

International Linguistic Human Rights: Global Perspectives

**California Education of Deaf Students
CAL-ED
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Linguistic Human Rights: Overview and Principles

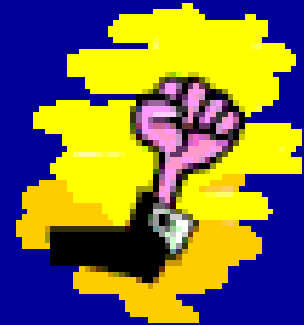
- **The Deaf Person's Identity and Human Rights**
- **WFD and UN Statement of Rights and Recommendations**
- **Fundamental Changes: Bi/Multilingualism and Multiculturalism in Society & Education**
- **Action Plan for Success: Collaborations among Deaf Adults, Families, Qualified Professionals, and Communities**



The Human Rights of a Deaf Person

are inalienable and recognized
by the United Nations, UNESCO and WFD

- To be one's self as a person
- Identity as a visual being
- Use of Sign Language
- Full access and quality education
- Bi/multilingualism and multiculturalism
- Community and diversity
- Citizenship and independence
(empowerment)



**These rights are born with
and belong to each person.**

Identity of Deaf People??



- **Visual people (people of light – Jamie Tucker)**
- **Sign Language user/native signer**
- **Attracted to community of shared needs, goals, preferences and interests**
- **Shift from Deafness (pathological) to Deafhood (humanistic) – Paddy Ladd**
- **Expansion of Deaf Community to Sign Language Users Community (including hearing sign language users and increasing global identity) – Markku Jokinen**

“Deafhood: epistemic process of knowing and explaining one-self to that self and to others.” (Ladd, 2003)

From deafheid to Deafhood and full embodiment

Megatrends in Attitudes towards Deaf People

From

To

Pathological



Humanistic

Deafness



Deafhood (Ladd, 2003)

Deaf



Sign Language User

Homogeneity



Cultural/Ethnic Diversity

Paternalism



Partnerships

Availability/Access



Quality

Activities



Results/Accountability

Fragmentation



Networking

Impossible



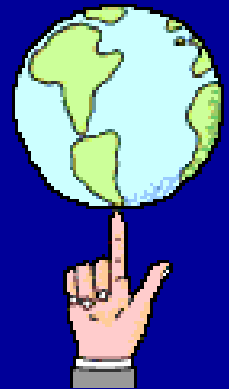
Possible! Empowerment!





Modifying Individual versus Modifying Environment

- Desire to modify a disabled individual to meet expectations of society
- **But** the **United Nations Standard Rules (1993)** emphasize need for accessible society and environmental systems
- Shifting from majority culture to mosaic culture





United Nations: International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)

Purpose: to promote, protect and ensure full access and equal human rights on local, national and international levels.

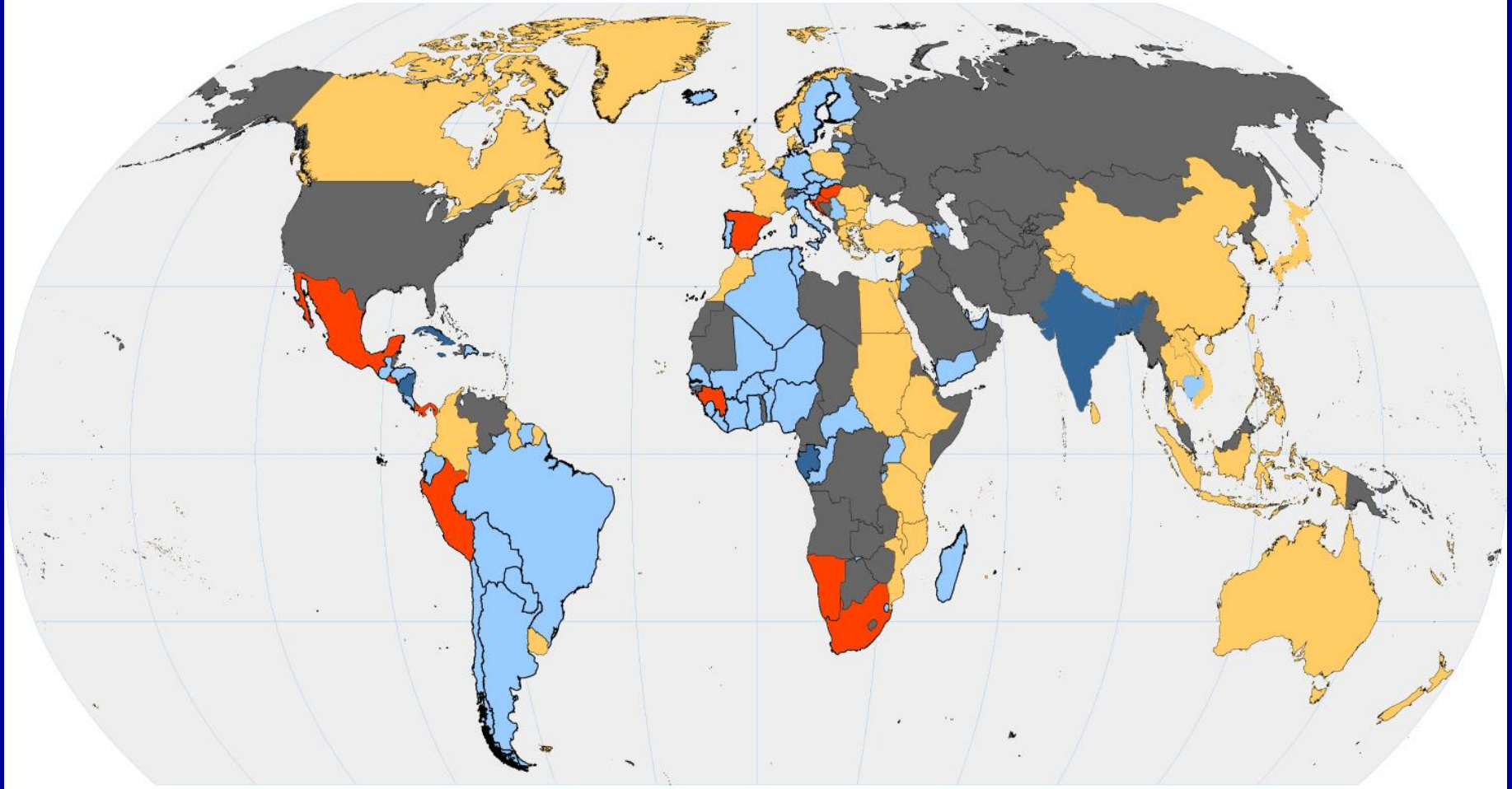
- Full access including Sign Language, interpreters and tech
- Independent living
- Freedom of expression and access to info in Sign Language
- Education: Sign Language & Deaf identity, qualified tchrs
- Employment: no discrimination, equal pay and support
- Political and public life, representation of disabled people
- Culture, recreation and sports including linguistic identity, Sign Language and Deaf culture

Sign Language is mentioned 9 times.

“Nothing about us without us.”



■ Not Signed ■ Signed Convention ■ Signed Convention & Protocol ■ Ratified Convention ■ Ratified Convention & Protocol



■ As of Feb 2008 – Ratification Process Results

Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights

National Minority People Have These Rights:

- ✓ **To use and to learn in their own language**
- ✓ **To be taught by proficient language teachers**
- ✓ **To be involved in planning curriculum and programs**
- ✓ **To be involved in the development, implementation and monitoring of these programs.**



UN Standard Rules 1993, Sign language should be considered in the education of Deaf children, families and communities

UNESCO Salamanca 1994, Right to Sign Language in Education

**UNESCO Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights,
Barcelona 1996: Articles 3, 5, 26**

**UNESCO Education Rights of National (Cultural) Minorities,
Hague, 1996: Articles 1, 11, 12, 20**

**United Nations Ad Hoc Committee on International Convention on
Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006**





WFD on Sign Language



Recognition of Linguistic Human Rights of Deaf Children

Deaf children have the right to master their sign language as their “mother tongue” and to learn the language(s) used by their family and community.

Recognition of Right to Sign Language in Education

“The distinct national sign languages of indigenous deaf populations should be officially recognized as their natural language of right for direct communication... Teachers of the deaf are expected to learn and use the accepted indigenous sign language as the primary language of instruction”
Resolution World Federation of the Deaf, 1987

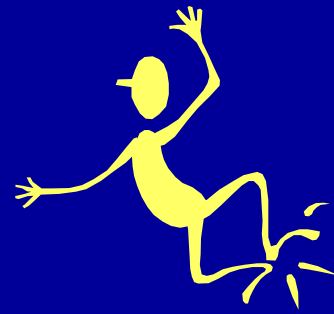
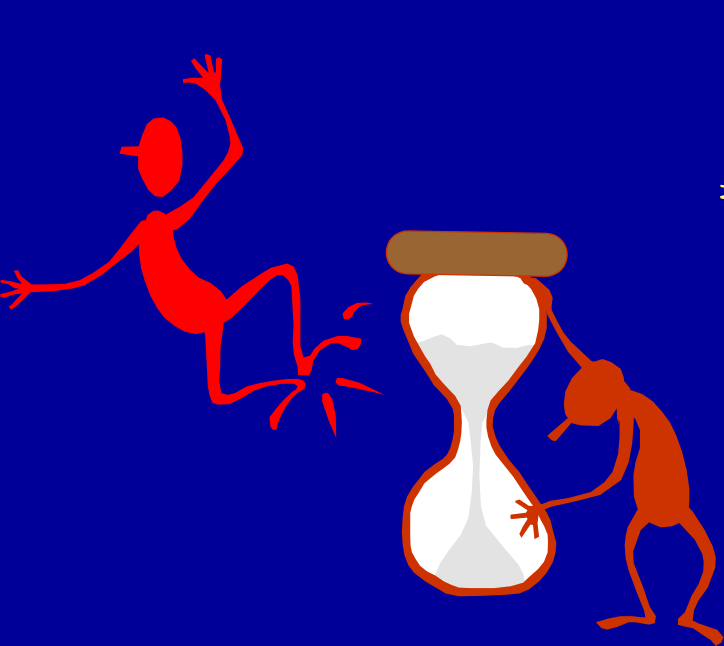
Deaf children must have the same quality access to education as non-Deaf children. Furthermore, sign language (bilingualism) is their birthright.
WFD Position Paper, 2001

42+ Countries have recognized Sign Language in their constitution, laws, or other legal documents.

www.wfdeaf.org

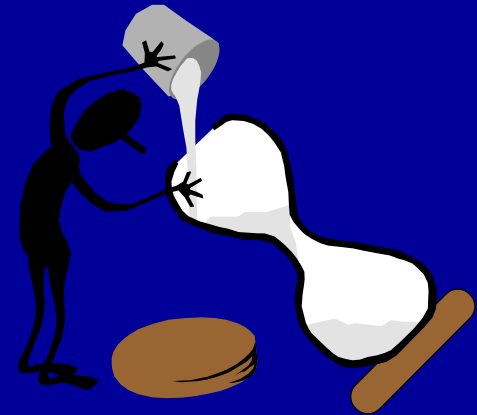
Evolution of Views on Language

- Language as a Problem
- Language as a Right
- Language as a **Resource** for ALL



Ruiz and Nover

Accountability
and limited time



Multilingualism and Multiculturalism Benefits

- **Multilingualism advantages over monolingualism: thinking, creativity, flexibility, tolerance**

(Wurm 2001, Tove Skutnabb-Kangas 2003)

- **Education & Economics in multi-lingual world**
- **Globalization, immigrants, refugees**
- **Value of linguistic and cultural diversity**
- **Increasing one's esteem and potential**

(Jokinen, 2005)

Multicultural perspectives should be present in the curriculum.

Deaf people must be involved in developing the curriculum and program. (UNESCO, Hague)



THE GREATEST IRONY:




Maureen Klusza of Moeart.com, August 2007

➤ **To deny Deaf children access to a quality bilingual education and their human rights is tantamount to child abuse.** (World Federation of the Deaf Policy Paper, 2001)

➤ **A strong educational and language base is essential to succeed in today's communities and marketplaces, and in the world of technology and information.**

➤ **Full access to language and acquisition of language leads to independence and economic power.**

 “Since they do not share this mother tongue (Sign Language) with their parents, (Deaf children) are completely dependent on formal education to really develop it to the highest possible level.” Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, 2003



WFD Statement of Responsibilities for Government, Society & Universities

- Legalize Sign language & quality lifelong education for all.
- Implement high standards & equal education policies or guidelines for Deaf people of all ages; monitor programs.
- Provide resources to teach Sign language & Deaf Studies to Deaf adults, families, professionals, interpreters & service providers.
- Support professional development programs for Deaf people to become teachers, researchers, professionals, & administrators.
- Ensure full access to programs & media (signed & captioned), professional interpreters & other needed support services.
- Support more research on strategies to teach & assess indigenous sign languages & fluency development.



Challenges:

- ✓ **Respect and value diversity**
- ✓ **Bi/Multilingualism**
- ✓ **Access: Direct, Interpreters, Technology, Media**
- ✓ **Training about Human Rights, Deafhood and ASL for Deaf People, Families, Professionals and Policy-Makers**
- ✓ **Partnerships: Deaf People and Families on decision-making teams and councils**
- ✓ **Political Action Plans, Collaborating and Networking**

**The future is in
YOUR hands!**



References and Resources

- <http://www.nad.org>
- <http://www.wfdeaf.org>
- <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable>
- <http://un.org>
- <http://www.unesco.org>

Check NAD and WFD websites for updates, position papers and membership forms

