



# INTERNATIONAL WEEK OF THE DEAF 2016

19 TO 25  
SEPTEMBER

## THEME: WITH SIGN LANGUAGE, I AM EQUAL

Taking place under the theme 'With Sign Language, I am Equal', IWD 2016 is filled with key milestones. We will celebrate the 65th Anniversary of the WFD, commemorate the 10th year Adoption of the UN CRPD, and acknowledge the recent adoption of the 2030 Agenda, including the new SDGs.

## CAMPAIGN KEY MESSAGES



### BIRTH RIGHT

Draws upon the principle of basic human rights in relation to language acquisition at birth. When acquired fast, it enables deaf children to have full communication with people, improving their cognitive and social skills. Deaf children need access to sign language from birth.



### DEAF IDENTITY

Identifies deaf people as belonging to a cultural and linguistic community, who use sign language as a mother tongue or natural language to communicate.



### ACCESSIBILITY

Stresses that deaf people need access to public information and services via sign language interpreting, subtitling, and/or close-captioning. A key factor to accessibility for public services such as health care, employment, social welfare or any other government services is provision of and access to sign language interpreters.



### EQUAL LANGUAGE

Recognises sign language as a valid linguistic means of conveying thoughts, ideas, and emotions. It is a fully operating language with its own syntax, morphology and structure. It fulfils all features serve to define the notion of a language. This has been confirmed in many systematic linguistic research on sign language since the late 1970s.



## WITH SIGN LANGUAGE, I AM EQUAL



### EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Sign language competency for communication and provision of interpreters mean that deaf people can do almost any job. It is important for deaf people to equally aspire securing jobs that reflect their interest and competency. The main barriers to employment arise from inaccessible work environments rather than an inability to hear.



### BILINGUAL EDUCATION

Urges stakeholders to accept the need for bilingual education for a deaf child and to understand how quality bilingual education should be provided in a sign language environment. Bilingual education is a social-cultural approach of using sign language as the language of instruction in all subjects with a parallel strong emphasis on teaching reading and writing of the language used in the country or society.



### EQUAL PARTICIPATION

Deaf people need to have equal access of participation in the personal, public and political area as everybody else. More importantly, it is necessary to ensure that deaf people have the opportunity to take up leadership roles, so that deaf people themselves can appropriately advocate for their rights and be involved in all decision-making processes concerning their lives. This is a reflection of the slogan 'Nothing About us Without Us'.



### LIFELONG LEARNING

Access to education, vocational training, and ongoing professional training and development, is key to gaining and retaining a job and earning a wage that allows independent living.