



## More Country Reports



### **Malawi:**

There are 3 interpreters in Malawi at the moment!

Malawi has a population of 12,000,000 with 60,000 deaf people. Sign language is not recognised. Interpreters are generally located in the South of the country so it's hard to get one in the North. There are no professional services therefore, interpreters tend to do their training and leave. There is currently no certification for qualified interpreters which impacts on the salary this profession attracts, it is very low so interpreters have to have a second job. Discussions with the TV stations have started and we have some programmes in sign language.

Moreover, they require Zane to continue with his emails round the world!

### **Mexico:**

The Sign Language Association started in 1995 so that interpreters could become accredited and certified. Their aim is to expand and to have sign language recognised by the government, but the government doesn't actually acknowledge that the language exists so linguistics are trying to prove to them it does.

There are 36 interpreters training in 9 states. There is 1 interpreter certified from the USA and there are 4 trainers. We would like WASLI to help us get together documents that will aid us to lobby government.

### **New Zealand:**

There are two levels of membership for our members, ordinary members and graduate members. In NZ there are three languages at work, and therefore there are some interpreters who can work trilingually.

Our goal is to work more closely with the Deaf community and develop our structure so that it can incorporate a PDP.

Most importantly in 2006 Sign Language was recognised not only as a language but an indigenous language!

### **Peru:**

Firstly it must be noted that it's nice to be in a room full of Spanish speakers!

In Peru there is a negative perception of deafness, in that it is a mentally disabling condition that leaves it's suffer not requiring education. If a deaf person is born to a hearing family, they will have no access to sign language at all. Interpreters are only recognised in Court settings, and as such the deaf person will not have any access to interpreters in the Police stations, therefore, they often end up at court on wrong charges.

There is no official interpreter association.

### **Korea:**

There are 350,000 deaf people in Korea and they have had to lobby government to allow them to have the ability to learn to drive. Subtitles are put on some programmes. There is a sign language centre that provides the training and examinations for interpreters and they offer a video relay interpreting service. There are 766 interpreters in Korea and there are 145 at the interpreter centre. They would like to see the welfare of deaf people improved in their country so that they had more rights, as do their hearing counterparts.

### **Kosovo:**

There is a need to increase the awareness of the deaf community and to explore the misconception that interpreter training can be done in 5 days (as was in the former Yugoslavia). There is the first group of interpreters coming to the end of their 3 year training course and over the course there has been 7 international guests training on our programme include Dr Napier who looked at the code of ethics and how to work with interpreters amongst other things.

Sign Language is still not recognised by the government; however the Prime Minister has set up a working party to look at this.

We welcome an open information exchange with WASLI and its members.

### **Lithuania:**

We are a small country with only 3 million inhabitants and 6000 deaf people. There are 70 interpreters, and sign language was recognised by our government in 1996. There are 5 training centres and in 2001 we saw the first three year training programme begin. We do have an Association of Sign Language Interpreters.

### **Madagascar:**

There are 19 million people in Madagascar with 6 schools for the Deaf. However there are only 5 interpreters, this number will increase to 17 at the end of the year as they will be coming to the end of their 2 year training programme. We are trying to set up our association and next year we hope to be full members of WASLI!

### **Malaysia:**

Our association is just 3 months old with 3 deaf and 8 hearing members! Zane officiated at our opening ceremony on the behalf of WASLI. We have 10 officially working interpreters but they are not accredited, and we are not seen as a profession. Often we are called Communication Officers, and there are some deaf interpreters.

### **Finland:**

We are in need of a certification process in Finland and we would like to see some international lecturers come from WASLI to teach our students. We think that we can offer a mutually beneficial information exchange as we have over 30 years of experience in training interpreters.

### **Holland:**

In Holland there are 15-25,000 sign language users with 204 full time interpreters. Our training programme is 4 years in duration and covers settings such as education, employment and the community. However there are 2 government offices that control these areas so there is sometimes a problem!

We would like to help WASLI improve its global status and we can teach you all how to operate on little money! In 2008 we will be hosting the EFSLI conference so put that date in your diaries and come along.



### **Ireland:**

In Ireland there are 5000 sign language users and Irish Sign Language is seen as a support service not a language! There are 50 interpreters scattered around with the most in Dublin and Kerry.

There is a 2 year diploma training course which is offered through the Centre for Deaf Studies in Trinity College. There is some government funding available for interpreting services and there are more deaf interpreters coming on-line.

### **India:**

The profession of interpreter is not on the list of professions held at the Indian government. Therefore there is no status attached to this job. Interpreting is done by CODA's and is unpaid.

India has many languages so often we have to communicate with our fellow interpreters from other regions in International Sign as we don't speak the same language!

June 2007 saw our Association being launched and I hope that WASLI can help us to learn from the mistakes of others.

### **Japan:**

Sign Language Interpreting needs to be established as a known profession by local government. Working conditions are bad for the interpreter and they are often not paid, having no insurance and they are not allowed to work outside of the office environment.

### **Kenya:**

KSLIA was set up in 2000 but we still need to have a standardised and certified training programme for our interpreters.

We have had some success as we do have a growing number of programmes on the television being offered with a SL interpreter.

There is a draft Code of Ethics, we have our own website blog, email updates to name some of the current work we are doing.

We would like to work with other African countries and look at indigenous languages. Currently we have less than 50 members, but we would like to expand.

### **Saudi Arabia:**

I am a researcher, am the coordinator of the Deaf Sign Language Programme, and I am the Director of Education in the S.A Association of the Deaf.

We need to set up a working party to look at establishing the grammatical rules of our sign language, and for them to collate a dictionary of signs. The wider community is unaware of the problems we face. The main problem we face is that current research is presented in written English, we need this to be provided in Arabic as well.

The profession is not recognised in Saudi therefore there is no training for interpreters. We are however, the first Arabic country to establish a certification process and we need WASLI to help us move this forward.



### **Canada:**

Canada has a population of approximately 32 million people and there are two spoken languages used in Canada, English and French, therefore there are two sign languages used ASL and LSQ. In AVLIC there are 184 members but this does not include those interpreters who work in educational settings. There are 8 regional chapters with 4 training programmes that range from 2-4 years in duration, and 1 programme specifically for LSQ. AVLIC provides a range of services for interpreters, including mediation in times of conflict or grievance. There is a National Certification that interpreters take and this includes a written test, workshops and a final examination.

### **Costa Rica:**

30th January 2005 was the date that Costa Rican Sign Language (CRSL) was officially recognised. Interpreters started to attend university programmes back in the 1980's and some went to Washington DC to Gauledet to study. In 1999 there were the first batch of fully trained and qualified interpreters leaving the programme; this was a group of 7 females. In 2005 there were a further 5 qualifying; 1 man and 5 women and they are trying to establish the third training programme.

Law 7600 saw the provision of funding from the State to allow for interpreting services.

### **Croatia:**

There is currently no National Interpreting Association in Croatia, but there is support available from the Deaf Blind Service; which is a well organised association and is like other national interpreting associations. Sweden was the model we emulated. Our big achievements to date include:

- Establishment of the DB Support Service, this is a unique service
- Our interpreters are recognised to work with both DB and Deaf people
- We fund a variety of services for DB interpreters, and education of deaf interpreters
- We are proud to be the leading light for DB services in South East Europe

We would like WASLI to assist us in lobbying government to get Interpreters recognised. We can provide WASLI with information and assist in the setting up of the Balkan Region.

### **Italy:**

ANIOS is now 20 year old and has 70 members, to become a member you have to successfully pass an entrance test. In Italy there are 60,000 deaf people and 60% of those use Italian Sign Language. Sign Language is not officially recognised by the government, and as recently as 2006 legislation was changed to alter terminology used to describe people as being deaf and not deaf mute.

ANIOS is looking to recruit more members and in particular deaf interpreters.

### **Scotland:**

In October 2007 SASLI will be having its 25th birthday! There are 48 registered interpreters in Scotland and there are 11 Associate members; interpreters on recognised training programmes. There are 5000 deaf people in Scotland and SASLI receives an income from the government to fund its 4 full time members of staff. We would like to see the training programme being more like an apprenticeship but based on a university programme. We are striving for the profession to be officially recognised.

In Scotland there are many refugees and asylum seekers so there is a greater need for deaf interpreters.

We are very proud to have sponsored the interpreter from Romania to attend conference!

### **Botswana:**

Botswana is in South Africa and there are 1.5 million people living there with 2000 deaf people attending 19 schools for the deaf, 2 of which are residential. There is no official sign language in the country. The remaining deaf people are educated in mainstream schools. However, the majority of teachers teach in both speech and sign language, there is only 10% who don't and therefore need to have interpreters with them (usually other teachers who can sign).

Many deaf children come from very poor families who themselves are uneducated therefore lobbying government is a difficult process.

### **Russia:**

There are 140,000 deaf people in Russia with 850 registered interpreters who have varying degrees of qualification. Interpreter training started in 1930, and in 1960 this changed to a college level qualification that took 3 years to complete. However deaf people don't feel this to be adequate for their needs and in fact it is disempowering as the interpreters are thought to be their voice, ears and THOUGHTS!

Interpreters are paid through the local government and the best fees are paid in Moscow. We would like WASLI to help us set up a deaf interpreter training programme.

### **Serbia:**

There are no official figures on how many deaf people there are in Serbia but from a total population of 7 million it is estimated that there are 30,000 deaf people and 50,000 hard of hearing people, 80% of whom are sign language users. Sign language is not recognised in Serbia, but this is something that we hope will change. When Serbia used to be combined with Montenegro the figures were easier to calculate but it is now seen that we have:

- Certificated Sign Language Interpreters (4 yr programme) – 44
- 95 Translators – who are seen to have a low level of skill

We hope that WASLI will assist us in setting up or ITP.



### **Sweden:**

I will keep this brief as you can find out most of our information from the website [www.sttf.nu](http://www.sttf.nu). Briefly we have 9 million people in Sweden with 30,000 deaf/Deafblind and hard of hearing people. There are 450-500 interpreters.

Sign Language was recognised by our government 25 years ago! Our association is now 4 years old.

### **South Africa:**

Sign language is not recognised by our government and there are not enough interpreters, however sign language is used in schools. We are expecting things to change in the future as a new law that has just been passed states that companies must have a percentage of its work force who are disabled, and it is seen an easier and cheaper option to employ someone who is deaf than someone who is a wheelchair user.

### **Ethiopia:**

We are in the horn of Africa and we have a population of 77 million. We are also the birth place of coffee!

We see some of the challenges that we have faced are the non cooperation from the deaf community as they don't want us to set up our interpreting association. We have had a distinct lack of awareness from our government and they don't see sign language as a human right.

We will achieve our association being set up and being a legal entity. We feel that WASLI should set up a fund for disadvantaged countries to set up training programmes and we can share our experiences with WASLI and its members.

### **Taiwan:**

There is currently no formal Association in Taiwan, but we hope to have one so that we can become a formal member of WASLI.

The schools for the deaf in our country use sign language. The interpreters have to go through a formal test at the National Blind Institution where they are examined by a panel that is made up of deaf and hearing people.

You all have to come to Taipei for the 21st Deaflympics!

### **USA:**

RID is now 40 years old!

Our challenges have been the quality and standards of the interpreting services, so we have been tightening up our standards to compensate, and this is at a state level. The interpreters coming into training now have to complete a 2 year degree programme before they can become interpreters.

The achievements we have had are our publishing arm which is just up and running again, the website [www.rid.org](http://www.rid.org) and the fact we have 13,000 members. The tests that we use now are in done in conjunction with the NAD and we have 4 new books about to be published.

### **Nigeria:**

There are 240,000,000 people in Nigeria with over 200 different spoken languages being used; there are 5 million deaf people with only 300 interpreters! There is no test of accreditation of interpreters at present.

In the schools and universities education is free to deaf people.

We don't have a national association and no national ITP.



### **Spain:**

In Spain there are 40 million people with 1 million of those being deaf, and 150,000 sign language users; however there are only 800 out of 3,000 qualified interpreters currently working.

Since 1984 there has been a 2 year training programme for interpreters.

Two weeks ago we had sign language recognised by our government!

The challenges we have faced have been setting up the regional associations and training courses in universities. We still want to improve our working conditions.

Our achievements; well coordinating WASLI 2007 was a big one! Also we have had the qualification standardised.

We would like WASLI to continue to distribute information and maybe set up some international working groups. Have conferences in other countries! We feel we could help WASLI by giving an information exchange and assisting with the Latin American countries.

### **MEDIA TEAM**

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