



# WFD POLICY

## *WFD Work in Developing Countries*

A policy statement of the World Federation of the Deaf

### **Intention**

The purpose of this policy is to guide the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) with regard to its own work in developing countries, and its position on programmes initiated and implemented by any of its Ordinary Members (national associations of Deaf people) to benefit Deaf people in developing countries. In other words, the policy covers the work and programmes of the WFD in which any of its members (whether in developed or developing countries) are involved.

The policy recognises that the majority of Deaf people in the world live in developing countries where there are unfavourable social, political and economic conditions, and traditional social conditions. Deaf people in developing countries are among the poorest of the poor, with limited access to relevant education, employment and information, and generally with low social status in society. Hence, there is a need for WFD to prioritise work in developing countries.

The policy focuses on the following main areas of concern:

1. Representation at World Federation of the Deaf General Assembly, Board and other fora.
2. World Federation of the Deaf support to developing countries.
3. Development of co-operation between Deaf Associations in developing and developed countries.
4. Co-operation in which World Federation of the Deaf is not consulted or its members are not involved.
5. Education and sign language work in developing countries.
6. Strengthening or establishing Deaf Associations in developing countries.
7. Regional co-operation in developing countries.
8. Interpreting services.

### **1. Representation at World Federation of the Deaf Fora**

The WFD believes in the right of Deaf people from developing countries to be represented at the General Assembly, on the Board and at other WFD fora. The WFD recognises that the absence of representation of developing countries in the WFD is, among other reasons, reduced by lack of adequate financial resources on the part of Associations in developing countries. In response to this situation, the WFD will continue to:

- A. Encourage development co-operation projects between Associations in developing and developed countries (where the possibility for this co-operation exists) to facilitate relevant Deaf leaders to participate in selected WFD gatherings or meetings, e.g. General Assembly and Board.
- B. Continue to encourage and sensitise Deaf Associations in developing countries on the need to mobilise their own resources in WFD activities.
- C. Provide relevant information on possibilities for fund-raising.
- D. Enable qualified Deaf persons from developing countries to become members in its commissions of experts in order to play a significant and contributory role expanding the quality of service for the Deaf population in developing countries.



### **2. WFD support to Developing Countries**

This will include:

- A. Advocacy and lobbying at the international level.
- B. Co-ordination of networking among Deaf Associations with the aim of encouraging co-operation projects between the north and south Deaf Associations.
- C. Sharing information.
- D. Exploring possibilities for funding.
- E. Facilitating experts in selected areas (e.g. sign language and organisational development) to help with building capacity in the developing countries.
- F. Encouraging governments to work towards implementation of the United Nations (UN) Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, adopted by the UN General Assembly at its 48<sup>th</sup> Session on December 1993 (Resolution 48/98). This will influence the government to pay more attention to Deaf citizens in their home countries.
- G. Lobbying international funding agencies to prioritise funding for Deaf programmes in developing countries.

### **3. Development of Co-operation between Deaf associations in Developing and Developed Countries**

The WFD will work towards a situation whereby:

- A. Deaf Associations in developed countries are encouraged to enter into a partnership/co-operation with counterparts in the south.
- B. The co-operation should as much as possible be based on the principle of mutual respect for cultural, language and social economic realities, e.g. in sign language work. The objective should not be to export the sign language of the developed countries, but for developing countries to research and/or develop their own sign languages based on cultural realities.
- C. Deaf people from developing countries should be encouraged to receive training in specific areas (e.g. sign language and management) in developed countries. However, the training should be tailored to enable them to work with the languages in their own countries.
- D. The co-operation should have a strong component providing for involvement of Deaf people in developing countries in such matters as initiation of programmes, decision-making, monitoring and evaluation of programmes.
- E. Information of such co-operation is widely shared with the global Deaf community.

### **4. Co-operation in which WFD is not consulted**

In circumstances where any co-operation between north and south projects to benefit Deaf people is initiated and implemented without the knowledge and involvement of WFD, the WFD shall:

- A. Endeavour to get information of the project, with emphasis on the views of the beneficiaries of the intended project and the extent to which the project goals are consistent with the basic principles and goals of WFD.
- B. Explore mechanisms to ensure protection of the intended beneficiaries and WFD principles. Action may include tendering advice to the project implementation and raising the issues with appropriate international authorities.



- C. Explore a system for dissemination of knowledge on Deafness and sign language to all political and administration levels in developing countries.

### **5. Education and Sign Language Work in Developing Countries**

Education and sign language work in developing countries is of vital importance. WFD will work towards:

- A. Encouraging international funding agencies to support Deaf education and sign language programmes in developing countries as a priority.
- B. Provide or facilitate experts in these fields to help promote Deaf education and sign language in developing countries.
- C. Provide expert information to differentiate between the social cultural view, clinical pathological view and disability view for professional education in order to identify how each of these views influence the values, working habits of teachers and treatment of Deaf pupils.

### **6. Strengthening or Establishing Deaf Associations in Developing Countries**

WFD encourages Deaf Associations to advocate for the rights of Deaf people in their respective countries at all levels. To this effect, WFD will:

- A. Share information to help strengthen Associations of Deaf people.
- B. Facilitate experts to assist the establishment or strengthening of Associations in developing countries.
- C. Provide or help arrange organisational and management training seminars and workshops.
- D. Ensure that member Associations in developing countries work towards the establishment of Associations that respect the basic principles of accountability and democratic participation of all individual members.

### **7. Regional Co-operation in Developing Countries**

The WFD encourages regional cooperation between Deaf Associations in developing countries and works towards:

- A. Building the capacity of regional management through training, sharing of information and networking of development agencies including donors.
- B. Establishing Regional Secretariats where they do not exist, and linking all National Associations to the Secretariats.
- C. Development of a network of regional experts to serve the regions in selected areas, e.g. sign language research, education and organisational development.
- D. Co-operation with other international organisations based in the region to promote mutual understanding and hence contribute to the development of Deaf programmes in the region.

### **8. Interpreting Services**

In the views of member Associations in developing countries where the level of interpretation service has not reached the stage of professionalism in the field, WFD experts in interpretation should develop a modified version of the ethics of interpreters to suit the environment of developing countries.



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## **THE WORLD FEDERATION OF THE DEAF (WFD)**

WFD is an international, non-governmental central organisation of national associations of Deaf people, with a current membership of 130 countries.

WFD has consultative status in the United Nations (UN) system, including the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC); the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); the International Labor Organization (ILO); and the World Health Organization (WHO). WFD also co-operates closely with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and has representatives on the Panel of Experts on the UN Standard Rules for the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities.

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