



WORLD FEDERATION OF THE DEAF



# With Sign Language Rights, Our Children Can!



## INTERNATIONAL WEEK OF THE DEAF 2015

21-27 September 2015

### PAST THEMES

2010

Deaf Education

2012

Sign Bilingualism  
is a Human Right!

2014

Strengthening  
Human Diversity

2009

Deaf People's  
Cultural Achievements

2011

Accessibility to Information  
& Communications

2013

Equality for Deaf People

# CONTENTS

## **1// Introduction**

- 02** What is International Week of the Deaf (IWD)?
- 03** Why is IWD Important?

## **2// International Week of the Deaf 2015**

- 04** Past Themes
- 05** With Sign Language Rights, Our Children Can!
- 06** Sub-Themes

## **3// Get Involved**

- 07** Identify Issues Surrounding the Theme
- 08** Raise Awareness Through Engagement
- 09** Campaign Materials
- 10** Spread the Message
- 11** Join the WFD as an Individual Member
- 12** Fundraise for the WFD
- 13** Leave A Gift in Your Will
- 14** Amount You Contribute will be used for

# INTRODUCTION



**International Week of the Deaf** is an initiative of the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD). It was first launched in 1958 in Rome, Italy and is celebrated annually by the global deaf community on the last week of September, commemorating the same month the first World Congress of the WFD was held.

**International Week of the Deaf** is celebrated through various activities such as events, marches, debates, campaigns and meetings. These activities call for participation and involvement of stakeholders (i.e. families, peers, governmental bodies, professional sign language interpreters, Organisations of Persons with Disabilities).

# WHY IS IWD IMPORTANT?



**International Week of the Deaf** 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.

**International Week of the Deaf** strives to promote the rights of deaf people and highlight specific human rights topics that merit attention.

**International Week of the Deaf** aims to call for unity from the rest of the world through consistent, coordinated and widespread mobilisation to ensure that the campaign(s) are visible through sufficient media coverage.

# **INTERNATIONAL WEEK OF THE DEAF 2015**

**‘With Sign Language Rights,  
Our Children Can!’  
21 - 27 September 2015**

## **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>

# WITH SIGN LANGUAGE RIGHTS, OUR CHILDREN CAN!



***With Sign Language Rights, Our Children Can!*** draws upon the principle of basic human rights in relation to (sign) language acquisition at birth. It is about recognising deaf individuals as primary visual beings belonging to a linguistic minority (deaf community) and calls for sign language to be made available to deaf persons as a birth right. [Article 24 Section 3b of the CRPD](#) obligates government to facilitate the learning of sign language and the promotion of the linguistic identity of the deaf community.

***With Sign Language Rights, Our Children Can!*** recognises sign language as a valid linguistic means of conveying thoughts, ideas and emotions. This fact has been accepted and enacted into [Article 2 of the CRPD](#), which defines sign languages as equal to spoken languages. As such, acquiring sign language shall not be considered as the last resort, least desirable or temporary option for deaf children and consequently they must not be denied access to sign language from birth.

***With Sign Language Rights, Our Children Can!*** stresses that the use of sign language does not hinder the learning of a spoken language and that literacy and language does not equal speech and communication. Language development must precede everything else, speech development can occur later. Conversely, early speech development alone will not guarantee language and literacy skills. The brain, without adequate stimulation during the critical learning years, ages 0-3, may atrophy as much as 30%. In fact, hearing babies whose parents use sign language have a head start in communicating with their parents. Due to insufficient family and community support during this critical learning period, deaf children are needlessly found to be stalled in language acquisition when commencing formal schooling.

**It is of utmost importance that deaf children are able to use sign language at an early age and in all areas of life.**

# SUB-THEMES



**Coordinated advocacy is important so that everyone is promoting the same key messages. Suggestions for your use and adaptations:**

**☞ Deaf People, A Cultural and Linguistic Community**

**☞ Deaf Gain, Not Hearing Loss**

**☞ Sign Language - A Human Right, Not an Option**

**☞ Hearing Babies Sign, Deaf Children Must Too**

**☞ Sign Language does not Hinder Speech Development**

**☞ Sign Language Training to Families of Deaf Children**

**☞ Quality Teachers for Deaf Children**

# GET INVOLVED

## IDENTIFY ISSUES

### SURROUNDING THE THEME



Select issues, study gaps and propose improvements

#### 1 LANGUAGE RECOGNITION

Official recognition of sign language(s) is the base for all further action. Know the status of your national sign language in the legislation of your country.

- ☞ *Is sign language as respected and recognised as spoken languages in your country? If yes, are legislation and practices in line with the official status?*
- ☞ *Is the recognition of sign language seen as a fundamental human right for all deaf children?*

#### 2 IMPLEMENTATION OF SIGN LANGUAGE

- ☞ *Is sign language implemented in a deaf child's daily life? Are the law, acts and decrees in accordance with practice?*
- ☞ *Do deaf children have access to information in sign language?*

#### 3 ATTITUDES OF THE SOCIETY

- ☞ *Are the general attitudes towards sign language positive in society?*
- ☞ *Are decision makers aware of the right of deaf children to sign language?*
- ☞ *Do they 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 conscious of the importance of access to a language?*
- ☞ *Does the deaf community know that access to sign language is a human right?*

#### 4 EDUCATION SYSTEM FOR CHILDREN

- ☞ *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 curriculum?*
- ☞ *Are deaf persons employed as teachers?*
- ☞ *Are deaf persons employed as staff members in school?*
- ☞ *Do hearing teachers sign fluently?*
- ☞ *Does the linguistic environment in the school support use of sign language, i.e. do deaf students have signing peers or deaf role models?*
- ☞ *Are professional sign language interpreters available in inclusive education settings?*

#### 5 EARLY INVOLVEMENT

- ☞ *Are hearing 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 doctors and 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?*

# RAISE AWARENESS THROUGH ENGAGEMENT



**Choose a strategy and implement with planning**



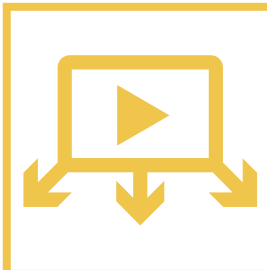
**Decide on the platform to raise awareness.**



**Target decision makers who are able to create a change.**



**Meet the decision makers and involve the local deaf experts.**



**Organise side-event to celebrate the International Week of the Deaf together with the deaf and hearing community.**

# CAMPAIGN MATERIALS



## Merchandise using IWD logo and posters

### Merchandise

It is recommended that you use campaign materials prepared by the WFD. Consistency and coordinated mobilisation is one way to show that you are part of a united global movement. You can adapt your merchandise by adding your organisation's logo and use them in the following way:



*Notepad*



*T-shirt*



*Poster*



*Tote Bag*



*Badge*




*Mug*

### Download

The IWD 2015 campaign materials can be downloaded at the following link:



 <https://goo.gl/Hm9tmb>

-  Poster
-  IWD Logo



# SPREAD THE MESSAGE



## Engage with your network through Social Media

### Anatomy of a Tweet

Labels in the diagram: User Profile Photo, User's real name, Event hashtag, Twitter username (handle), Date posted, User options, Subject-related hashtag.

**World Federation of the Deaf** @worldfederationofthedeaf - Sep 21  
Honouring Colin Allen on #InternationalWeekOftheDeaf2015 to fight for human rights for deaf people because #WithSignLanguageRightsOurChildrenCan

### A Facebook Post

**World Federation of the Deaf - Official**  
21 September at 00:00 ·

Honouring Colin Allen on #InternationalWeekOftheDeaf2015 to fight for human rights for deaf people because #WithSignLanguageRightsOurChildrenCan

Like · Comment · Share

### Download

<https://goo.gl/Hm9tmb>

Twitter cover image



Facebook cover image



Social media badge



Hashtags:

**#InternationalWeekOftheDeaf2015**

**#WithSignLanguageRightsOurChildrenCan**

**#IWD2015**

# JOIN THE WFD AS AN INDIVIDUAL MEMBER



Encourage your network to join the WFD as an Individual Member



*'Together we can make a difference!'*

WFD Individual Member, Drisana Levitzke-Gray, winner of the Young Australian Award of the Year 2015.

As a WFD Individual Member you can expect to receive:

 **The WFD bimonthly newsletter**

 **Emails encouraging you to take action on the WFD campaigns**

 **Discounts at the WFD events**



<http://wfdeaf.org/become-an-individual-member>

# FUNDRAISING FOR THE WFD



## CROWDFUND

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



## BIRTHDAY PLEDGES

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



## GIVE-IT-UP OR MATCH THE EURO

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



## DONATION GIFT

Coming from a small organisation, every penny counts, thus any amount you can raise is vital to our work.



## FUNDRAISE THROUGH EVENTS

Include fundraising for the WFD as part of your event. If you decide to do so, we can send a personal video message from the WFD President addressed to all those attending the event.



 <http://wfdeaf.org/donate>

**Account Name:** World Federation of the Deaf  
**Bank Name/Address:** Nordea Bank Finland Plc., Aleksanterinkatu 36, FI-00100 Helsinki  
**IBAN:** FI04 1555 3000 1113 37  
**SWIFT/BIC Code:** NDEAFIHH

Please ensure that all fundraising initiatives are conducted in a safe and legal manner.

# LEAVE A GIFT IN YOUR WILL



*The WFD President Colin Allen, together with sister Julia Allen, is designating a portion of their estate as a bequest to the WFD. Both Colin and Julia are familiar faces in the deaf advocacy scene. By making a bequest to the WFD, their life driven commitment to improve lives of the global deaf community will continue to have a lasting impact.*

Leaving a gift or bequest through a will is an opportunity for you to continue to make a difference through the work of the WFD. It is easy and can be modified or cancelled at any time if you change your mind in the future. A charitable bequest may vary, depending on the jurisdiction, but has to meet certain formal requirements in order to be legally valid.

Generally it contains at least the following:

Testator's name (the person making the will) and address

The target organisation name and business identification number (in this case, the WFD)

Type of bequest (specific, general, percentage, or residual) to be received by the organisation

Revocation of previous wills

Testator's signature and date on the will in the presence of two witnesses

Because everyone's circumstances are different and planning needs to be tailored accordingly, we urge that you consult with your financial or legal adviser and ask for appropriate clauses to be inserted into your will and/or memorandum of wishes.

In order to honour your commitment, we ask that you share with us your intent to leave a gift in your will. This will enable us to show our appreciation (if you wish) of your forethought.

The WFD reserves the right to disclaim bequests that do not align with our mission.

If you decide to include us in your will or would like more information about leaving a legacy, bequest or other fundraising matters, please contact our Development Officer, Nafisah Rantasalmi at [nafisah.rantasalmi@wfd.fi](mailto:nafisah.rantasalmi@wfd.fi). All enquiries will be treated in confidence.

# AMOUNT YOU CONTRIBUTE WILL BE USED FOR:

## International Advocacy Work



- ☞ Participate in meetings and events to represent the WFD and/or the whole disability field.
- ☞ Provide comments on documents and present the deaf perspectives.
- ☞ Lobby for better accessibility at UN meetings and events.
- ☞ Include deaf and disability rights into the general human rights and development cooperation discourse.

## Production and sharing of accessible information



- ☞ Produce human rights materials in International Sign.
- ☞ Lobby to the UN and other stakeholders to translate written material into International Sign.
- ☞ Use regular mail outs, WFD Newsletters, and social media to disseminate information
- ☞ Collect and publish information from Ordinary Members.

## Support for the WFD Ordinary Members and Regional Secretariats of the WFD



- ☞ Conduct Capacity Building and Training through funded projects as well as seminars and workshops.
- ☞ Supplement Ordinary Members' advocacy work by writing support letters, responding to emails, making direct contact with the national authorities, and monitoring CRPD country review.

## Develop scientific and legal publications



- ☞ Develop and disseminate statements, policies, position papers, and other documents to highlight the WFD's view on various issues.
- ☞ Coordinate generating of studies that include statistical information on deaf situation in the world.

## Administration, Coordination and Management



- ☞ Organise the biannual WFD Board Meetings.
- ☞ Organise the quadrennial WFD General Assembly.
- ☞ Coordinate the annual International Week of the Deaf theme and activities.
- ☞ Plan and execute the WFD Fundraising activities.
- ☞ Plan and execute the WFD projects, including sourcing and applying for funding.



*International Week  
of the Deaf*  
*September*

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## INTERNATIONAL WEEK OF THE DEAF 2015

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### WORLD FEDERATION OF THE DEAF

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 [Info@wfdeaf.org](mailto:Info@wfdeaf.org)

 [www.facebook.com/Wfdeaf.org](http://www.facebook.com/Wfdeaf.org)

 <http://wfdeaf.org>

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*The WFD would like to thank Yew Hau En for her graphic support to the campaign.*