



WORLD FEDERATION OF THE DEAF

WFD NEWSLETTER

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The World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) was established in 1951 in Rome, Italy during the first Deaf World Congress. As an international non-governmental central organisation of national associations of Deaf people. It has B-category status in the United Nations (UN) system, where it is represented at the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC); the Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); the International Labour Organization (ILO); and World Health Organization (WHO). It is also has participatory status with the Council of Europe (CoE). WFD currently has 130 Ordinary Members (national associations of the Deaf). WFD provides a platform for cooperation and information exchange among its members and partnerships. As an international organisation and through national organisations, WFD is emphasizing on improving the human rights for Deaf persons, the status of national sign languages, to have better education for Deaf people, and improved access to information technology and services.

We welcome all news, articles, letters to the editor, and other contributions. We reserve the right of acceptance or rejection and the right to edit all submissions that we publish.

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WFD INFORMATION

Deaf people are not able to enjoy human rights

By Hilde

The newly released report “Deaf People and Human Rights” shows that few Deaf people are able to truly enjoy even basic human rights. Relatively few countries deny Deaf people access to education, government services or equal citizenship on the basis of deafness alone. But lack of recognition of sign language, lack of bilingual education, limited availability of sign language interpreting services and widespread lack of awareness and knowledge about the situation of Deaf people deprive most Deaf people of access to large sections of society.

The Deaf People and Human Rights report

The lives of Deaf people in 93 countries, most of which are developing countries, is addressed in the “Deaf People and Human Rights” report. The analysis in the report is based on the data collected through the Global Education Pre-Planning Project on the Human Rights of Deaf People. This constitutes the largest database about Deaf people in the world outside Europe, the USA and Canada. Mr Colin Allen was the project co-ordinator for the seven regional surveys, while Ms Hilde Haualand was appointed as a researcher for the final report. The report presents data and analyses about the respondents (most of which are associations of Deaf people), recognition of sign language in legislation, education, accessibility and interpreters and lifelong learning. One hundred and twenty-three (123) countries received the questionnaire, and 93 responded, giving a response rate of 76 percent.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) underlines that people with disabilities have the right to enjoy full human rights. CRPD mentions sign language in Article 2 - Definitions; Article 9 - Accessibility; Article 21 - Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information; Article 24 - Education; and Article 30 - Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport. CRPD provides a powerful tool to enhance the human rights of people with disabilities, and the above-mentioned articles highlight the basic factors for protecting the human rights of Deaf people, which are

- Recognition and use of sign language(s), including recognition of and respect for Deaf culture and identity
- Bilingual education in sign language(s) and the national language(s)
- Accessibility to all areas of society and life, including legislation to secure equal citizenship for all and prevent discrimination
- Sign language interpretation

Full enjoyment of human rights for Deaf people can only be found in the core of this model, where sign language (including recognition of and respect for Deaf culture and identity) is the central factor. The 'Deaf People and Human Rights' report provides an analysis guided by the principles of CRPD. Answers to different topics in the questionnaire and the regional reports have been linked to show what factors influence the violation or support of human rights for Deaf people.

Citizenship and recognition of sign language

Nineteen country respondents say their governments do not recognise Deaf people as equal citizens and only 44 countries have legal recognition of sign language, mostly within the fields of education and social services. Deaf people are not allowed to obtain a driver's license in 31 countries. With very few exceptions, Deaf people are not formally denied the right to vote or to establish a family; but limited access to the media and other information, high illiteracy rates and heavy social prejudices cause violation of human rights for Deaf people and denigrate their status as equal citizens.

Education systems continue to fail Deaf children

It seems that no country totally denies Deaf people the right to an education, but the education system and/or literacy levels of Deaf children are not satisfactory in any respondent country. Only 23 countries provide bilingual education in sign language and the national language to Deaf children in some schools. In all other schools and countries, Deaf children's access to education is limited. Most respondents say the quality of education for Deaf people is low and the illiteracy rate is high, which indicates that there is a massive ignorance in education systems about the importance of sign language in Deaf education.

Limited access to government services and sign language interpreting

Eighty countries have sign language interpreters, but only 32 governments take some responsibility in paying for the sign language interpreters' salaries. There is sign language interpreting training of varying quality in 43 countries, and only 30 countries have a Code of Ethics that secures the autonomy of Deaf people in situations where a sign language interpreter is involved. Only 18 countries have a sign language interpreting service, professional training and a Code of Ethics for sign language interpreting. Only 11

countries say Deaf people do not have access to government services, but the limited access to sign language interpreting indicates that there are almost no countries where Deaf people have real access to government services.

Low awareness and little information on the HIV/AIDS situation

Fifty-two country respondents are ignorant about whether the HIV/AIDS situation affects Deaf people in their country, or have no information about this issue. Country respondents in African regions seem to be the most aware about the HIV/AIDS situation, yet these are also regions with low access to public services. In most of the respondent countries there is a need for HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns and/or information about HIV/AIDS directed at associations of the Deaf and individual Deaf people, as the current situation is precarious.

The Swedish National Association of the Deaf (SDR) and the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) initiated the survey, with funding from the Swedish Agency for International Development Co-operation (Sida) and the Swedish Organisations of Disabled Persons International Aid Association (Shia). The written report (in English) and a presentation of the report in International Sign can both be found on the WFD website (www.wfdeaf.org/projects.html).

Nepal –On the Way to Equality

20th Regional Meeting of WFD Asian Pacific Regional Secretariat
7-10 December 2008
Pokhara, Nepal

BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN NEPALESE SCHOOLS

Markku Jokinen visited Nepal in December 2008 on the occasion of the 20th Regional Meeting of WFD Asian Pacific Regional Secretariat in Pokhara. During his visit he had an opportunity to meet with the Deaf community of Nepal. “Deaf people in Nepal have achieved a lot in their way to equal participation and towards full human rights in their society in a relatively short period. One of the most positive achievements is use of Nepalese Sign Language (NSL) in deaf education. It was wonderful to see the schools using a bilingual method”, he says. Markku Jokinen visited deaf schools in Kathmandu and Pokhara where both hearing and deaf teachers use Nepalese Sign Language fluently with students and had high command of it. In the Kathmandu school there is also a unit of deaf blind students which is very important and encouraging. However, despite all these positive developments there are still a lot of students who are left out from education, especially in mountain regions. Nepalese National Federation of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NNFDH) with its member organisations try to seek for these young deaf to get them to schools. Another great problem relates to the limited government funding, which leads to dependency on the support received outside, mostly from international organisations and development cooperation agencies.

LANGUAGE WITH PROUD NATIONAL ORIGIN

Social events, activities and gatherings of the Deaf seem to be active providing opportunities for seniors, women and young people. The Deaf Nepalese are also proud of their language. “Deaf Nepalese are proud of their language that has a strong national origin. They have tried not to copy other SLs into their SL. It was a great enjoy seeing how Nepalese Sign Language

has developed through systematic sign language work. This good development is a result of a long process supported by Swedish Association of the Deaf through Shia and other international non-governmental organisations, such as Deaf Way from UK and another German organisation.” However, cooperation is not always uncomplicated with some other international organisations that have strongly advocated for inclusive education against Nepalese Deaf community’s wish that emphasizes deaf children’s right to sign language environment. World Federation of the Deaf urges to respect Nepalese deaf people’s point of view in this regard.

There are a number of positive developments taking place in Nepal. The Nepalese Parliament will soon ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and a Member of Parliament Mr Raghav Bir Joshi has been very active in this with the disability movement. He has also advocated a driving license for the deaf and a legislation for NSL. Hopefully, the government increases its support to NNFDH in the future as discussed.

REGIONAL MEETING OF ASIA AND PACIFIC

Markku Jokinen participated in the opening ceremony of the A/P Region’s regional meeting. There were ongoing discussion on the future development of the WFD Regional Secretariat of Asia and the Pacific. Also the convention process and ratification were discussed at the meeting. “It showed me very clearly huge impact that development cooperation and closely working together can really influence in improving human rights of deaf people and their lives”, Markku Jokinen outlines.

New WFD Experts Network

The WFD Expert network has been set up recently and the areas of expertise are Human Rights/Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD), Education, Developing Countries, Sign Language, Deaf Women, Deaf Senior Citizens, Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, Bisexual (LGTB), Universal Design, Bioethics and Mental Health. The experts will serve until the World Congress 2011. We also have appointed the coordinator for each of expertise area, who is responsible for collaborating with other experts in the same area.

In the past, WFD used to send nomination letters to the Ordinary Members for them to nominate and to propose to the Board of the names of the persons in their area of expertise. But the network of the accepted experts was not fully utilised due to the weakness in communication. So the Board decided to give more flexibility to nominate experts directly, not through Ordinary Members.

If any of you have something to ask or give information to one of expertise area, please be in contact to Ms. Phillipa Sandholm, WFD Administrative Secretary and she will forward the message to one of the coordinators.

WFD Congress in South Africa 2011

Visit the new websites of the World Congress at: www.wfd2011.com. More info on registrations and programme will be provided soon.

WFD’s Mexico Conference 2009 CANCELLED

Due to economic crises the WFD Conference that was planned to take place from 14 – 16 May 2009 in Mexico is cancelled.

Membership information

Membership fees

The WFD General Secretariat has sent the invoices for membership fees for the year 2009 to Ordinary, Associate and Individual members recently. It would be much appreciated for the members to pay the fees as soon as possible.

WFD Secretariat depends on membership fees to cover part of the expenses of running the office - without your support we cannot continue to function.

If Ordinary Members need a reduction or postponement in paying their fee this must be communicated to us in writing so this can be added to the agenda for Board action.

Ordinary members' contacts

Please let WFD office know if your contact details have been changed. Sometimes members miss out WFD information due to old contact information. Also, please make sure we know of any changes in your administration or activities. For example, if you have a new President, please let us know! We need your correct contact person, information and addresses.

We need updated address for this WFD Ordinary Member. Our mail to them was returned:

Kazakhstan Society of the Deaf

If you happen to have an up-to-date address for these above, please notify the WFD General Secretariat. Thank you.

INTERNATIONAL AND UNITED NATIONS NEWS

CRPD COMMITTEE STARTS ITS WORK

Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) has begun its work. The committee is mandated to consider reports of States parties submitted under article 35 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (the Convention). It is also mandated to receive and examine individual complaints against States to the Optional Protocol to the Convention (articles 1 to 5 of the Optional Protocol) and conduct inquiries based on reliable information indicating grave or systematic violations by a State party to the Optional Protocol of rights set forth in the Convention (articles 6 and 7 of the Optional Protocol).

CRPD members

The Committee consists of 12 members, who will serve in their personal capacity as independent experts. Upon reception of the sixtieth ratification of the Convention, the membership of the Committee shall increase by six members. For details about the members of the Committee please consult the secretariat's website at <http://www2.ohchr.org/bodies/crpd/membership.htm>

NGO engagement with CRPD

Representatives of national and international NGOs can follow and contribute to the Committee's future work. In this regard, international NGOs and United Nations organizations, funds and programmes are encouraged to facilitate attendance at Committee sessions by representatives of national NGOs. The first Committee meeting was arranged on 26 February 2009 in Geneva, Switzerland.

The Committee's Secretariat

The Human Rights Treaty Branch of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is responsible for supporting the Committee. For detailed information on upcoming sessions of the Committee please see "Information for NGOs" on the relevant session page at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crpd/index.htm>.

CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

BY NOW:

- 137 signatories to the Convention
- 81 signatories to the Optional Protocol
- 48 ratifications of the Convention
- 28 ratifications of the Optional Protocol

LATEST:

Uruguay ratified the Convention on 11.2.2009
Azerbaijan ratified the Convention on 28.1.2009
Azerbaijan acceded to the Optional Protocol on 28.1.2009
Oman ratified the Convention on 6.1.2009

48 countries ratified: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Brazil, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Gabon, Guinea, Honduras, Hungary, India, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Lesotho, Mali, Mexico, Namibia, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Oman, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Rwanda, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Uruguay

See more on <http://www.un.org/disabilities>

IDA CRPD Forum conveys its suggestions to the CRPD Committee

The IDA CRPD Forum, set up by the International Disability Alliance (IDA) to continue the work of the International Disability Caucus, has written a position paper that was sent to the 12 members of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities focusing on providing them suggestions from the IDA CRPD Forum prior to its first meeting. These suggestions include inter alia recommendations on the Rules of Procedure, working methods and election of the Chair and other positions of the committee.

IDA organised a seminar in Manila, Philippines, 11-12 February

The IDA Asia Pacific Seminar in Manila gathered representatives from 14 countries in the Asia and Pacific to address various topics, such as the CRPD and regional initiatives including drafting of an Asia Pacific Action Plan. The delegates agreed on a common declaration called Manila Declaration, in which they urge national governments in the Asia and Pacific Region to sign, ratify without reservations, implement and monitor the CRPD and its Optional Protocol. In addition they seek full participation of persons with disabilities in law and policy making, in all education and training programmes, and in the regional initiative such as the Asia-Pacific Decade of Disabled persons (2003-2012).

WFD had two representatives attending this seminar, Ms Ilaisa Vuleikaci from Fiji and Mr Raphael Domingo from Philippines.

A New Website to Claim Human Rights in Africa

A new website has just been launched introducing all procedures of international law for people living in Africa. The information on the website is available in English and French and is an offer to human rights defenders, lawyers, NGOs and victims of human rights violations in Africa. The website aims at popularizing the systems of protecting human rights of the United Nations and the African Union and the instruments of the European Union, the OECD and the International Criminal Court.

The website www.claiminghumanrights.org adds several access possibilities to the complex system of international law. It explains all relevant steps in order to claim human rights and clusters human rights thematically. In addition, it contains a database for a quick country-wise overview about the status of ratification and state reports.

The website is a joint project of the UNESCO National Commissions of France and Germany, celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The project has been initiated by the former Human Rights Ambassador of France Michel Doucin on the basis of publications of Klaus Hübner, member of the Executive Board of the German Commission for UNESCO. An abridged version of the website will be printed soon. The project has been supported by the German Foreign Office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France.

Website: www.claiminghumanrights.org

En français:

Le site Internet www.invoquerdroitsdelhomme.org est un guide pratique pour tous ceux qui luttent pour la mise en œuvre intégrale des droits de l'homme en Afrique. Il offre de nombreuses possibilités d'accès à l'information par rubrique: soit par instruments internationaux, soit par chacun des articles de la Déclaration universelle, soit par pays ou encore par thèmes.

Le site Internet: www.invoquerdroitsdelhomme.org

People with disabilities must play key role in development, says Ban

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon addresses a seminar on the theme, "Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Dignity and Justice for all of Us" on the occasion of the observance of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon marked the International Day of Persons with Disabilities by stressing that people with disabilities – the vast majority of whom live in poor countries – have a fundamental role to play in development processes. The Day was a week before the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and both occasions were being commemorated with the theme, "Dignity and justice for all of us."

Mr. Ban pointed out that the General Assembly has underscored the need to include people with disabilities in efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), eight anti-poverty targets, by their 2015 deadline. "With 80 per cent of persons with disabilities – more than 400 million people – living in poor countries, we need to do much more to break the cycle of poverty and disability," he said.

Noting that the international disability community's slogan is "Nothing about us without us," the Secretary-General called on governments and others to guarantee that persons with disabilities are an integral part of all development processes. "In this way, we can promote integration and pave the way for a better future for all people in society," he said.

Mr. Ban stressed that there were much to celebrate in 2008, with the entry into force of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in May.

The first Conference of the Parties to the pact met in October, and the resulting progress is due to the "active participation and leadership of persons with disabilities, by ensure that they have access to – and are included in – all aspects of our work," he said.

Addressing a commemoration in New York today, he stressed the world body's commitment to promoting accessibility in many forms, such as with communications technologies and political processes.

The Secretary-General also noted the need to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities at UN Headquarters. "I share your frustration, and sometimes I feel ashamed, at how difficult it can be to navigate our building here in New York," he said, adding that efforts are underway to improve the Organization's facilities by rebuilding rooms and adding ramps, among other measures.

Events marking the Day in New York included a multimedia presentation by the UN Mine Action Service on disability rights. There were also musical performances by Tamas Erdi, a Hungarian pianist who lost his eyesight shortly after he was born, and Rudely Interrupted, an Australian rock band almost entirely composed of members who have physical and intellectual disabilities.

Meanwhile, with an estimated 1 billion people on course to gain access to the Internet in the coming years, it is essential to ensure that people with disabilities are taken into account, a senior UN official said today in Hyderabad, India.

“The access needs to take into account the diversity of the world’s population, the diversity of languages but also the diversity of people with different abilities,” Jomo Kwame Sundaram, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, said at the opening of a gathering of the Internet Governance Forum.

The four-day meeting is bringing together representatives from government, the private sector, civil society, the Internet community, international organizations and the media to discuss how to make the web accessible to the greatest number of people while guaranteeing that cyberspace remains safe, secure and reflective of the diversity of the world’s people.

Source: UN Press releases

World Federation of the Deaf has proposed the United Nations to officially recognize an International Day of the Deaf / Sign Languages to be held on the last Sunday in September to bring wider attention for the concerns Deaf people face in their everyday life and highlight the importance of national sign languages. The global Deaf community widely celebrates an international week of the Deaf during the last full week of September culminating on the last Sunday of the week.

The UN has answered that it is reluctant to establish any new international days, but wishes to do more cooperation to attract greater attention for the importance of sign languages during the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3 December. The WFD and the UN DESA are locating areas of cooperation for the future. However, this does not affect the International Week of the Deaf celebrations in September and WFD encourages its member countries to organize their events and campaigns the same way as always in September 2009.

Disability Rights Fund Targets Three Countries

BOSTON, MA – The Disability Rights Fund (DRF)—a groundbreaking grantmaking collaborative supporting the human rights of people with disabilities—today announced its first 2009 grants round, “Raising Our Voice,” targeted at disabled persons’ organizations (DPOs) in three countries: India, Mexico and Ukraine.

The broad objective of the Fund—which was officially launched in March 2008—is to empower DPOs in the developing world and Eastern Europe/former Soviet Union to participate in ratification, implementation and monitoring of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CPRD).

In 2008, the Fund made one-year grants to 33 organizations in 7 countries (Ecuador, Nicaragua, Peru; Ghana, Namibia, Uganda; Bangladesh), totaling USD 800,000. Grants ranged from USD 5000 - 50,000 and supported CRPD awareness-raising, strengthening coalitions and networks, and rights advocacy.

In the first round of 2009 grantmaking, applicant organizations may apply within one of two categories: a) single organizations or partnerships and b) national DPO coalitions. Grants to single organizations will range from USD 5,000 to 30,000 and support efforts to build voice and visibility and to develop rights-based advocacy and monitoring on the CRPD. Grants to national DPO coalitions will range from USD 30,000 to 70,000 and will support advocacy toward ratification of the CRPD, passage of specific legislation to accord with the CRPD, or the production of shadow reports.

Interested organizations are urged to review the full eligibility criteria and application details posted at the Fund's website, <http://www.disabilityrightsfund.org/grant.html>. Any questions on the proposal process should be directed to info@disabilityrightsfund.org by March 16. The deadline for applications is April 16, 2009.

As a donor representative on the DRF Steering Committee stated, "The launch of DRF's 2009 grantmaking process marks an exciting expansion of our grantmaking to DPOs in three new countries and an effort to support both more marginalized sectors of the disability community and national coalitions advancing the rights of persons with disabilities."

DRF's donors include the American Jewish World Service, an anonymous founding donor, the Open Society Institute, The Sigrid Rausing Trust, and the United Kingdom Department for International Development.

Special rapporteur's tenure extended

Special Rapporteur Sheikha Hessa Al-Thani briefed the UN Commission for Social Development on 6 February 2009. She noted that her tenure had been extended for six months, summarized her work over the past six years.

She said she had continued monitoring implementation by Governments of the Standard Rules for the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities through surveys and research, which depended heavily on Government reports and testimony by organizations for the disabled, as well as on country and field visits. The Global Survey on Government Action on the Implementation of the Standard Rules was conducted in partnership with the South-North Centre for Dialogue and Development. During Phase III of analysing the Global Survey, experts had looked at three main areas, she said. They included the level of spending and differences in funding among the disabled-persons organizations that had responded; how the availability of resources affected the level of implementation in each country, regardless of the region in which it was located; and how disabled-persons organizations evaluated implementation of the Standard Rules depending on the type of disability they represented, such as visual, hearing, physical, developmental and psychosocial. For the most part, Governments had responded that they had implemented more measures than the disabled acknowledged. In terms of medical care, a pre-condition of the Standard Rules, 11 per cent of the countries had not implemented any measures.

A visit to the Sudan had revealed a high level of awareness in Khartoum of the rights of persons with disabilities and of the need for accessible, adequate and appropriate services for them, she said. In other areas of the country, however, there had been far less awareness and programming for disabled persons. Darfur lacked services in refugee settlements, where there was a complete lack of awareness of the needs of persons with disabilities. The Human Rights Officer with the African Union-United Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) had informed her that it had no specific programmes for the disabled, and that the “City of Hope”, an independently funded area for persons with disabilities, provided rehabilitation services at a hospital, in addition to a physical therapy unit, a prosthetics department, vocational training and a psychosocial support unit.

Describing activities to fulfil the Commission’s resolution on expanding the Special Rapporteur’s mandate to include raising awareness of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, she said her office had organized a workshop in Doha to educate civil society groups and relevant Government departments. A letter writing campaign had been initiated to encourage countries that had not signed or ratified the Convention to do so.

During war, many people ended up with permanent disabilities and without the support needed to live independent, productive and dignified lives, she said. The latest war in Gaza had resulted in an excessive number of persons with disabilities of all kinds. During the 22-day conflict, she had drawn attention to the plight of the injured and the situation of already disabled people facing grave dangers due to their disability and their inability to reach shelters and safe havens. Since the end of the war, she had been lobbying and campaigning for reconstruction of the Gaza rehabilitation centre destroyed by Israeli bombing, rebuilding of the children’s hospital, urgent psychosocial rehabilitation for the local people and for earmarking a percentage of aid funding to newly disabled people.

NEWS FROM WFD’S MEMBERS

Bulgaria

The Union of the Deaf in Bulgaria celebrates its 75th Anniversary

On July 16th 2009, the Union of the Deaf in Bulgaria proudly celebrates its 75th Anniversary. Bulgarian deaf people have lived for 75 years in harmony with the society, in which the Union of the Deaf in Bulgaria has played a central role for advocating equality. The Union of the Deaf in Bulgaria has gained much wisdom during its history and today it is an example to follow. Events and activities are countless from national to international, such as the flowering of the amateur art, the activity of the clubs by interests, the amateur artistic creation, and women's initiatives, many festivals, fairs and tourist competitions. In 1979 Bulgaria hosted the major event of the World Federation of the Deaf - the Eighth World Congress.

The Union of the deaf in Bulgaria was the host and organizer during the 1993's of XXVII World Summer Games of the Deaf. In 2003, which was declared the European Year of People with Disabilities, UDB was among nationally represented organizations that established the National Council on Disability - an organization that fights for the rights of its members and the European Forum of People with Disabilities. Bulgaria's achieved success is the result of the efforts and labor of generations of deaf people, unions, activists and friends.

Bulgaria has been an ordinary member of the WFD since 1954 joining only three years after WFD was founded. President of the UDB, Mr Vassil Panev, was Vice-President of the WFD for many years. The WFD General Assembly has awarded him by the highest honors as "Honorary member of the World Federation of the Deaf"

For more information, please visit the website of the Union of the Deaf in Bulgaria:
www.sgbbg.com

Source: Union of the Deaf in Bulgaria

Burundi

The Deaf people in Burundi face exclusion, poverty and abuse

By Chris Kubwimana

Deaf people especially in developing countries like Burundi do not have a voice, or opportunity to access to services such as education, health, housing, social service or Deaf culture/community, and sign language service; as we see here in UK.

During July and August 2008; I visited Africa with the intention of visiting the Burundi and Rwanda D/deaf community. However due to finance constraint; I only managed to visit Burundi. I am Deaf myself and live in the UK but originally from Africa. Although the country and people as a whole have changed much due to the civil war, I was able to interact with people I met, both deaf and hearing.

Most people living in the UK do not know much about Burundi as very little is mentioned in the media. Burundi is relatively a small but beautiful land-locked mountainous country lying south of the Equator in Central Africa. It shares borders with the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Tanzania, and Rwanda. Burundi is one of the poorest countries in the world. According to UN, some 68% of the population lives below the poverty that is less than \$1 a day. Burundi is also emerging from a 12-year, civil war which devastate and ravaged the country's infrastructure. It is estimated that up to 300, 000 people lost their lives. No one knows how many D/deaf died during the civil war or those became deaf as result of war.

Deaf survivors continue to live in paucity sharing similar problems along with most of their hearing counterparts. However; Deaf people experience poverty more intensely. Those I met live on less than what we spend on a cup of tea in UK. The exclusion they face along with the attitudinal and structural barriers impact on their chance to escape poverty or participate in the development activities.

There is also folklore and misconception about D/deaf people in the Burundi as a result some families still see their deaf children as "shame" in the family and at some point hid their D/deaf children away. Burundi D/deaf Association estimates there are up to 15.000 deaf children and young people; however less than 200 children are in school; catering for by -faith based school; while others are unreachable and unaccounted for. The government is inactive in providing D/deaf education or developing programme or initiatives to meet D/deaf people needs. Many D/deaf children people have not school

or class to go to, while most D/deaf adults are illiterate, others have not job skills and those who by good luck attend missionary school left school ill-equipped for employment and even unable to write or read properly.

While in Burundi I worked as a volunteer at one of two deaf schools, which was a good experience. However, these schools did not have adequate human resources, this includes poor teaching due to lack of qualification and training, lack of teaching material, lack of funds to hire qualified teachers, lack of deaf awareness. It is not surprising that deaf people leave school without being able to read or write properly and ill-equipped for jobs opportunities. These schools might be doing well if they have adequate support.

Another major issue facing by Deaf people in Burundi is health. Mental health issues amongst D/deaf people are most often due to a combination of traumatic civil war and life experience events. In addition, there is wide spread HIV/AIDS in this country. There is no known health or psychosocial service for this group. Deaf people are vulnerable and the lack of accessible information and services on HIV/AIDS is a worrying issue. In addition, Deaf parents do not have any support on parenting issues or health issues of their babies, not to mention attitudes and communication barriers between family and health professionals.

Deaf people could benefit from inclusive models in education, economic empowerment and community based services. Education projects promote special education or mainstreaming and enable deaf children to access primary school education would make a difference to their current situation. Economic empowerment involves the provision of vocational skills training programmes for disabled youths and micro-credit revolving loan schemes for parents of children with deafness/disabilities would also make a positive impact.

Deaf people in Burundi are poor, because they are denied access and opportunities most basic to human development—education, income, and self-esteem. However, Deaf people have the capacity to become productive citizens and contribute to national development. The current problem is not a lack of will in the deaf community or ability but a lack of opportunity.

The writer is a Deaf person who lives in London, UK. The article is based on his observations during his visit to Africa.

Croatia

Legislation on SL in process

Parliamentary Committee of Croatia has introduced a Draft Proposal of the Croatian Law on the Use of Sign Language. At first, the draft caused uncertainty among the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deafblind communities because it was drafted without their knowledge. However, due to successful campaigning and advocacy work, the Deaf associations of Croatia were finally included in the process by establishing a special task force to improve the law.

In Croatia, sign language is accepted, but not yet legally recognised. Following the example of several European countries that have legally recognised sign language, the Deaf people of Croatia insist upon the following: the right of choosing the mode of communication with the purpose of getting the best access to information, official and legal recognition of Croatian sign language, educating and training of sign language interpreters and instructors, the use of sign language in educating the Deaf, the right of free choosing among oral or bilingual school education systems.

The World Federation of the Deaf supports the positive development in Croatia for recognising Croatian sign language by law.

Finland

Signmark Gets Second in the Finnish Eurovision Song Contest Qualifications

A deaf rapper, Signmark, who is well known by the sign language community, has also risen to the awareness of a much larger audience in Finland over the past couple of months by participating in the Finnish Eurovision song contest qualifications. Signmark's Speakerbox got 41,2 % of the votes in the grand final coming second to the winner Waldo's people who was selected to represent Finland in the Eurovision Song Contest in Moscow by 45,1 % of the votes.

Signmark's ground-breaking success in the music world clearly shows what can happen, when sign language receives the status that belongs to it. For a long time there has been fruitful co-operation between the sign language community and the decision makers of Finland to improve the status of Finnish Sign Language and sign language users. When the status of one's own language is secured by legislation, it will give an individual the possibility of using their potential to the maximum and to participate in society as one of its active members. Signmark is a concrete example of this.

See the video Speakerbox: www.signmark.biz/speakerbox.html
Official website of Signmark: <http://www.signmark.biz/>

Indonesia and Tibet

Deaf People in Indonesia and Tibet

By Yerker Andersson

Introduction

Two Deaf activists from Indonesia and Tibet had a 5-hour meeting with me on August 5, 2008. As their experiences and achievements were impressive, I decided to share them here. I met and discussed international issues with Ekawati Liu of Indonesia several times in the past. She worked at schools for the Deaf in Jamaica, a deaf program in Guam and worked with deaf youth and adults in Tibet. She also volunteered briefly in Nicaragua and held workshops on bilingual-bicultural teaching strategies with teachers and staffs of the Pokhara School for the Deaf in Nepal. She has kindly kept me informed about what is going to the Deaf world in Asia. Lhamo Tsering (known as Lhatzse) of Tibet was the first Deaf Tibetan person I have met. She turned out to be an excellent activist and has become the Project Manager of the Tibetan Deaf Association in Lhasa. She has learned three languages, in addition to Tibetan Sign: Tibetan, Chinese and English. She showed several successful books illustrating Tibetan Sign Language prepared with sign language data

collected by the Tibetan Deaf Association which is an admirable achievement, especially considering the only support the Tibetan Sign Language Project received is primarily from the Handicap International based in Belgium.

Lan Qing who has worked with Ekawati Liu and Lhamo Tsering was kind enough to add several comments in this article. Lan Qing also is involved in the activities of Deaf people in Tibet.

Based on my ten questions, their responses are given below:

INDONESIA

The numbers of Deaf children and adults are not always accurate because no formal or official census has been conducted by the government. According to the WHO data, about 12 percent of 20 million people with disabilities are deaf and hard of hearing. But this number might be higher because many deaf persons are living in extreme poverty and, therefore, are out of reach by local, national and international officials. As expected, Deaf people still are suffering from a deep cultural stigma in families and society.

Two schools for the Deaf in Medan, Sumatra Utara are run by the governmental Department of Education and a Catholic mission, respectively. Their level of formal education still is low. Their employment opportunities are severely limited. Deaf children would eventually be able to work for or to be unemployed if their parents were wealthy. Unfortunately, like the governments in several developing countries, the Indonesian government has constantly failed to provide adequate education for deaf children. While other schools for the deaf are orally oriented, Sekolah Tunarungu in Rangkasbitung, is the only school using sign language and the Padesan Foundation, who runs the school, provides bilingual-bicultural teaching strategies for their teachers in any way possible.

Those deaf persons successfully employed are mostly seamstresses, hairdressers, bakers and office workers. Deaf people knew very well that a most successfully trained deaf dentist wanted to open a private dental clinic but the Indonesian medical association declined to grant her a license due to her deafness.

Deaf people living in major cities Indonesia usually are actively involved in Deaf clubs and are aware of how well Deaf persons in USA, nearby Southeast Asia countries, including Japan, are living.

The number of Deaf tourists from foreign countries visiting Indonesia apparently is very low.

Like other countries in the world, hearing people in Indonesia still exercise suppression on Deaf people. They have even created and compiled “Bahasa Isyarat Indonesia” (Indonesian Sign Language) without any advice by, nor inclusion of, any Deaf individuals in their committee. Instead of qualified Deaf leaders, hard of hearing persons often are selected to represent Deaf people at meetings with government or NGO officials.

Deaf people in Indonesia have not been able to develop local organizations for

different reasons. Like other developing and industrialized countries, Deaf people have been waiting for financial support by the government or NGOs instead of building

cooperation among themselves at different levels, from local to national. Foreign Deaf experts have indeed trained and encouraged potential Deaf leaders or activists but mostly for a short time.

Ekawati states that “Deaf and hearing persons who are passionate and honest at working with Deaf people could be powerful allies for the marginalized deaf people in Asia” if they could become aware of the successful efforts by other human rights groups. Because of the lack of interpreting services, government grants and human rights, Deaf people in Indonesia, as well as other developing countries, face much more difficulties, compared to Deaf people in Europe and USA.

As Eka points out, the national norms, restrictions, and demands depend on the cultures of different human groups in all the countries. After having observed many volunteers, both Deaf and hearing, and their activities in developing countries, she has a feeling that the appreciation of local cultures, the ability to relate to people of different personalities and backgrounds, the tolerance toward ambiguity and the willingness to keep up with deadlines are what all volunteers should have. In short, the volunteers should “serve, not to be served by, local NGOs and Deaf organizations in developing countries” as Eka states.

TIBET

Comment: Since the cultures in Indonesia and Tibet are quite different, they should be understood separately. Lhatzse is offering her answers to my questions, with additional insights through correspondence by a third person from Tibet:

According to the Tibetan Autonomous Region Government the number of persons with disabilities in Tibet is 194,000, including about 46,000 Deaf persons, which is 7 percent of the total population in Tibet. Currently, there is only one school serving Deaf children, established in 1999. This residential school is located in Lhasa. At present, the number of students at the school is 200, aged between 5 and 18, about 20 students are blind and instructed separately. Another location in Tibet is planning to be reserved for a second school for the Deaf.

The school is supported by a local Tibetan Ministry of Education, which is Chinese Government entity, and is maintained by the local government of Lhasa. The parents of Deaf children cannot afford education outside the Deaf school. After examination at the Deaf school, a few students may be able to continue their study elsewhere. Most of the students face severe employment limitations. Some may continue vocational training at a training center for persons with disabilities, or through other opportunities arranged by foreign development organizations such as Handicap International Belgium.

Lhatzse states that Tibetan Sign Language (TSL) is being documented in 2001. At that time only four deaf persons were organized as a core group to collect data of the natural TSL. The core group visited Thailand and Nepal twice in order to get new ideas for the development of Tibetan Sign Language dictionaries. The number of Tibetan Signs

collected is around 1,000. Today, the Tibetan Deaf Association urgently is needing both financial and practical supports to identify TSL's basic grammatical structure.

Until recently, TSL has been marginalized within the Lhasa Special School's curriculum to two, 10-minute, sessions per week and one large group Saturday session, following twice weekly instruction in the host-culture language (Tibetan). The balance of the Lhasa Special School's curriculum is taught in Chinese pidgin sign and oral and written Chinese under a nation-wide (Chinese) mandated curriculum. Because of Lhatsze's urging, highly-qualified Deaf development workers on short-term assignment to Tibet, and Handicap International, the Tibetan Autonomous Region's Ministry of Education has now been persuaded to include TSL and Tibetan (the bi-lingual language of Deaf Tibetans) in the school's general curriculum. They have also adopted a measure to begin developing a Bilingual/Bi-cultural methodology with support from Handicap International Belgium and UNICEF. However, without the identification of the grammatical structure of TSL, the development of quality instructional materials for a Bilingual/Bicultural approach will be a big challenge.

Lhatsze confirms that hearing people maintain suppression on Deaf people in Tibet – a common problem in every country. Hearing people can be either rude or friendly when they meet Deaf individuals. Some hearing persons are married to Deaf persons. They are not always willing to accept sign language for communication which is not unusual in other countries. Lhatsze recognizes that the interpretation of religious scriptures within the local culture apparently leads to the stigmatization of Deaf people.

Many volunteers and professionals have, for a short time, worked in Tibet for different reasons. Their mastery of Tibetan Sign Language was very limited. Until recently, Ekawati has appeared as the only qualified development worker to be able to work with Deaf people in Tibet for longer than three months. Others came into and left Tibet within three months or less. Her involvement in the activities of Deaf people has been supported by Handicap International Belgium. The Belgian-managed Handicap International's program in Tibet has encouraged experts to work with the Tibet Deaf Association in different fields such as sign language development for 1-2 months or to assist in training on management skills for the Association for 2 months. Thanks to the supply of highly-qualified Deaf development workers, Handicap International has been granted permission by the Tibetan Disabled Persons' Federation (a regional Chapter of the Chinese Disabled Persons' Federation) to fund a long-term Deaf professional Advisor to the Tibetan Deaf Association for a period of 1 to 2 years. TDA will continue to look for qualified Deaf volunteers for additional guidance and support.

On a trip in August 2008, arranged by Eka Liu, Lhatsze had a chance to visit to Gallaudet University in order to bring more information into her view of Deaf people in general. She states, "I feel that I am also a part of mainstream society." Note that Lhatsze is late-deafened and was chosen for her role in the TDA on the basis of her literacy in both the Chinese and Tibetan languages¹. Lhatsze has described her internal struggle with her

¹ A comment: I have personally observed, and a number of field-experienced Deaf development workers have commented to me on their observations, that international development organizations tend to select leaders for Deaf development projects from local Deaf populations on the basis of speech ability—

identity to Eka Liu and others, and its effect on her ability to work for the betterment of her Tibetan peers. Lhatsze has also made a recent trip to New Zealand hosted by Deaf New Zealanders. Through her broader exposure to the outside Deaf World, and to incoming Deaf professionals in Lhasa, Lhatsze has been able to recognize herself as a proud member of the global Deaf community and has greatly increased her capacity to serve as a leader in the Tibetan Deaf community.

In addition to linguistic research, the Tibetan Deaf Association's current new plans include a) sponsoring a development of an independent TSL interpreting association; collaboration with the Lhasa Special School on the development of a Bi/Bi Tibetan/TSL curriculum; b) increasing the social activities among Deaf Tibetans to interact and thereby foster the natural development of TSL; c) supporting an early childhood intervention for Deaf children in cooperation with locally trained Deaf adults; and d) establishing other chapters of TDA in rural Prefectures of Tibet. Our ongoing projects include a sewing workshop; literacy classes in both Tibetan and Chinese; a collection of signs; increasing the awareness of policy contributions; and the teaching of TSL to children and adults both Deaf and hearing. As of today, these activities are facing cut-backs because of the current international financial crisis.

For more information about the Tibetan Deaf community please contact the Tibetan Deaf Association at tibet.stata@handicap-int.org.cn (in English, Chinese, Tibetan, French, or Spanish.)

Madagascar

Interpreter training in Madagascar

Federation of the Deaf in Madagascar (FMM) has initiated an interpreter training programme organised together with the Ministry of the Health, Family Planning and Social Protection. Ten people trained about sign language interpreter for ex: hospitals, sport, social, and communication. Also a leader of a big hospital in Antananarivo acknowledged that all big hospitals in Madagascar should send workers to train Malagasy sign language. Students got certificates on 11th December 2008. FMM has now 28 sign language interpreters in Madagascar, but still want to have more interpreters training on the next time.

Palestine

Deaf school severely damaged in Gaza

The Gaza Strip was twisted into a disaster zone due to the Israeli incursion into Gaza for more than twenty days. Over 1300 people were killed and at least 5000 were wounded. The

presumably due to the ease with which the international organization's management team will be able to communicate with the local Deaf community. This may be an error in judgment, as it sets a precedent for non-democratic participation in local Deaf Persons' Organizations, as well as, possibly placing limits on the input of those who may have the strongest Deaf cultural identities and the strongest natural sign abilities.—
Lan Qing, from Tibet.

local infrastructure was greatly destroyed leaving 1.5 million Palestinians without electricity and water. Twenty one thousand buildings were partially or totally destroyed leaving many residents without shelter.

Since the first day of the Israeli aggression, Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children suspended its operations due to the extremely unsafe and dangerous situation. On the third of January 2009, the Atfaluna building was badly damaged due to the bombing of a neighboring building. The powerful explosion shattered all of Atfaluna's windows. The damage is estimated to be around \$20,000 in value. Providentially there was no fire and there were no casualties. Atfaluna staff is now back to work and the Atfaluna School is expected to resume on the 1st of February 2009.

Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children (ASFC) is reaching out to the deaf community by supplying the affected families with their most urgent needs. Atfaluna has also setup an emergency counseling team which is conducting field visits in order to identify and assess the needs of the most critical cases that are in need of short and long-term emergency support. Additionally they aim to provide psycho-social assistance to the Atfaluna students and their parents. The program will aim at re-establishing a sense of reason, peace, and safety to these children. The Centre also aims to conduct out-reach hearing screening and an awareness program to cover areas that were heavily affected by the bombardment.

Atfaluna Society is doing its best to offer the deaf children and adults in our care the most basic needs, after losing all their belongings during the war on Gaza. If you would like to lend a hand to the deaf people of the Gaza Strip who have suffered because of the war, you can support us to offer the following items:

- Blankets
- Clothing and shoes
- Hygiene kits
- Hearing Aids and batteries
- Material for school uniform
- School bags and stationery

For any further information on donations, please contact support@atfaluna.net
Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children: www.atfaluna.net

Source: Atfaluna Newsletter, February 2009

Philippines

A Documentary on Filipino Deaf Culture

A documentary film *Silent Odyssey: A Journey into the Deaf World* was launched in September at the University of the Philippines Film Center Theater. The film, directed by Mirana Medina, features Filipino Deaf culture and slants heavily on the importance of sign language, Filipino Sign Language in particular, which up to now is not being recognized by the government. Mirana Medina hopes that the film would make the Filipino Deaf aware of its importance as index to their cultural identity and that they be

aware of their linguistic human rights and together fight for it. The film is widely appreciated and appraised and it will be shown outside of Manila as well.

A Journey into the Deaf World (110 minutes, subtitles in English) is a production of Miryad Visyon in cooperation with the National Commission on Culture and the Arts (NCCA) and Lingap-Pangarap Foundation, Inc

Saudi Arabia

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia celebrated the International Day of Persons with Disabilities: "Dignity and Justice for All of Us"

By Hend Al-Showaier

Under the auspices of HR Princess Aljohara Bint Faisal Bin Turki Al-Saud Kingdom of Saudi Arabia celebrated the International Day of Persons with Disabilities: "Dignity and Justice for All of Us" on Wednesday, January 21st, 2009 in Riyadh at the state of art theater of Altarbia Alislamia school. The event concentrated on Deaf people issues and was sponsored by Prince Salman Center for Disability Research (PSCDR) www.pscdr.org.sa , Altarbia Alislamia school http://www.altarbiaalislamiaschools.net/en/default_en.aspx , Saudi Association for the Deaf, and the Cultural Center for Deaf Women.

Representatives from the Directorate General of Special Education – Ministry of Education, Females' Department, Special Education Department – King Saud University, Prince Salman Center for Disability Research, Saudi Association for the Deaf, females Deaf schools in Riyadh, and other governmental institutions have been invited to participate in this event as well as Saudi Deaf community.

The event started with the national anthem and some verses of the Holy Quran. A speech by the principal of the school, Ms. Samirah Shukry, welcomed the princess, the Deaf people, and the audience. She expressed the willingness of the school administration to continue their efforts to support the Deaf people and announced that she herself would like to learn Saudi Sign Language. Hend Al-Showaier, Coordinator, Deaf and Sign Language Program at PSCDR, and Director of Education Department at the Cultural Center for Deaf Women, Saudi Association for the Deaf gave a brief report about the "Global Education Pre-Planning Project on Human Rights of Deaf People" in the Arab region and concentrated on the status of Sign language in Saudi Arabia, the importance of preserving Saudi Sign Language and standing together against the "Unified Arabic Sign Language Dictionary" which, unfortunately, is a wide spread in the Arab countries.

Dr. Heidi Al-Askary, Deputy Executive Director Research Core, PSCDR emphasized on the Deaf people rights to use their indigenous sign language and that the PSCDR has a national project to document Saudi Sign Language with the cooperation of the Finnish Association of the Deaf.

HR Princess Aljohara in her short speech assured the Deaf people that she will continue supporting them and will provide scholarships to Deaf students who would like to pursue

their studies at the Arab Open University and that she will stand on their side and work to preserve Saudi Sign Language.

Dr. Haniah Merza, Deputy Chairman Special Education Department, King Saud University announced in her speech that King Saud University will start accepting Deaf students next year for the first time and that the university has established a new center for special needs services to make the university accessible to all students with disabilities.

A play had been performed with the title: "Real scenes from Deaf people's life" showed the problems and obstacles Deaf students face at mainstream schools when teachers are not trained on Saudi Sign Language, and at home with their hearing families who do not sign. A scene at a class showed a teacher who was fluent in Saudi Sign Language and the Deaf students had full access to information.

Worth mentioning Altarbia Alislamia School was the first school in Saudi Arabia to recognize Saudi Sign Language and teach it to their students. Not only that, but they also raised funds to support Deaf projects.

Saudi Arabia - Another Country to Accept Sign Language

By Yerker Andersson

Hend Al-Showaier has with joy announced that the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia has agreed to establish a training program in Saudi Sign Language for teachers and those others working with Deaf and hard of hearing students at schools for the Deaf and integrated schools. Ms. Al-Showaier is a Deaf person working as Coordinator of Deaf and Sign Language Program at the Prince Salman Center for Disability Research in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Ms. Al-Showaier has already agreed to develop a training program for all the supervisors and teachers accept Saudi Sign Language for communication with Deaf and hard of hearing children with and without CI. She is looking for research reports on the training of sign languages. Those universities with Deaf Studies programs in the world should now share their materials with Prince Salman Center for Disability Research. Its address is found in www.pscdr.org.sa.

The existing private and public schools where deaf children are enrolled will now develop a program. Their major problem is recruiting qualified instructors trained in Saudi Sign Language. It is on time for Deaf adults in Saudi Arabia to share their signing skills for Deaf children and teachers.

Ms. Al-Showaier has constantly been keeping me informed about what is happening to Deaf people in the Arab world. The experiences of Saudi Deaf adults have been fascinating. These persons will also become models for Deaf people in other Arabic countries – not unusual in the human world. The more Deaf people work together for their country, the more stable their culture will become a part of the national culture of their country.

Even though the literary Arabic is exercised as the standard language with different dialects in all the Arabic countries, the sign languages of deaf people are influenced more by their daily observances of natural, cultural and industrial environments rather than spoken languages – similar to deaf children and adults in other countries. Ms. Al-

Showaier hopes that deaf children would acquire Saudi Sign Language instead of importing signs from foreign sign languages. Interpreting would eventually be offered in Saudi Sign Language.

The number of those countries recognizing sign languages now is constantly growing in the world. Some countries have included the recognition of sign language in their constitutions or laws. Very few countries have issued a resolution to recognize sign languages in their declaration or resolution. Finland has probably gone further than other countries by including Finnish Sign Language not only in its constitution but also in specified laws. Following the human rights issued by the United Nations and UNESCO, the WFD is determined to ensure that Deaf people in every country shall have the right to respect their own national sign language or regional sign languages.

Please inform the WFD Secretariat about the most recent acceptance of sign languages in constitution, law or declaration or resolution in the countries.

Uganda

Education of the Deaf people catching up in Uganda

Reported by: Joseph Mbulamwana and Iyute O. Deborah
Uganda National Association of the Deaf – UNAD

Two decades ago, the highest level of education a Deaf person who attended school in Uganda could attain was standard six, commonly called Primary six at the two schools (Ngora and Ntinda schools for the Deaf). Thereafter the luckier ones would enrol in neighbouring country Kenya for vocational training in carpentry, knitting, tailoring among others.

Those whose parents or guardians could not afford the costs of taking their Deaf children to Kenya, could either choose between joining the other Deaf in the villages who are primarily hewers of wood, drawers of water, baby sitters, cattle, goats, sheep herders. If you organised and held a workshop or seminar for the Deaf people, one in ten could neither write nor read their names.

As time went and with, the development of partnerships Denmark, Finland, Sweden Deaf Associations among others, UNAD embarked on Sign Language development and training of the Sign Language Instructors and Interpreters and advocacy and lobbying.

The fruits of these partnerships are worth writing about.

- The number of teachers fluent in Sign language has been rising up; these have replaced the foreign teachers with local professional ones.

- Sign Language Interpreters training is now at Government University whose sustainability is worthwhile noting the Government has a role to play in the development of Sign Language as per its Uganda Constitutional mandate.
- Rise in number of special schools for the deaf from 2 (two) to over 15 primary schools with about 60 annexes units / annexes which are inclusive.
-
- There are two Government aided special secondary school for the Deaf (Wakiso and Mbale secondary schools for the Deaf) and two inclusive secondary school (Ngora high school and Kent foundation school) providing advance education to Deaf students.
- Affirmative Action Policy for Tertiary Institutions and University is in place. This provides 4.5 extra points to Secondary six graduates to join Government Scholarship programmes at University level. At the moment there are mote than 20 Deaf students at Government University.

Today the former carpenters, tailors, shoe shiners, herdsmen are either students at universities or have already graduated in the different universities and colleges.

COMING EVENTS

Critical Link conference 2009

Interpreting conference – Vancouver, Canada, 6 – 8 May 2009

See more information in the website: www.criticallink.org/2009conference

The 3rd International Conference on Disability & Rehabilitation

Prince Salman Center for Disability Research (PSCDR)

Date: 22 - 26 March, 2009

Place: Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Registration and submission of papers through conference website:

<http://www.icdr.org.sa/en/>

Deaf Parenting UK Conference 2009: Education, Education, Education

Date: Friday 12th June 2009

Place: London, United Kingdom

Email: info@deafparent.org.uk

Website: www.deafparent.org.uk

Rainbow Alliance of the Deaf Conference

Date: 30 June – 4 July 2009

Place: Chicago, Illinois, USA

Contact: Windy City Rainbow Alliance of the Deaf, 3656 N. Halsted Street, Chicago, IL 60613, USA

Fax: +1 888 772 5073

Videophone: +1 773 904 0026

Email: info@wcrad.org

Website: <http://wcrad.org/rad2009.htm>

International Society for Cultural History & Cultural Studies

Theme: Storytelling, Memories and Identity construction

Date: 1 – 5 July 2009

Place: Mexico City, Mexico

Contact: [info\(at\)enkidumagazine.com](mailto:info@enkidumagazine.com)

Website: <http://enkidumagazine.com/chics/esc.htm>

Multimod 2009

Theme: Multimodality of communication in children: gestures, emotions, language and cognition

Date: 9 – 11 July 2009

Place: Toulouse, France

Contact: multimod2009@univ-tlse2.fr

Website: <http://w3.eccd.univ-tlse2.fr/multimod2009/index.php?pg=acc&lg=en>

7th Deaf History International conference

Theme: No History, No Future

Date: 4 – 8 August 2009

Place: Stockholm, Sweden

Email: dhi2009@sdhs.se

Website: www.sdhs.se/dhi2009

10th Asia Pacific Congress on Deafness – APCD2009

Date: 4 – 7 August 2009

Place: Bangkok, Thailand

Website: www.apcd2009.org

21st Summer Deaflympics Games

Date: 5 - 15 September 2009

Place: Taipei, Taiwan

Website: www.2009deaflympics.org

5th International Deaf Clownery Festival

Date: 23 – 25 September 2009

Place: Kiev, Ukraine

Email: chepchina@bigmir.net

European Forum of Sign Language Interpreters (EFSLI) Conference

Date: 18 – 20 September 2009

Place: Tallinn, Estonia

Website: www.evky.ee/eng_efqli2009/index.html

PARTICIPATION FOR ALL - Opportunities & Supporting Technology CANCELLED

Date: 14-16 Oct 2009

Place: Orebro, Sweden

Website: www.partforall.se

World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry (WNUSP) General Assembly and Conference 2009

Theme: Making our Rights a Reality - Human Rights in the Age of the CRPD

Date: 16 - 20 March 2009

Place: Kampala, Uganda

Conference programme and registration: <http://wnusp.rafus.dk/preliminary-program-for-the-wnusp-general-assembly-and-conference.html>

World Federation of the DeafBlind conference

Date: 22 – 27 October 2009

Place: Kampala, Uganda

Website: www.wfdb.org

4th World Congress on Mental Health and Deafness,

Date: 27 – 30 October 2009

Place: Brisbane, Australia

Website: www.mhd2009.org

International WORLDEAF Cinema Festival hosted by Gallaudet University

Date: 4-7 November 2009

Place: Washington, DC, USA

For registration information, visit <http://wdcf.gallaudet.edu>

International Festival Pantomime of the Deaf - Theatre of Bolek Polívka

Date: 10 - 15 November 2009

Place: Brno, Czech Republic

E-mail: snn-cr@snn-cr.cz or ecpn@ecpn.cz

Organised by the Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in the Czech Republic and European Center Pantomime of the Deaf (ECPN) under financial support of Ministry culture in Czech Republic and corporate town Brno.

SIGN4

Date: 17-19 December 2009 (+ pre-conference workshop 16 December)

Place: Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi, India

Organisers: Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi, International Centre for Sign Languages and Deaf Studies, Preston, UK, Ishara Foundation, Mumbai, Deaf Empowerment Foundation, The Netherlands

Deadline for abstracts: 15 April 2009

E-mail: sign4conference@uclan.ac.uk

Further details will be announced on a SIGN4 conference website in February/March

21st International Congress on the Education of the Deaf

Date: 18 – 22 July 2010

Place: Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Website: www.iced2010.com

If you know about an upcoming conference of regional or international interest, be sure to send us information about it for our Calendar of Coming events in WFD NEWS or, in the WFD newsletter and also in the website.

SPONSORS OF THE WFD

Finnish Association of the Deaf
National Association of the Deaf in USA
Norwegian Association of the Deaf, Swedish Association of the Deaf, Finnish Association of the Deaf and Danish Association of the Deaf have supported the pre-planning project
Schwung ApS
CSD for websites

BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

Deaf People and Human Rights

A report written by Ms Hilde Haualand, researcher and Mr Colin Allen, project coordinator and report assistant.

The “Deaf People and Human Rights” report is based on a survey that is, up until now, the largest knowledge database on the situation of Deaf people. The lives of Deaf people in 93 countries, most of which are developing countries, is addressed. The Swedish National Association of the Deaf and the World Federation of the Deaf initiated the survey, with funding from the Swedish Agency for International Development Co-operation (Sida) and the Swedish Organisations of Disabled Persons International Aid Association (Shia).

The report is available on the WFD Website in English and International Sign. You can also order a DVD of the report in International Sign for postage fee **(5 €)**.

If you wish to receive the DVD, please contact WFD General Secretariat Office at orders@wfdeaf.org.

DVD - Suggested International Signs for use at the World Federation of the Deaf General Assembly, Norwegian Association of the Deaf, Ål Experiential College and Conference Centre for Deaf People. It is produced by Døves Media.

This DVD is intended as a guide to signs commonly used at the quadrennial General Assembly of the WFD. The cost of the DVD is **30 €**. It contains 11 sections of signs on the following topics:

WFD and United Nations
General Assembly
Board
Geographical Signs
Meeting Procedures

Meeting Communication
Projects and Fundraising
Finance
Numbers
Other Signs
WFD Youth Section

A Handbook on International Sign

This Handbook on International Sign, costs **25 €** is intended to be, above all, a tool for deaf people. It is a proposal that will contribute to ease the life of our collective group. It is also important to note that this book is a collective work which has been conceived, developed and produced by CNSE Foundation and FAXPG Foundation (with the support of the WFD) and in collaboration with FESORD CV Foundation.

It is available by ordering through this email: faxpg@hotmail.com

A Sociolinguistic Survey of the Guatemalan Deaf Community by Elizabeth Parks and Jason Parks,

SIL International, March 2007

If you are interested to receive a copy of the survey, please send e-mail to orders@wfdeaf.org

Teaching democracy – A collection of models for democratic citizenship and human rights education (EDC/HRE Volume VI) (26/01/2009)

Council of Europe Publishing

Price: 19 €/ 38 \$ + 10% postage

Orders: publishing@coe.int or <http://book.coe.int>

This teachers' manual contains a collection of exercises and models for Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC) and Human Rights Education (HRE) in schools as well as in non-formal settings of education.

WFD MERCHANDISE

Many people need to know what the name sign is for each country. The popular book, Country Name-Sign, was published for WFD by Japanese Federation of the Deaf (JFD). Publisher WFD (2003), Collection of data: Japan Institute for Sign Language Studies and Tomas Hedberg, Swedish National Association of the Deaf. **All of the books have been sold out. We hope in the near future that there will be more books to be published and we will let you know when they are available through the website.**

If any of you are interested in ordering items from WFD, such as **T-shirts (golf, woman and ordinary), WFD Pins, water bottles, watches, bracelets, pens and caps**, you can make an order through email, which is orders@wfdeaf.org

CONTACT INFORMATION OF WFD SECRETARIAT

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Also please check on WFD's website which is www.wfdeaf.org for more information, updates and contacts. (On WFD website, please do go to the Contacts section for specific direct contact on memberships and orders of WFD merchandise). If you would like to contact directly to WFD President, his email address is wfd@kl-deaf.fi.

If any of you is interested to contact to one of the WFD Ordinary Members' contact details (national associations of the Deaf), please do go to the WFD website to click on 'National Members'.

Please do feel free to submit us newsworthy articles for future editions. You can forward articles at anytime to us at info@wfdeaf.org, and we will do our best to include them in the next issue. Also, any feedback and comments on the newsletter would be most welcome!

For more information on what is happening within WFD, look at the WFD website: www.wfdeaf.org

In case you have something you would like to inform about the international deaf community, please be in contact with Ms Phillipa Sandholm or Laura Pajunen.