



WORLD FEDERATION OF THE DEAF

# WITH SIGN LANGUAGE, I AM EQUAL

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**INTERNATIONAL WEEK  
OF THE DEAF 2016**

19-25 September 2016

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# ABBREVIATIONS

<b>CRPD</b>	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
<b>DPOs</b>	Organisations of Persons with Disabilities
<b>ECOSOC</b>	United Nations Economic and Social Council
<b>IDA</b>	International Disability Alliance
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organisation
<b>IWD</b>	International Week of the Deaf
<b>OHCHR</b>	High Commissioner for Human Rights
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNESCO</b>	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
<b>WFD</b>	World Federation of the Deaf
<b>WFDYS</b>	WFD Youth Section

# INTRODUCTION



*International Week  
of the Deaf*

*September*

**International Week of the Deaf** is an initiative of the WFD and was first launched in 1958 in Rome, Italy. It is celebrated annually by the global Deaf Community on the last week of September to commemorate the same month the first World Congress of the WFD was held. IWD is celebrated through various activities by the respective Deaf Communities worldwide. These activities call for participation and involvements of various stakeholders including families, peers, governmental bodies, professional sign language interpreters, and DPOs.



WORLD FEDERATION OF THE DEAF

The **World Federation of the Deaf** was established in Rome, Italy, in 1951, and is an international non-profit and non-governmental organisation representing approximately 70 million deaf people's human rights worldwide. The WFD is a federation of 132 national associations of deaf people. Its membership also comprises of Individual Members, Associate Members, and International Members. It also has eight Regional Secretariats, one Regional Co-operating Member, and a Youth Section (WFDYS). The WFD has a consultative status in the UN system, including the ECOSOC; the UNESCO; the ILO; and the WHO, and co-operates closely with the UN OHCHR. The WFD is a founding member of the IDA.

# WHY IS IWD IMPORTANT?



IWD is the only week in a year that sees highly concerted global advocacy to raise awareness about the Deaf Community on different levels. It is about gathering together, becoming united, and showing that unity to the rest of the world.



IWD strives to promote the human rights of deaf people and highlight topics that merit attention.



IWD aims to call for unity from the rest of the world through consistent, coordinated and widespread mobilisation to ensure that the campaigns are visible through sufficient media coverage.

## PAST THEMES

<b>2009</b>	<b>Deaf People's Cultural Achievements</b>
<b>2010</b>	<b>Deaf Education</b>
<b>2011</b>	<b>Accessibility to Information and Communications</b>
<b>2012</b>	<b>Sign Bilingualism is a Human Right!</b>
<b>2013</b>	<b>Equality for Deaf People</b>
<b>2014</b>	<b>Strengthening Human Diversity</b>
<b>2015</b>	<b>With Sign Language Rights, Our Children Can!</b>



# INTERNATIONAL WEEK OF THE DEAF 2016

19 TO 25  
SEPTEMBER

## THEME: WITH SIGN LANGUAGE, I AM EQUAL

Taking place under the theme 'With Sign Language, I am Equal', IWD 2016 is filled with key milestones. We will celebrate the 65th Anniversary of the WFD, commemorate the 10th year Adoption of the UN CRPD, and acknowledge the recent adoption of the 2030 Agenda, including the new SDGs.

## CAMPAIGN KEY MESSAGES



### BIRTH RIGHT

Draws upon the principle of basic human rights in relation to language acquisition at birth. When acquired fast, it enables deaf children to have full communication with people, improving their cognitive and social skills. Deaf children need access to sign language from birth.



### DEAF IDENTITY

Identifies deaf people as belonging to a cultural and linguistic community, who use sign language as a mother tongue or natural language to communicate.



### ACCESSIBILITY

Stresses that deaf people need access to public information and services via sign language interpreting, subtitling, and/or close-captioning. A key factor to accessibility for public services such as health care, employment, social welfare or any other government services is provision of and access to sign language interpreters.



### EQUAL LANGUAGE

Recognises sign language as a valid linguistic means of conveying thoughts, ideas, and emotions. It is a fully operating language with its own syntax, morphology and structure. It fulfils all features serve to define the notion of a language. This has been confirmed in many systematic linguistic research on sign language since the late 1970s.



## WITH SIGN LANGUAGE, I AM EQUAL



### EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Sign language competency for communication and provision of interpreters mean that deaf people can do almost any job. It is important for deaf people to equally aspire securing jobs that reflect their interest and competency. The main barriers to employment arise from inaccessible work environments rather than an inability to hear.



### BILINGUAL EDUCATION

Urges stakeholders to accept the need for bilingual education for a deaf child and to understand how quality bilingual education should be provided in a sign language environment. Bilingual education is a social-cultural approach of using sign language as the language of instruction in all subjects with a parallel strong emphasis on teaching reading and writing of the language used in the country or society.



### EQUAL PARTICIPATION

Deaf people need to have equal access of participation in the personal, public and political area as everybody else. More importantly, it is necessary to ensure that deaf people have the opportunity to take up leadership roles, so that deaf people themselves can appropriately advocate for their rights and be involved in all decision-making processes concerning their lives. This is a reflection of the slogan 'Nothing About us Without Us'.



### LIFELONG LEARNING

Access to education, vocational training, and ongoing professional training and development, is key to gaining and retaining a job and earning a wage that allows independent living.

# GET INVOLVED!

## 1 WHAT DO YOU WANT TO CHANGE?

- ☞ Identify an issue or barrier you or your group wants to change.
- ☞ Analyse the area where change is needed. Are you changing attitudes, physical barriers, institutional practices, or informational barriers?

## 2 WHERE WILL THE CHANGE HAPPEN?

At the level of:

- ☞ Government
- ☞ Organisations and Private Companies
- ☞ Society and Individuals
- ☞ Public Systems
- ☞ Deaf Community

## 3 UNDERSTAND THE ISSUE

- ☞ Describe the problem or barrier
  - How does it affect deaf people's lives?
  - Who does it affect?
  - What are the possible causes?
- ☞ Relate the problem or barrier to the CRPD. What rights are violated?
- ☞ How does addressing the problem improve the lives of deaf people?
- ☞ What specific actions can be done to address the problem?
- ☞ Who needs to be involved to take those actions?

## 4 GATHER INFORMATION

- ☞ What laws protect you and support the right that has been denied?
- ☞ What statistics of information do you have to support your campaign?
- ☞ Identify potential allies, people that will help and support you in resolving this problem, and explore how you can work together to achieve your goals.

## 5 PLAN AND TAKE ACTION

Now is the time to follow the action plan and take action. Implement the steps you identified to create social change.

## 6 FOLLOW UP

- All advocacy action needs follow-up!
- ☞ Did you complete the action plan? What was successful? What was challenging?
  - ☞ If you met your goal:
    - What has helped you to be successful?
    - Can you use the same strategies for other goals?
  - ☞ If you did not meet your goal:
    - What changes need to be made to the action plan to achieve your goal?
    - Do you need more resources, group members, allies, or information?
    - What are your next steps for action?

# IDENTIFY ISSUES

In your advocacy, do reference international human rights laws for each key message surrounding the theme. Refer to the provided 'general questions to ask' as guidelines.



## BIRTH RIGHT

### CRPD Article 21.e and 24.3b

Obligates the governments to encourage the learning of sign language and promote the linguistic identity of the Deaf Community.



## DEAF IDENTITY

### CRPD Article 30.4

Requires the governments to recognise and support specific cultural and linguistic identity, including sign languages and deaf culture.



## EQUAL LANGUAGE

### CRPD Article 2

Makes clear that sign languages are equal in status to spoken languages.

### CRPD Article 21.b

Allows deaf people to choose to give and receive official communications in the way they choose, including in sign languages.

### CRPD Article 23.3

Requires the governments to provide early and comprehensive information, services and support to children with disabilities and their families, including information about deaf culture, sign language and bilingual education.

## GENERAL QUESTIONS TO ASK

- ☞ Is natural sign language recognised and accepted by the Deaf Community in your country? If not, are there plans for sign language development work?
- ☞ Are the decision makers and the Deaf Community aware of the richness and variations of sign languages?
- ☞ Do deaf people have access to information in sign language?
- ☞ Is sign language as respected and recognised as spoken languages in your country? If yes, are the laws and practices in line with the official status?
- ☞ Is the recognition of sign language seen as a fundamental human rights for all deaf children?
- ☞ Are the general attitudes towards sign language positive in society?
- ☞ Are decision makers aware of the right of deaf children to sign language?
- ☞ Do decision makers know that sign language should be the first language of a deaf child to which other language skills in a spoken/written language are built on? Are they aware of the importance of access to a language?
- ☞ Does the Deaf Community know that access to sign language is a human right?
- ☞ Are parents of deaf children given information about the importance of sign language for their child's linguistic development and cognitive skills in their early childhood?
- ☞ Are medical professionals aware of the linguistic input needed for a child to develop a language? Are they aware that language is not purely a means of communication but the starting point for a healthy identity and all cognitive skills?
- ☞ Is the government funding any research in sign languages including developing a Sign Language dictionary?
- ☞ Are parents and family members of deaf children provided with sign language training?





# BILINGUAL EDUCATION

## Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (paragraph 21 in page 18)

Addressed the right to receive education in a national sign language for deaf children.

## CRPD Article 24.1

Requires the governments to ensure inclusive education system at all levels.

## CRPD Article 24.3b

Ensures the right to learn sign language and promotes linguistic identity of the Deaf Community.

## CRPD Article 24.4

Requires teachers of deaf children to be qualified in sign language.

## 2030 Agenda, Goal 4.5

By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations.

## 2030 Agenda, Goal 4.a

Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.

## GENERAL QUESTIONS TO ASK

- ☞ Are there schools for deaf children that promote quality education in sign language?
- ☞ Does the school system support and promote the learning of sign language and the linguistic identity of the Deaf Community?
- ☞ Is sign language included as a subject in the educational curriculum?
- ☞ Are deaf persons employed as teachers and staff members in school?
- ☞ Do hearing teachers sign fluently?
- ☞ Does the linguistic environment in the school support use of sign language? Do deaf students have signing peers or deaf role models?
- ☞ Are professional sign language interpreters available in the education settings?
- ☞ Are decision makers and the Deaf Community aware of the concept of bilingual education?



# LIFELONG LEARNING

## CRPD Article 5, 24.5 and 27

Requires the government to ensure vocational and lifelong learning.

## 2030 Agenda, Goal 4

Ensure inclusive and equitable education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

## GENERAL QUESTIONS TO ASK

- ☞ Has the government taken legal action to ensure that private businesses remove existing barriers to access for deaf people?



# EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

## CRPD Article 27

Requires the governments to provide 'reasonable accommodation' (adjustments and supports) to deaf employees.

## 2030 Agenda, Goal 8.5

By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.

### GENERAL QUESTIONS TO ASK

☞ Has the government developed anti-discrimination legislation that protects deaf people against discrimination at work?

☞ Is sign language interpretation available at the work place?



# ACCESSIBILITY

## CRPD Article 9 and 21

Requires governments to provide for accessibility to information and communication.

## 2030 Agenda, Goal 11.2

By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons.

## 2030 Agenda, Goal 11.7

By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities.

### GENERAL QUESTIONS TO ASK

☞ Has the government taken steps to provide communication access to deaf persons? If yes, is sign language interpreting one of the options?

☞ Are the relevant decision makers paying for the sign language interpreting service?

☞ Is there quality sign language interpreter training programmes in your country?

☞ Is there an agent that monitors the quality of sign language interpreting services?

☞ Are important human rights materials such as the CRPD and the SDGs accessible in national sign language(s)?

☞ Are there legal protections to ensure access on an equal basis with others?

☞ Has the government developed minimum accessibility standards, guidelines, and monitoring mechanisms?

☞ Is the government engaging in any acts, customs or practices that create barriers to accessibility?

☞ Has the government taken legal action to ensure that private business remove existing barriers to access for deaf people?



# EQUAL PARTICIPATION

## CRPD Article 5

Requires that the governments prohibit all discrimination on the basis of disability and guarantee to persons with disabilities, including deaf people, equal and effective legal protection against discrimination on all grounds.

## CRPD Article 12

Requires the government to ensure that persons with disabilities, including deaf people, enjoy legal capacity on an equal basis with others in all aspects of life.

## CRPD Article 20

Requires the government to take effective measures to ensure personal mobility with the greatest possible independence for persons with disabilities, including deaf people.

## CRPD Article 29

Requires the government to guarantee and promote an environment that ensures effective and full participation in political and public life on an equal basis with others, including the opportunity to vote and be elected.

## CRPD Article 23

Requires the government to take effective and appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against persons with disabilities, including deaf people, in all matters relating to marriage, family, parenthood and relationships, on an equal basis with others.

## CRPD Article 24

Obligates the governments to facilitate the learning of sign language and to promote the linguistic identity of the Deaf Community, so that they learn life and social development skills to facilitate their full and equal participation in education and as members of the community.

## 2030 Agenda, Goal 10.2

By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.

## GENERAL QUESTIONS TO ASK

- ☞ Are deaf persons legally allowed to marry one another?
- ☞ Are deaf persons legally allowed to vote or become elected in the political arena?
- ☞ Are deaf persons allowed to inherit property?
- ☞ Are deaf persons allowed to become a jury member?
- ☞ Are deaf women allowed to reproduce children?
- ☞ Are deaf persons allowed to obtain driving license?

# CAMPAIGN MATERIALS



## Unite in Harmony

### IWD VISUALS

Consistency and coordinated mobilisation is one way to show that you are part of a global movement. Here are some ideas you can adapt the IWD visuals.



*Notepad*



*T-shirt*



*Poster*



*Tote Bag*



*Badge*



*Mug*

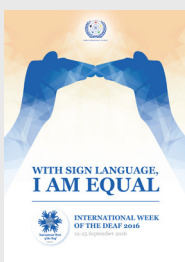
### Download

The IWD 2016 campaign materials can be downloaded at the following link:

<https://goo.gl/Rd8cFq>



*Poster*



*Logo*



*Twitter Cover Image*



*Support Letter*



*Know and Achieve Your Human Rights Toolkit*



# SPREAD THE MESSAGE

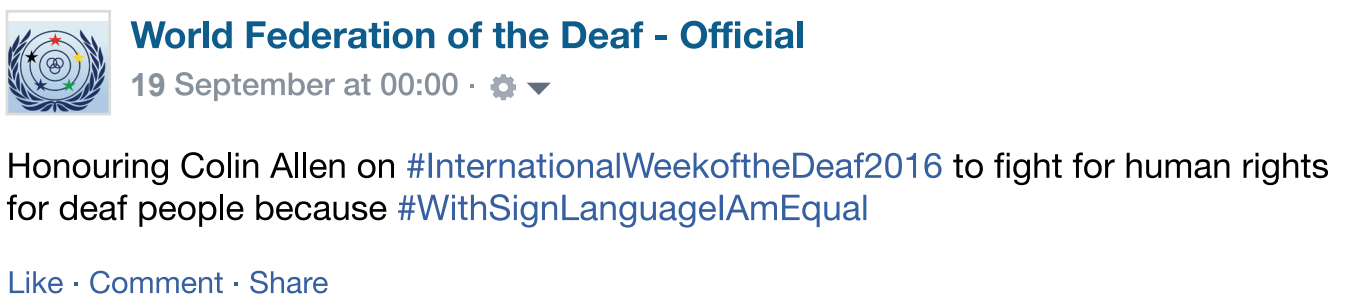


## Engage through Social Media

### Anatomy of a Tweet



### A Facebook Post



*Hashtags:*

**#InternationalWeekOftheDeaf2016**

**#WithSignLanguageIAmEqual**

**#IWD2016**

# SUPPORT THE WFD



## Become A Member

### BENEFITS

- WFD Newsletter
- Regular information relating to deaf issues
- Discounts on WFD merchandise and registration passes of the WFD events

### MEMBER TYPES

#### INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

Advocates who wish to support the work of the WFD. Encourage our network to join now!



[wfdeaf.org/  
become-an-  
individual-  
member](http://wfdeaf.org/become-an-individual-member)

#### ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Registered **national or regional organisations** whose goals are in line with the WFD.

#### INTERNATIONAL MEMBERS

Registered **international organisations or institutes** whose goals are in line with the WFD.



For more information about membership, contact [memberships@wfd.fi](mailto:memberships@wfd.fi)



## Fundraise for the WFD

### BEQUEST

Leave a gift through your will. Everyone's circumstances are different, so we urge that you consult with your adviser and ask for appropriate clauses to be inserted into your will.

A charitable gift through a will generally contains the following:

- Name and address of the person making the will
- The WFD's name and business identification number
- Type of gift to be received by the WFD
- Signature of the person making the will and date in the presence of two witnesses

Contact WFD Development Officer for more information at [nafisah.rantasalmi@wfd.fi](mailto:nafisah.rantasalmi@wfd.fi).

All enquiries and requests will be treated in confidence.



### CROWDFUNDING

Pick a platform to use, decide on the target amount and delivery time, and reach out to people.



### PLEDGES

Share your pledge (on social media) with your friends and ask that, in lieu of gifts, they donate instead to the WFD.



### EVENTS

Include fundraising for the WFD as part of your local events.



### GIVE-IT-UP OR MATCH THE EURO

Encourage your peers to give up or match the euro of their cost spending.

### PAYPAL



<http://wfdeaf.org/donate>

### BANK TRANSFER

**Account Name:**  
**Bank Name/Address:**

**SWIFT/BIC Code:**  
**IBAN:**

WFD Money Collection Licence  
Nordea Bank Finland Plc., Aleksanterinkatu 36,  
FI-00100 Helsinki  
NDEAFIHH  
FI07 1555 3000 1203 04

Campaign Code: IWD2016



*International Week  
of the Deaf*  
September

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## INTERNATIONAL WEEK OF THE DEAF 2016

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 <http://wfdeaf.org>

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