



Legal Seat – Helsinki, Finland

## WORLD FEDERATION OF THE DEAF

An International Non-Governmental Organisation in official liaison with ECOSOC, UNESCO, ILO and WHO

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## Fact Sheet

### ***DEAF IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES***

Approximately 80% of the world's Deaf people live in developing countries. In 1988, the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) conducted a survey to obtain data on the human and linguistic rights of these Deaf people. The survey was disseminated in English, French and Spanish, to Deaf organisations, Deaf schools and government agencies in 97 countries; 96 replies were received, from 68 countries. The following are some of the findings.

#### Civil Rights and Legislation:

- In five (5) countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, six (6) in Africa and one (1) in Asia, Deaf people did NOT have equal citizenship rights. In other words, Deaf people in those countries could not vote, their freedom to assemble or establish representative bodies was restricted; Deaf could not marry other Deaf, etc.
- 26 countries prohibited Deaf people from driving and obtaining a Driver's License.
- In most countries, sign languages were not recognised by the government; therefore there was no guarantee that Deaf children had access to their native sign language even in schools that claimed to use sign language.

#### Access to Information and Self-Representation:

- Out of 53 countries with a television broadcasting network, only six (6) – Belize, Brazil, Cuba, Ghana, India and Pakistan - produced programmes, news and documentaries for Deaf people.
- In 17 countries, there were no organisations of or for Deaf people.
- In countries with Deaf organisations, only 33% received financial support from the government.

#### Employment:

- The general proportion of unemployment for Deaf people was three (3) times higher than national averages.
- The most common jobs for Deaf people were manual labour jobs, i.e. carpentry, joinery, and masonry, as well as tailoring and dressmaking.
- 40% of countries said that discrimination and wrong attitudes towards Deaf people at work were not unusual.

#### Interpreting Services:

- Sign language interpreters were available in only 29 out of 65 countries. Moreover, these interpreters were not trained professionals, nor were they certified by an authority.
- 28 countries had no interpreters at all [Algeria, Angola, Botswana, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Gambia, Jordan, Kuwait, Mali, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Syria, Tunisia, Uganda and Zimbabwe, to name a few].
- In Barbados, Colombia, Kenya and Thailand, there were only one (1) or two (2) interpreter(s) nationally.

#### Education:

- Only 20% of Deaf children received any education at all.
- Only 1% of Deaf children were enrolled in primary education.
- Modes of instruction in Deaf Schools (from 89 replies of 64 countries) were:

Oral – 64 countries	Manual – 44 countries
Both – 3 countries	Total Communication – 42 countries
- In 18 countries, teachers did not receive formal training to teach Deaf children.

NOTE: These statistics are based on survey results published in 1992; WFD believes that today there are some changes and improvements, although probably not dramatic improvements. Plans for a new survey are under development.

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