



Legal Seat – Helsinki, Finland

WORLD FEDERATION OF THE DEAF

An International Non-Governmental Organisation in official liaison with ECOSOC, UNESCO, ILO, WHO and the Council of Europe. WFD was established in Rome in 1951

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Members of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
Palais des Nations
CH-1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

Re: Upcoming review on Azerbaijan

Dear Committee Members,

The World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) would like to raise some issues for your information upon review on Azerbaijan. The WFD has human rights project that includes providing training for 12 Azerbaijani deaf leaders on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and its monitoring mechanism. The aim of the training is to build deaf leaders' capacity to become involved in the Azerbaijani disability movement to submit a parallel report. This submission is based on WFD Human Rights Officer's (HRO) visit in Azerbaijan in the beginning of June 2013 when she trained the deaf leaders at the Azerbaijan Public Union of the Deaf that is Ordinary Member of the WFD.

According to Article 9.2(e) of the CRPD, deaf people have the right to use professional sign language interpreters. The WFD has received information from its ordinary member in Azerbaijan that there is no sign language interpreter training program in the country. A decade ago, there was sign language interpreter training project funded by a foreign non-governmental organisation.

Suggested question: What measures has the government of Azerbaijan taken to start training sign language interpreters in cooperation with deaf organisations and fund sign language interpreter service?

Article 21(e) indicates that it is obligation of State Parties to officially recognise sign languages. In Azerbaijan, Russian Sign Language is acquired from the Soviet period and still used today. The Ordinary Member of the WFD has shared its experience on trying to approach the government by sending letters requesting to recognise sign language without results.

Suggested question: In which extent has the government of Azerbaijan consulted with deaf organisations aiming to take legislative measures to recognise sign language in the country?

The right of deaf children to receive education in sign language is set in Article 24.3(b) and Article 24.4 requires teachers of deaf children to be fluent in sign language. During training, the HRO noticed that participants were mostly illiterate. According to information received from the Ordinary Member of the WFD, deaf students are still being taught in written Russian while other schools provide tuition in Azeri. As result of poor education, most deaf people are unemployed because they have not been able to pursue further studies. Based on experiences of deaf leaders in the training, teachers at deaf schools do not know sign language and thus linguistic identity of deaf community is not promoted.

Suggested questions: Are teachers required to be fluent in sign language when employed at deaf schools? How has deaf education been revised since the independence and the ratification of the CRPD?

Hopefully these information are useful for your work in revising Azerbaijan. Please do not hesitate contacting us if you have further questions.

Kind regards,

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