



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: Review on El Salvador

Dear Committee Members,

The World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) would like to raise some issues for your information upon review on El Salvador. The WFD has human rights project that includes providing training for 12 Salvadoran 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 be involved in the Salvadoran disability movement to submit a parallel report. This submission is based on WFD Human Rights Officer's (HRO) visit in El Salvador in May 2013 when she trained the deaf leaders at the Salvadoran Association of the Deaf that is Ordinary Member of the WFD.

The WFD is pleased to note that you have requested the government of El Salvador to provide information on the process towards the official recognition of Salvadoran Sign Language (LESSA). WFD HRO has seen a worrying phenomenon in El Salvador on the rivalry between two sign languages, LESSA and American Sign Language (ASL). According to the Ordinary Member of the WFD in El Salvador, ASL has been brought into the country by charities and missionaries coming from the USA. The WFD stresses the importance of preservation and promotion the use of LESSA in El Salvador. Any purification of sign language conducted by the government is objected by the WFD¹.

Suggested questions: Is the government of El Salvador aware of the rivalry? What measures has the government taken to promote the use of Salvadoran Sign Language (LESSA)?

Paragraphs 14 and 17 of the list of issues adopted in 9th session in April 2013 highlight the importance of providing LESSA interpretation to ensure deaf people's participation. This is very important issue that should be further monitored. According to the Ordinary Member of the WFD in the country, it has been training and accrediting sign language interpreters that has not been funded or recognised by the government. Even though the government funds sign language interpretation on broadcasting at the national parliament and in meetings of the national disability council under the ministry of social protection, training is not being provided or funded. According to the Ordinary Member of the WFD in El Salvador, the national disability council has occasionally used ASL interpreters instead of or along with LESSA interpreters that is a worrying issue as explained in the previous paragraph as an example of possible purification of LESSA conducted by the government. To ensure professionalism of LESSA interpreters in conformity with Article 9.2(e) of the CRPD, sign language interpreter training needs resources from the state.

Suggested question: Which resources has the government of El Salvador placed in Salvadoran Sign Language interpreter training and accreditation?

¹ WFD Statement on the Unification of Sign Languages. http://www.wfdeaf.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/Statement-on-the-unification-of-sign-languages- January-2007_1.pdf

Deaf education is a major concern worldwide that was also addressed in paragraph 27 of the list of issues. The right to receive education in sign language and being taught by teachers who are fluent in sign language as set in the Article 24 of the CRPD is not being fully realised in El Salvador. WFD HRO has visited four out of five deaf schools in El Salvador; Centro Escolar para Sordos Licenciada Griselda Zeledón en Departamento de San Salvador, Centro Escolar para Sordos de Cojutepeque en Departamento de Cuscatlán, Centro Escolar para Sordos de Santa Ana en Departamento de Santa Ana and Centro Escolar para Sordos Licenciado Carlos S. Langenneger de Sonsonate en Departamento de Sonsonate. Schools were not informed beforehand that the WFD Ordinary Member's visitor group included WFD HRO. Particularly at deaf school in Sonsonate (Centro Escolar para Sordos Licenciado Carlos S. Langenneger de Sonsonate en Departamento de Sonsonate), teachers seemed unmotivated to teach deaf children properly as they were taking breaks or doing their own things during lessons. There is a project funded by the government of El Salvador that funds one deaf tutor per deaf school to support sign language development of deaf children and improve sign language skills of teachers. The project is ending next year. Despite the possibility of receiving free sign language tuition, many teachers have been reluctant to attend lessons, the Ordinary Member of the WFD in El Salvador has told. Only deaf schools in San Salvador and Cojutepeque have a few deaf teachers. Another subject of concern that WFD HRO noticed during school visits is the number of pupils. When WFD HRO asked for reason for absence of some pupils, she was told that some families of deaf pupils could not afford daily bus transportation and thus some children receive education only a couple of times a week.

Suggested questions: How is the government of El Salvador planning to continue the project to support deaf schools? Are teachers of deaf schools required to be fluent in LESSA? Does the government of El Salvador provide financial assistance or transport for deaf pupils coming from poor families to be able to attend school every day?

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

Kind regards,

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