



Issue 3

WASLI and WFD Sign Joint Agreement.



At an open air reception yesterday evening, Joe Murray, representing Markku Jokinen, President of the World Federation of the Deaf and Liz Scott Gibson, President of WASLI signed a Joint Agreement in front of delegates and guests.




JOINT STATEMENT

(adopted on 23/01/2006)

The World Federation of the Deaf and the World Association of Sign Language Interpreters are happy to issue the following statement to support their agreement to work in close partnership for the future benefit of Deaf people and people who use sign language and the sign language interpreting profession:

- In co-operation with National Associations of the Deaf we will work towards the establishment of sign language interpreter associations in countries where there are currently none, and encourage regional networks throughout the world
- We will strive to increase learning opportunities to increase the numbers of professional sign language interpreters who are competent and appropriately qualified to national standards
- We affirm the importance of joint working, close liaison and transparent communication between associations of Deaf people and sign language interpreters at local, national, regional and international levels
- We will pay particular attention to the development of international links in order to build capacity, provide a forum for discussion and share resources with developing countries
- This agreement recognises the primacy of organisations of Deaf people to chart the political, cultural, and educational development of sign language in their country, including the dissemination of sign language dictionaries and teaching materials.

Signed:	Signed:
Markku Jokinen	Liz Scott Gibson
WFD PRESIDENT	WASLI PRESIDENT



THE FIRST DAY OF CONFERENCE

by Karl Llorca



Well what an amazing, emotional, moving and thoroughly awe inspiring opening ceremony we were treated to! In our delegate packs we were given castanets and were told that they were integral to the proceedings. People were looking around the room, wondering what they were for, and our Spanish colleagues were rushing round showing us how to operate these devices. To say the noise was deafening once we all could use them was an understatement!

A hush fell on the room as Zane and Saul facilitated the proceedings. Each country that was represented at conference were asked to stand up and be greeted by fellow interpreters, along with a few words of welcome in each respective language by our hosts.



Liz Scott Gibson then formally opened the Conference and invited welcoming speeches from

- Jose Lopez (FILSE President)
- Knud Sondergaard (WFD Representative – who couldn't attend)
- Pedro Garcia Sanz (CNSE Representative)
- Sanja Tarczay (WFDB Representative)

Each speaker reminded us of how fortunate we were to be here, and for us to remember those deaf people who are having to go through life with no or little access to an interpreter.

Particular thanks were given to Jose and FILSE for managing to host this conference for us, they have only had since Nov 2005 to get this up and running when in normal circumstances a conference of this size would take 4 years to organise!



Liz then announced that we had 293 delegates at conference and they consisted of:

- 208 Sign Language Interpreters
- 38 Students
- 9 Professionals
- 14 Deaf people
- 1 Deafblind

This is an amazing number and of course, she wants to see even more at the next conference in 2011!

For me the most moving part then occurred, Liz invited each of the interpreters who are working during this conference to introduce themselves, giving us their names and where they are from. As working interpreters we are often expected to be the 'invisible' party in the interpreted event, which is something that Esther De Los Santos explored further in her presentation. To have our colleagues afforded the opportunity to say 'hi' and actually acknowledge their presence there really hit a nerve with me, and I have to say, I was getting a little moist in the eye area! Interpreters at this conference have been working into and from spoken English and Spanish, International Sign, spoken Japanese, Cambodian Sign Language, and Croatian Sign Language. It is an uplifting experience to be in a room of 293 interpreters applauding their colleagues and saying, 'hey we appreciate the work you are doing!'



Keynote Speaker: Esther De Los Santos, Spain



“More than interpreting”

Esther's paper focused on the role of the interpreter in an interpreted event and concentrated on the work of Viaggio who looked at the interlinguistic transfer of language. Being this invisible robot working away in the corner is a concept that Viaggio repels and feels that we are able to enrich the situation as we are able to mediate both language and culture.

The remaining part of this paper presented by Esther continued to look at Viaggio's work and in particular how important that cultural mediation is. Furthermore there are some simple logistical points that still require addressing in some countries, such as do you introduce the interpreter, do you allow the interpreter freedom to translate in a manner they see fit, or do you dictate the conditions in which they must work?

These and other questions, for instance that of people working as 'interpreters' without having gone through any formal training, Esther feels needs to be addressed in interpreter training courses so that a comprehensive model can be viewed of how and who interpreters work for.

In my opinion this was an interesting paper in terms of how we can go through our career without giving any real thought to what interpreters from other countries have to experience. We can learn from each other, offer guidance and of course have some fun!

Keynote Speaker: Bill Moody, USA



“The role of international sign interpreting in today's world”

It is often thought that to be an interpreter working into international sign is seen as the pinnacle of one's career, that those who do this at conference are the elite of our profession. This thought is something that Bill challenges in his paper on this subject. We were given a whistle-stop tour of how international sign developed and where it developed. Records show some forms of international communication between deaf people from differing countries as far back as 250 years ago. Since then, each time that deaf people have come together from differing countries more and more international signs were developed and used. It is from this rich melting pot of signs from whence 'international sign' was created. Records show that this was taking place in Europe and Africa, but we have no records so far to show was happening in Asia, perhaps this is something that our Asian colleagues could investigate?

So from this rich, diverse pot of signs used by deaf people at the WFD and of course Deaf Olympics interpreters have been developing their skills in translating it, and of course working into. Bill was part of the 1979 team of interpreters working at the WFD using the Gestuno based system of international sign, and he estimates that back then perhaps only 50% of the source language found its way into the target language. Compare this with today's interpreters working in international sign, he believes they will be getting about 80%, so you can see there has been a significant development.

To answer the original concept that international sign interpreters are the pinnacle, Bill believes they are not, however, to be a successful interpreter in that arena you have to have several signed languages in your knowledge base to call upon to help you best interpret that language.

Finally Bill believes that the onus for training and assessment should not lie with WASLI but with a collaborative partnership between WFD and WASLI.

The official WASLI Conference Proceedings will be published later this year. Visit the website after September for details.

Sula Gleeson, London



I met Sula during the first coffee break today. Despite the conference only starting today she still felt that so far she had really enjoyed meeting so many new people, watching and learning sign languages from around the world, and of course meeting some old faces not seen for a long time. Sula has been interpreting for 6 years and is supposed to be handing in her final portfolio for the Post Graduate Diploma in Interpreting next week! What commitment this shows on her part that she can take this time out of her studies to come and meet us all here! Sula is also the Regional Representative for the Arts Task Group of ASLI.

Sula Gleeson, Londres

He conocido a Sula durante el primer descanso de hoy. Aunque la Conferencia acababa de empezar sentía que ya había conocido a un montón de gente nueva y aprendido muchos signos de diferentes países, y encontrado a muchas personas conocidas que hacía mucho tiempo que no veía. Sula ha estado interpretando durante muchos años y se supone que tiene que entregar su tesina para conseguir su postgrado en interpretación la próxima semana. Todo un símbolo de su compromiso sacando tiempo de sus estudios para venirse aquí y conocernos a todos. Ella es también la representante regional de la comisión de Arte de la ASLI (Reino Unido)

Stefan Coster, Sweden



He feels that having the conference in Spain has made it more affordable for him to attend, and this is his first WASLI conference! He and I are no longer virgins of the interpreting scene now! Stefan explained the situation of interpreters in his home area, and they are very different to those in the UK. In the UK we have a majority of freelance interpreters working in the industry, whereas the majority of the 80 interpreters in Sweden work as 'in-house' interpreters. This highlights some of the major cultural differences that occur in this profession and why it's important for us to meet and exchange ideas.

Stefan Coster, Suecia

Piensa que el hecho de que la Conferencia se haya celebrado en España le ha facilitado el poder asistir, y esta es la primera vez que asiste a una Conferencia de la WASLI. Tanto él como yo podemos dejar de considerarnos vírgenes en esto de las conferencias de intérpretes a partir de ahora. Stefan explicó la situación de los intérpretes en su región, que se diferencian mucho de los del Reino Unido. En el Reino Unido abundan los intérpretes autónomos mientras que la mayoría de los 80 intérpretes de Suecia son contratados. Esto resalta una de las grandes diferencias que se dan en esta profesión y demuestra la importancia de estos encuentros para nosotros de manera que podamos intercambiar ideas.

NEXT EDITION

More Interviews, Country Reports, Presentations in Summary

MEDIA TEAM

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