Code of Ethics (long term project),
- offer mediation services to members and customers if financially possible (though nobody seems to need it as nobody asks for it...),
- review some of our internal rules to improve the standards of our members and - as a wanted side effect - possibly of all sign language interpreters in Germany on the long run.

How can WASLI assist/what can we do for WASLI?

With information, same as the other way around (only problem: resources).

For BGSD,
E. Vega Lechermann
Vicepresident.
info@bgsd.de
www.bgsd.de

Romania

General information

Population: 21.658.000. The majority of the people are Romanian with just over 7% Hungarian and minorities of Roma, Germans and Ukrainians.

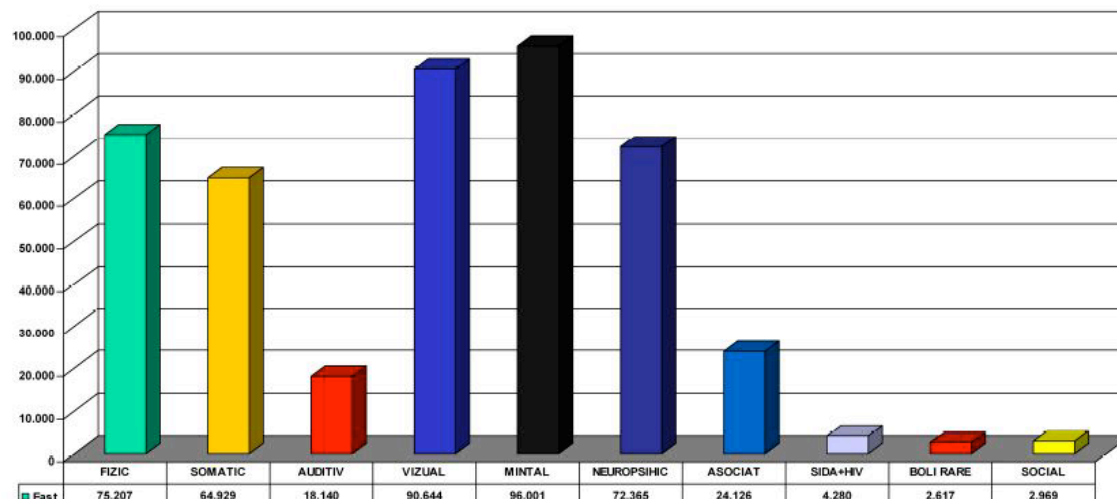
Deaf people are estimated at 30.000, so 0.138% from the population.

Capital City: Bucharest ; size of the country: 237,500 sq. km in South East Europe and is bordered by the Black Sea, [Bulgaria](#), [Hungary](#), [Moldova](#), [Serbia](#) and [Ukraine](#).

Deaf People

National Association of the Deaf, address: Str. Italiana nr. 3, sector 2, Bucharest, has as the main tasks education and integration of hearing impaired people in the social, economical and cultural life.

ANPH (The National Authority for Disabled People), studied the classification of people according to the disability and the following chart is showing their statistics of disabled people officially registered to ANPH. Deaf people are represented by the third column, the read one.



Laws to protect deaf people rights

http://www.cdep.ro/pls/legis/legis_pck.htm_act?ida=38760

http://www.fcc.ro/legislatie_448_2006.htm

<http://www.sign.ro/traducatori/articole/lege178-1997.php>

Deaf Education: is provided, according to the law, at every level of education, from early intervention, kindergarten, primary school to vocational school and high school. Some of the institutes are boarding schools but the new approach is the integration and the right to learn in the schools from the home area.

Sign Language(s): the Romanian Sign Language is officially recognized by the law 519/2002 as the native language of Deaf Romanians.

Spoken Language(s): according to ethnologic studies, the number of languages listed for Romania is 15; Of those, all are living languages as Hungarian, Armenian, German, Bulgarian, Turkish, Greek, Polish, Romani, Serbian, Macedonian

Sign Language Interpreters

How many interpreters?

Majority of the interpreters are CODA, relatives of Deaf people, employees of the National association for the Deaf, volunteers.

The 17 persons that finished last year the sign language course, organized by the National Association for the Deaf and the Ministry of Education, need to be accredited according to the new law.

Do you have an Interpreter Association?

No, we don't have yet a National Association of Sign Language Interpreters, but we have ATR, the Association of Interpreters and Translators in Romania.

Details of your Interpreter Training

There are initiatives to develop Sign Language courses and Training for Interpreters but the only recognized according to all the standards has the following structure.

| | Course name | Theory | Practice |
|----|--|--------|----------|
| 1. | General and social psychology | 34 h | |
| 2. | Deaf culture and History | 34 h | |
| 3. | Elements and strategies of communication | 34 h | |
| 4. | Sign Language | 34 h | |
| 5. | Interpreting-Retro version- Translation | | 200h |
| 6. | Law and counselling | 34 h | |
| 7. | Practice in the public institutions | | 150 |
| | TOTAL: 520h | 170 | 350 |

In October 2006 we developed a pilot project offering a Romanian Sign Language Course to students at the Babes-Bolyai University, Faculty of Letters department of Applied Modern Languages, a program that was designed to test the feasibility of such an undertaking and to precede a prospective 3-year academic SL interpreter program, with RSL as one of the languages for which the department teaches interpretation.

Details of your Interpreter Accreditation/Certification

The next link (sadly that it is in the Romanian language only) shows the methodology of organizing the national examination for the interpreters to be accredited. In the following months the first selection of people to participate will take part.

<http://www.mmssf.ro/website/ro/legi/ordineministru.jsp>

What have been the important events since 2005?

The most important was the law recognition of Sign language as a unique language and the right of deaf people to have interpreters in all the settings.

What are your goals for the future?

A very important task is to establish the National Association of Sign Language Interpreters and in collaboration with the National Association of the Deaf to develop the interpreting services. Romanian Sign Language will be dealt with as a foreign language to be studied along another language within a context of higher education so many interpreters will be professionals.

In the long run we would like to develop the programme to a full extent to cover the gap existing to date in the Romanian context.

What are the major challenges for interpreters in your country?

Even though the EU legislation regulate the compulsory nature of SL interpretation in public administration and institutions of education, the laws are very slowly put into practice. Currently

there are no accredited interpreters so it is not recognized as a profession even though there is a strong need for interpreting.

What have been your important achievements?

The department of Applied Modern Languages that we collaborate at the “Babes Bolyai” University, trains translators and spoken language interpreters at BA and MA levels with consistent pedagogical support from the Directorate General of Interpretation of the European Commission. Starting this academic year it was introduced Romanian Sign Language as a 3rd foreign language (this entails an elective training programme of 6 hours weekly for the students majoring in Translation or Interpretation who already have language competence in two spoken foreign languages) and in this context the quality of the interpreters training developed considerably.

How can WASLI assist?

Currently, the situation in Romania clearly indicates the need for specialized training in Romanian Sign Language for future interpreters and for research into Romanian Sign Language. The needs are also about training deaf trainers (to engage in trainer exchanges), training SL interpreters to become trainers and producing appropriate pedagogical support.

Respectfully submitted by Ioana Farcas

Realized in collaboration with Mihail Grecu, the President of the Romanian National Association for the Deaf

Scotland

General

Population
5 million

Capital City
Edinburgh

Deaf people

National Association of the Deaf

British Deaf Association (BDA)

How many Deaf people?

No precise information either on the numbers of deaf people or on the number of BSL users. There are working estimates. It is estimated that there are 5,000 deaf people in Scotland. According to the BDA, British Sign Language (BSL) is the first or preferred language of nearly 250,000 people in the UK.

Legislation

Legislation, which protects the rights of Deaf people under the law in Scotland, is provided by the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA Scotland - amended 2005). This piece of legislation is

not devolved, which means that the Parliament in London is responsible for it through a UK wide organisation called the Disability Rights Commission.

The Disability Rights Commission will be amalgamated with the Commission for Racial Equality in October 2007 and the new Equalities Commission will be responsible for all six of the current equalities strands: Disability, Race, Age, Religion and Belief, Gender and Sexual orientation.

Recent consultations from the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh have involved “A Language Strategy for Scotland” and “Scotland’s Culture Bill”, so some Deaf organisations have taken the opportunity to raise the view that perhaps BSL and Linguistic Access issues would be better legislated for under culture and ethnicity laws rather than disability legislation.

Education for Deaf pupils in Scotland

As seems to be the case across Europe, mainstream inclusion is affecting all areas of specialist education and many special schools in Scotland, including schools for the Deaf, are closing. More and more deaf pupils are being supported in units attached to mainstream schools in both primary and secondary schools. Deaf schools that were traditionally important centres for the development of BSL, as well as Deaf Identity and Culture, are losing pupils and their rolls are dropping.

Sign Language

On 18 March 2003, the government announced their formal recognition of BSL as a language in the UK but it does not have legal protection.

Spoken Language(s)

The official language is English, although Gaelic is spoken, primarily in the North and West of Scotland.

Sign Language Interpreters

How many interpreters?

SASLI holds the public register of BSL/English Interpreters for Scotland. There are currently 48 registered British Sign Language/English interpreters and 11 waiting to be registered.

Do you have an Interpreter Association?

Yes. SASLI was set up in January 1981, initially as a sub-committee of the Scottish Council on Deafness (known as the Scottish Association for the Deaf at the time). It became an independent organisation in May 1982.

How many members?

63 altogether (48 Registered Members, 11 Associate Members and 4 Co-opted Members)

Details of Interpreter Training

In Scotland, there is only one training institution that provides certificated training in BSL/English Interpreting and this is a Graduate Diploma at Heriot Watt University in Edinburgh. This

course evolved out of a partnership with SASLI, a pilot of the first stage of a certificate course was launched in 1997. It was revised in October of 2007 into a Graduate Diploma. It is a 9-module programme and is studied part time over a two-year period. The Diploma is rated at 15 Scotcat credit points or at SCQF level 10.

Details of Interpreter Testing/Assessment and Accreditation/Certification

SASLI has developed a new Supervision and Assessment Program for all Associate Members of SASLI. Associate members are mostly graduates from Heriot Watt University. They must achieve an average of a level B in the second year modules in BSL and interpreting skills. Other applicants are considered if they have approved prior learning of an equivalent level. Associates go through a six month period of mentoring before going through formal assessments. These are based on the core competencies outlined in the National Interpreting Standards as developed by CILT (the National Centre for Languages). We are hoping to get this programme certificated and accredited. Additionally, since April 2006, all Registered Interpreters have been required to undertake Continuing Professional Development.

Important events since 2005

In 2005, SASLI received funding to oversee the delivery of a Graduate Diploma in Teaching BSL Tutors course at Heriot Watt, which is leading the way for the future of BSL Teachers in Scotland.

Helga McGilp's appointment as SASLI Director. It is believed that Helga, a British Sign Language (BSL) user, is the first Deaf Director of an interpreting association in the world, which is ground breaking for the Deaf community. As a receipt of interpreting services, Helga is fully aware of the skills and standards that are required.

It has been fortunate enough to receive funding from the Scottish Executive (the government in Scotland) to relocate our office from Edinburgh to Glasgow and appoint four new staff in 2006/07: a Director, a Policy Advisor, a Training and Development Officer and an Administration and Information Officer.

Goals for the future

2007 promises to be a very special year for the Scottish Association of Sign Language Interpreters (SASLI), especially when we celebrate their 25th anniversary in October.

Increasing membership of the professional body is a major target. By 2010, SASLI aspires to have a membership of over 100 individuals, potentially offering two different packages of benefits, and to explore having a category of membership that includes students. As part of developing the credibility, profile and recognition of the BSL/English interpreting profession by the wider public, SASLI will also build its association with other related and developing professional communication services, their professionals and their professional bodies – for example, deafblind communicators, notetakers, lipspeakers, translators and communication support workers.

SASLI intends to make changes in its governance, management and organisation to strengthen its capacity to take its work forward over the next few years.

We hope to be able to share our resources with colleagues overseas. Standards set in Scotland by SASLI will reflect and keep pace with developments happening elsewhere in the UK and worldwide.

Sweden

Deaf, deaf blind, hearing impaired, deafened adults in Sweden

The population of Sweden is approximately nine million people, of which 8 000-10 000 (~ 1 ‰) are congenitally deaf and ~ 1500 people are deaf blind. These two groups in addition with deafened adults and hearing impaired persons need interpreter services.

The Swedish National Association of the Deaf estimate that 30.000 persons use and depend on Sign Language for their communication.

Primary, secondary and high schools for children with hearing disabilities are located in five districts. There is one college for the hearing disabled that is located in Örebro with a national admittance whereas university studies function with the use of interpreters.

In 1981 the Swedish Sign Language was officially recognized as deaf people's first language.

The Health and Medical Services Act (1982:763), Section 3b

“The County council shall offer persons who are residents of the county council or residually registered there as provided in Section 16 of the Civil Registration Act (1991:481) and permanently residing there:

1. habilitation and rehabilitation,
2. assistive devices for persons with functional impairment, and
3. interpreting services of an everyday nature for persons deaf from childhood, the deaf blind, persons becoming deaf during adulthood, and persons with hearing impairment.”

The 1986 Administrative Procedure Act, Section 8

“When an authority is dealing with someone who does not have a command of the Swedish language or who has a severe hearing impairment or speech impediment, the authority should use an interpreter when needed.”

Equal Treatment of Students at Universities Act (2001:1286), Section 1

“The purpose of this Act is to promote equal rights for students and applicants in the higher education sector and to combat discrimination in higher education on grounds of sex, ethnic affiliation, religion or other belief, sexual orientation or disability. (2003:311).”

Interpreters

As of December 31st 2006, STTF had 328 members. 279 of these are trained and work actively as interpreters. The remaining members support other members, mostly interpreter students. There is no statistics on how many trained Sign Language interpreters there are in Sweden today, but STTF estimate that there are about 400-450 interpreters working actively.

Interpreter training

The interpreter training program is four years and available at seven different adult educational centres. Requirements to attend this program are the same as for admittance for university studies. Personal suitability is also considered during the admission. The first year they are admitted with no Sign Language or interpreting skills. However students can be admitted to for example third semester out of eight depending on the level of Sign Language skills he/ she already has. The main subjects are Swedish, Sign Language and Interpreting techniques. When the students graduate they are qualified both as Sign Language interpreters and as interpreters for deaf blind.

What is going on in the field of Sign Language interpreting?

The authority that tests and certifies interpreters in different spoken languages, The Legal, Financial and Administrative Services Agency (Kammarkollegiet) also administrate the certification of Sign Language interpreters since September 2005.

The test is divided into two steps. The first is a written, theoretical test in the areas of law, social insurance, health care and the labour market. To pass and move on to the practical test you need 80% correct answers. This is very likely the first certification of Sign Language interpreters in the world performed by a governmental body. Today there are 61 certified Sign Language interpreters.

Further training for Sign Language interpreters has been offered at the University of Stockholm. Until now approximately 75 persons have graduated. Next semester 24 students will be admitted to the fourth course. This is a distance course and consequently gives interpreters from all over Sweden the possibility to participate. The name of the course is "In-Service Training Course for Sign Language Interpreters - theoretical emphasis" and gives the student 15 ECTS credits. A similar course is planned for the coming years.

Current activities

The 1st Nordic Seminar was held in Norway 2002. The topic for the seminar was "further training". One of the results from the conference was that the further training in Danish, Norwegian and Swedish that is offered by Nordiska Folkhögskolan, outside Gothenburg now has participants from Norway and Denmark instead of only interpreters from Sweden. In November 2004 Sweden hosted the 2nd Nordic Seminar with "The future of our profession" as the topic. The 3rd Nordic Seminar was held in Denmark 8th-10th June 2007. The topic was "Challenges for the Nordic Sign Language Interpreter".

We are constantly working on our visibility towards our members. Our member bulletin is issued four times per year and distributed in over 300 copies. We also use e-mail to distribute urgent information or other messages that cannot wait until the next newsletter.

Every new class of interpreter students gets a letter, informing them about the aims of our organization and welcoming them as supporting members. During their semester a member of the STTF board visits the group, gives information and offers an upgrade to active membership.

The new and improved web site, www.sttf.nu is designed by one of our members. The e-mail address is sttf@sttf.nu Our aim is to add more information in English.

Our Ethical guidelines can be found on our web site in both Swedish and English. Ethical discussions are being held through out the country at the governmental interpreting agencies and other private agencies.

Future activities

The Annual General Meeting in 2008 will be held in March. Last year's program was a success with reports on finished projects, recent research and developments in our field. 2009 STTF celebrates its 40th anniversary. This grandiose event will be celebrated in Stockholm.

To complement the anniversary we hope to implement an information campaign about STTF to the public.

The demand of English skills is increasing and our aim is to facilitate a course in three steps to meet the needs of our members and in a wider sense the needs of our deaf clients.

What are the major challenges for interpreters in your country?

To add to the problem with the shortage of English interpreting skills is the increasing number of interpreters being trained and not finding employment. During training there have been problems in finding job training placements for the students. The professional interpreters complain on the strain the trainees' cause, not as individuals but as a never ending stream of coming and going trainees. STTF is trying to decrease the number of students being admitted to the programs. It may sound controversial but our main focus is on quality and not quantity. That being said there is still not enough funds to employ the amount of interpreters that is estimated to fulfil the need of the deaf community.

The Netherlands

Country representative: Josje Muntendam

Country facts:

Population: 16.365,000

Size of the country: 41,528 sq km

Capital City: Amsterdam

Deaf people:

- National Association of the Deaf: Dovenschap (www.Dovenschap.nl)
- Number of Deaf people: 15,000 – 25,000 sign language users.

Laws to protect the rights of Deaf people:

- Law for equal treatment (no matter what disability you have)
- Law for the provision of interpreting services
- Law for the provision of special needs of people with disabilities

Deaf education:

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

Sign Language:

- Dutch Sign Language (Nederlandse Gebarentaal, NGT)

Spoken languages:

- Dutch and Frisian

Sign language interpreters:

- Number of Sign Language interpreters: 204 (no data on part-time vs. full-time ratio)
- *The interpreter's organization:* Nederlandse Beroepsvereniging Tolken Gebarentaal (NBTG), that is the Dutch Association of Sign Language Interpreters. (www.nbtg.nl). The NBTG has a total of 506 members: 201 interpreters, 184 students, 21 speech-to-text reporters, 21 student speech-to-text reporters, and 79 sponsor- and supporting members.
- *Interpreter training:* in the Netherlands there is one interpreter training program, a 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. Since 2001 a total of 143 students graduated. The program also started a Masters program Deaf Studies. Graduated interpreters with a BA degree have the opportunity to enroll in the MA program.
- *Interpreter testing/assessment/certification:* in 2001 the NBTG established an independent foundation: the Registry of Sign Language Interpreters (www.stichtingrtg.nl). The Registry requires 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.

Important events since 2005:

Continuing negotiations with government agencies on the regulations and payment of sign language interpreters: the NBTG is pleased that after negotiations with the office that pays for community interpreting, team interpreting is allowed in specific situations without consultation in advance. Furthermore, the NBTG, in cooperation with an interpreter agency and a deaf organization started with an orientation for the possibility to formulate an enabling legislation. Until now the interpreters in the Netherlands had to deal with approximately thirty different offices for community interpreting. After intensive negotiations there is now one office dealing with the interpreting hours for community interpreting.

The NBTG working committee on continuing education, in co-operation with the board, organized various workshops for (student) interpreters. Since 2005 the NBTG hosted workshops on e.g. interpreting in (mental) healthcare settings, ethics, voicing, interpreting in international settings, visual music and poetry.

Since November 2006 all speech-to-text reporters are offered a trial membership by the NBTG. If all works out well, the trial membership can become a definite membership as of January 1st 2008.

In 2006 the NBTG welcomed her 200th interpreter member.

Goals of the NBTG for the future:

The NBTG likes to continue the goals that were set for 2006. We have made a start on these goals, but have not yet accomplished all that we wanted.

- 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.

In September 2008 the NBTG will host the EFSLI annual general meeting and conference (www.efсли.org). Also in 2008 the NBTG will celebrate her 20th anniversary.

Major challenges for interpreters in the Netherlands:

- In the Netherlands the legislation, regulations and payment of sign language interpreters is a complicated matter. The NBTG, in cooperation with an interpreter agency and a deaf organization started with an orientation for the possibility to formulate an enabling legislation.

Important achievements by the NBTG:

- Within ten years the NBTG developed from a small organization of 20 volunteers to a professional association with 500 members, that advocates for the rights of Sign Language Interpreters in the Netherlands. The organization is as follows: the board (a daily and a general board), a policy maker and office coordinator, and several working committees e.g. on continuing education, PR, and the Efsli 2008 conference.
- In 2001 the NBTG has established an independent foundation: the Registry of Sign Language Interpreters (www.stichtingrtg.nl). The Registry requires 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.
- Since 2005 The NBTG working committee on continuing education, in co-operation with the board, organized various workshops for (student) interpreters. Since 2005 the NBTG hosted workshops on e.g. interpreting in (mental) healthcare settings, ethics, voicing, interpreting in international settings, visual music and poetry.

How can WASLI assist:

WASLI can help countries all over the world sharing their experiences and provide support to each other in the profession of sign language interpreters. By working together we can form a greater power in achieving a higher status of the profession of sign language interpreter. A large international organization will have a greater impact and believe in society.

How can the NBTG assist WASLI:

The NBTG can offer WASLI the experience in setting up a well working organization of sign language interpreters and the establishment of a Registry.

www.nbtg.nl

info@nbtg.nl

LATINO AMERICA

Peru

En nuestro país, la mayoría de las personas tienen la idea equivocada que los sordos son mentalmente incapaces, minusválidos, que necesitan protección y dependiendo del lugar donde viven, se piensa que no es necesaria su educación.

Más del 80% de sordos nace en una familia de oyentes, por lo que desde temprana edad no tienen acceso a su lengua de señas. Debido a la predominantemente tendencia oralista en el sistema educativo, la persona sorda se ve limitada en su desarrollo integral y en el acceso a su propia cultura.

Ante este panorama, son los familiares quienes primero comienzan interpretando para los sordos, luego son los amigos, quienes por necesidad cubren este rol ambos sin mayor capacitación que el contacto diario con un sordo.

Fue en el año 1984 que se inició el servicio de interpretación, a través del programa para sordos de la Unión Bíblica del Perú. Esto se realizó empíricamente, ante la necesidad de asistir al sordo en diferentes situaciones.

Ante esta necesidad, Ernesto Zavala, de la Unión Bíblica del Perú, realiza estudios sobre interpretación de señas, en los Estados Unidos y se inicia el REGISTRO DE INTERPRETES PARA SORDOS (RIPS)

Inició su labor con profesores que trabajaban en el Centro Educativo Especial “Efata”, donde la educación se impartía en lengua de señas. Por algunos años los servicios eran voluntarios y aunque no recibían una formación formal, el grupo de intérpretes se mantenía activo.

Viendo la necesidad de tener más personas que colaboraran, se abrieron los cursos de señas, que con los años fueron ampliándose en duración y niveles. La Iglesia Evangélica también empezó a trabajar con sordos y a poner personas que interpretarían durante los cultos.

Años después se hicieron intentos por profundizar en el tema. La Asociación de Sordos del Perú y la ONG Aproddis, a través del proyecto “Manos que Hablan” invitó a diferentes instituciones para participar del estudio socio-lingüístico para estandarizar la lengua de señas en el Perú, y

unificar a la comunidad de personas sordas. Dentro del trabajo se organizó un panel para evaluar intérpretes. Se evaluó a un número aproximado de 18 intérpretes. Estos resultados quedaron inconclusos por la disolución del proyecto.

A partir del año 2000, en el Perú, toma fuerza el tema sobre la discapacidad. Algunos organismos del estado e instituciones privadas, empiezan a tomar en cuenta la participación del intérprete de lengua de señas en eventos públicos.

Se está participando en las licitaciones del Poder Judicial, para intérpretes de lenguas de señas, a través del consorcio de intérpretes, LEARNING S.A., quienes dentro de su staff, cuentan con intérpretes de lengua de señas. Lográndose de esta manera la participación del intérprete en las diligencias judiciales. El registro de intérpretes (RIPS) ha ido ganando reconocimiento y demanda de sus servicios, de parte de las entidades del estado y privadas, logrando obtener una tarifa por el servicio.

Por estos años, se empieza a escuchar de instituciones que ofrecen cursos de señas. En universidades, dentro de sus programas profesionales de educación, en institutos y en las iglesias para sus fines eclesiásticos.

En la actualidad, no tenemos intérpretes profesionales de lengua de señas, por ende no hay una asociación. Tampoco está reconocida la lengua de señas. Lo que se está propiciando es la formación de un registro nacional de intérpretes a través de la fundación "Persona Sorda". Las asociaciones de sordos están acreditando intérpretes sin cursos específicos, solo con el aprendizaje de señas y algunos meses de práctica.

Isabel Rey Clemente
Intérprete de lengua de Señas - RIPS
Unión Bíblica del Perú

NORTH AMERICA

Canada

Facts About Canada

- Canada is the second largest country in the world. The total area of Canada is 9 984 670 square kilometres. Of this, 9 093 507 square kilometres is land and 891 163 square kilometres is fresh water. Canada's total population is 32,000,000 people. With only 3 people per square kilometre. Canada has the fourth lowest population density in the world. The capital city of Canada is Ottawa and is located in Ontario, one of Canada's 10 provinces and 3 territories.
- 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 has two official signed languages:* American Sign Language (ASL) and langue des signes quebecoise (LSQ)
- *Canada has two official spoken languages:* English and French
- Education for all Canadians is covered by the 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 can be 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. Survey and data collection in 1998 shows only 20.6% of deaf Canadians are fully employed; 41.9% are under-employed, and 37.5% are unemployed. By comparison, 60.9% of all Canadians are employed and only 8.1% are unemployed. *Employment Statistics from the Canadian Association of the Deaf*
http://www.cad.ca/issues/employment_and_employability.asp
- 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 has universal access to health care and education and Canada's current major political challenges are meeting public demands for quality improvements in both these areas of service.

Country Report

- AVLIC has approximately 480 Active members. AVLIC is aware that this does not reflect the entire number of people working as interpreters in Canada, especially at the public 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)*
<http://www.avlic.ca/services.php?evaluation> is made up of four stages: Written Test of

Knowledge, Preparation Phase, Test of Interpretation and Certification Maintenance.
Canada currently has 43 certificate of Interpretation (COI) holders members

Phase One: WRITTEN TEST OF KNOWLEDGE

The first phase of the CES is the Written Test of Knowledge (WTK) which is a preliminary step to ensure the candidate has appropriate background knowledge in the field of ASL/English interpretation.

Phase Two: PREPARATION

The second phase of the CES process is the Preparation Phase and is designed to assist candidates in establishing the groundwork for the actual performance test. There are two mandatory workshops - both concentrate on discourse analysis entitled: Interpretation of Narratives and Interpretation of Interactive Interviews. Workshops must be taken in this order due to the theory involved and either may be repeated if needed. The workshops include materials that have been fashioned after the actual Test of Interpretation materials. The committee believes that with the guidance offered by these workshops and the day-to-day experience the interpreter gains while working, candidates should be successful when they take the practical test. The Test of Interpretation is not designed for specialty areas but rather for a generalist level.

Phase Three: TEST OF INTERPRETATION

The third phase of the CES process is the Test of Interpretation (TOI) which is the performance -based portion. The test verifies whether a candidate's test performance is at or above an acceptable standard. The TOI looks for candidates to provide message-equivalent interpretation between American Sign Language and English.

Phase Four: CERTIFICATION MAINTENANCE

Currently being developed

Maintenance requirements of the COI have always been: adherence to the AVLIC Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Professional Conduct, and annual Active membership in good standing paid in full.

Based on motion TO06G-26:

That AVLIC certified members document and submit their annual professional development activities when renewing membership, for the next three years. This data will assist the AVLIC Evaluation Committee in developing the Certification Maintenance Process requirements.

The criteria for Phase Four: Maintenance will be determined based on the documentation submitted by current COI interpreters. This phase will not be in operation until approximately 2010 after all data has been collected.

In order to keep a valid CES status, Active AVLIC membership must be maintained at all times. Allowing membership to lapse invalidates the CES status and requires individual to being at Phase One after membership is renewed.

The most important events for AVLIC in 2006 – 2007:

- Biannual conference held in Toronto, Ontario in July 2006
- Non conference AGM held in Winnipeg, Manitoba June 2007
- 2008 conference will be held in St. John's, Newfoundland
- Revised CES including the first national offerings of the Preparation Workshops and the Test of Interpretation
- Website has been dramatically updated with more general information and member services including online membership renewal.
- Educational Interpreting Issues (EII) committee established to satisfy a motion requesting increased support from the national organization for interpreters working in schools with Deaf and hard of hearing children.
- Dispute Resolution Process (DRP) currently recruiting nationally Deaf and hearing candidates who will be trained to become internal resource people (IRP). IRPs will help mediate disputes between consumers and interpreters in Level One of the DRP
- Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Professional Conduct and the Dispute Resolution Process translated into ASL

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 member of the professional association,
- lack of funding of 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,
- working conditions and standards
- implementation of Video Relay Services and the impact this will have on our field.
- professional regulation

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.

Canadian trivia:

- The baseball glove was invented in Canada in 1883.
- Vancouver, Canada is tied with Zurich, Switzerland for the highest quality of life of any city in the world.
- The world's smallest jail is believed to be in Rodney, Ontario, Canada. It is only 24.3 square meters (about 270 square feet).
- Canada has the ninth biggest economy of the world
- According to the United Nations Human Development Index, Canada has the highest quality of life in the world.

- Contrary to popular opinion, Canada does not own the North Pole. In fact, the North Pole is not owned by any country. It is believed, however, that Santa Claus is from Canada.
- Canada is the world's eighth biggest trader.
- Of all of the world's producers of natural gas, copper, zinc, nickel, aluminum, and gold, Canada is in the top five.
- Canada is the home of many great inventions, including: basketball, the electric light bulb, the electric range, the electron microscope, standard time, the television, the telephone, and the zipper.
- Canada is the fifth largest energy producer.
- Canada has the world's highest tertiary education enrolment.

Mexico

| | |
|--|--|
| Type of Government | Republic |
| Population | 103 millions of habitants (National Institute of Statistics) |
| Mexican Sign Language Status | <p>Mexican Sign Language is recognized as national language since April of 2005 in the General Law of People with Disabilities: Article 12. - <i>Mexican Sign Language is one of the national languages that form part of the linguistic patrimony whereupon the Mexican nation counts of.</i></p> <p>The existence of Mayan Sign Language (LSMy) is also recognized in the Peninsula of the Mexican Republic in the state of Yucatan.</p> |
| Mexican Sign Language Interpreter Status | <p>There is no educational formation nor professional certification by the Mexican government</p> <p>There is no recognition of the image of the Interpreter.</p> <p>Some universities give interpreting course classes without any academic support (sign language courses and not of interpretation)</p> |

ANILS (Asociación Nacional de Interpretes la Lengua de Señas, A.C.) The National Association of Sign Language Interpreters, A.C. was founded June 16th of 1995 (Notarial Scripture 29.688 book 663 year 1995 Notary's office 14, Permission Secretary of Outer Relations 9'015853 file 9,509'292)

The association social objective is the recognition and the defence of the conference interpreter's profession, to promote the formation and continuous training of its associates and that they apply all their knowledge and abilities in the work performance in benefit of the consumers either deaf or hearing.

According to statistical estimations of the Worldwide Health Organization, in Mexico, around 10 millions Mexican people has any type of disability and of this 10%, only 1% is Deaf.

The National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Computer Science in the XII General Census of Population and Living in 2000, concluded that 16.5% is deaf or is able to hear with the support of a hearing aid.

ILV data calculate that there are between 350 thousands and 500 thousands MSL signing deaf in the Mexican Republic. And approximately 150 deaf people in Yucatan with Mayan Sign Language very well definite and quite different from MSL.

In the Mexican republic there are 135 sign language users located in 17 of 32 states of the republic (not all of them pertain to the ANILS) that in some form offer interpreting services in MSL by payment of their services and/or for free.

Approximately 25 sign language users with university titles other than Interpretation

Approximately 50 sign language users with high school diploma.

Only one member with Interpretation certification (USA)

Only 4 sign language users with courses and graduate degrees in interpretation from the United States and Latin America **obtaining acceptable standards of professional interpretation.**

46 sign language users with formation in Religious Associations, without obtaining acceptable standards of professional interpretation in secular situations.

84 sign language users without any educational formation specialized on interpretation.

Only 8 sign language users are children of deaf Parents (CODA) dedicated to the job of interpreting receiving economic remuneration for their service. In Mexico because of historical and cultural situations the hearing children of deaf adults stay away from the deaf community and a great majority of them doesn't have a dominion of signed language.

13 sign language users with a deaf relative.

114 sign language users without having a familiar relationship with a deaf person.

Summary

One interpreter with professional certification (RID/USA)

Four interpreters with linguistic competition and “professional” formation without a certificate with acceptable level of interpretation.

130 interpreters in formation, 50% of them without a linguistic competition.

Members of ANILS.

ANILS was formed as an association by 56 sign language users from different states of the Republic, now with only 26 members “in formation” in 9 of 32 states of the Mexican Republic that cooperate actively in ANILS.

ANILS has succeeded in agreements to provide interpreting services constant with Deaf Associations:

- Mexican Federation of the Deaf
- Mexican Sports Federation of the Deaf
- 16 State Federations of the Deaf
- National Front for the defence of the Linguistic and Cultural Rights of the Deaf. (During 5 years, ANILS has provided with interpreting services for free in the social movement for the recognition of Mexican Sign Language as a national language.)

Agreements have been succeeded with public and private institutions that offer and/or need the interpreting service.

- Presidency of the Republic.
- H Deputy Chamber
- H Senator Chamber
- National Counsel for Discrimination Prevention (CONAPRED)
- National School of Anthropology and History (ENAH)
- Mexican Institute of Sexuality (IMESEX)
- San Idelfonso Museum
- Televisa, TV Azteca, Channels 11 and 22 (Television Sets)

Support from WASLI

WASLI supported ANILS so that a representative could be present at the Conference held on the month of July at Segovia, Spain. And to narrow focus on the Mexico’s representative so that he could be reunited with the person in charge of the region of North America Debra Russell and with the representatives of the national associations of United States and Canada where an excellent support was given.

The invitation was established so that you can be present with us to the national meeting of interpreters that will be held on September 29th and 30th of 2007 at the city of San Luis Potosi, Mexico. This meeting will be of great importance because during the year 2007 six of the 32 states of the republic have been working to create state associations of interpreters and to form the Mexican Federation of Interpreters, the same that will have as a social objective the recognition and professional certification of the sign language interpreter, this to be advisable with an agreement of the Mexican legislature. The importance of this meeting is that not only the state interpreters’ associations will be present, but also official representative from the government that are motivating the official formation and certification of the sign language

interpreter. Specifically, the National Institute of Indigenous Languages which is the responsible of forming the interpreters of the national languages of Mexico. The direct responsible will be the Ph. D. Boris Fridman Mintz who, by this time, would already be in touch with you because it is urgent to, during this time, elaborate the project of interpreters' formation and the participation of WASLI and the RID is of vital importance. The Ph. D. Boris Fridman has untiringly collaborated for the defence and the linguistic and cultural rights of the deaf people and enjoys the great prestige within the deaf community not only as a linguist but as a collaborator with the social movement of the deaf. He is the adviser of ANILS.

It would be of great help that you could be present at this meeting. Please confirm your assistance as soon as possible to be able to elaborate a program and to make the necessary arrangements of lodgings and food supply.

If it is necessary any extra data of this inform, please communicate it to me to elaborate this and to make it arrive to you.

Receive an affective greeting from all of ANILS.

ILS. Daniel Maya Ortega
Academic Secretary and Adviser of the ANILS

USA

Cheryl Moose, RID President-Elect

What are the major challenges for interpreters in the United States?

- Beginning June 30, 2008, hearing candidates for national certification must have a minimum of an associate's degree to take a performance exam. Deaf candidates must have a minimum of an associate's degree after June 30, 2012.
- Interpreters must meet the minimum requirements of qualifications as mandated by their respective states' legislations.
- New graduates of interpreter preparation programs gaining the skills and experience necessary to successfully achieve national certification. We call this "Closing the Gap".
- Establishment of successful mentoring programs to "Close the Gap" across the nation, especially in rural areas.

What have been RID's important achievements?

- The 2007 RID National Conference will be held in San Francisco, California August 3 – 8, 2007. This event has attracted record numbers and could easily exceed 2,000 participants.

- 2008 RID Regional Conferences will be held in Raleigh, North Carolina; Houston, Texas; Columbus, Ohio and Sacramento, California.
- The RID website has been dramatically updated with more general information and member services.
- RID Press will introduce four new publications in 2007 and more in 2008.
- The RID Educational Interpreting Committee was established to strengthen the organizational ties among educational interpreters, affiliate chapters and the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf and to assist the board of directors in identifying and promoting best practices in the field of educational interpreting in order to advocate for highly qualified practitioners for students who are deaf and hard of hearing.
- RID entered into a partnership with the national Consortium of Interpreter Education Centers, (NCIEC) to establish the RID/NCIEC Mentorship Grant Program, providing \$25,000 per year to be divided among five geographic regions. This is a great step forward in supporting sustainable, successful programming for mentoring. The RID/NCIEC Mentorship Grant Program's goals are to increase the skills of: New interpreters, Interpreters from minority populations, Deaf interpreters or Deaf mentors, Interpreters in specialized settings.
- The RID Standard Practice papers were revised and updated reflecting the advent of technology, current and future trends and best practices.
- The RID Video Interpreting Committee completed a multi-year project to develop a standard practice paper on video relay interpreting.
- Collaboration and partnering between RID and NAD continues.
- Record numbers of raters were trained in 2006 for the NIC and CI/CT examinations.
- Membership continues to grow.
- Numbers taking certification exams up considerably and results returned in record time.
- In 2006 RID entered into an agreement with Boys Town National Research Hospital in Omaha, Nebraska, developers of the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment ® (EIPA), tools that assess the proficiency of educational interpreters. This collaboration recognizes educational interpreter members of RID who have passed the EIPA at level 4 as certified.

How can WASLI assist?

WASLI can continue to advance the profession of sign language interpreting worldwide by encouraging and supporting the establishment of national associations of interpreters in countries

that do not have them, supporting existing national associations and sharing information. This service is invaluable.

How can you assist WASLI?

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 Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf as well as individual RID members can serve as resources to others. We can also share information about the cooperation and collaboration that has occurred between the USA's national interpreter association and national association of the Deaf.