Inclusion and Deafness  
A Report on a Seminar University of Manchester June 14th 1999

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# Summary

The seminar began with an overview of the current trends and thinking in inclusive education internationally. There are many different interpretations of the term inclusive education and it was important to consider these before discussing the relevance of this philosophy for Deaf education. Inclusive education in income-poor countries can perhaps best be achieved through partnership with the community and there are already some excellent examples of Deaf children being included in community-based informal and non-formal education initiatives.

The other four presentations focused on the different levels of inclusion in the family, the community, and in the school. There was insufficient time to discuss policy and teacher education issues, although they were referred to throughout. The promotion of inclusion in the family for Deaf people was highlighted as a pre-requisite for successful inclusion in education and in society. The need to inform and support parents as they bring up their Deaf children can best be achieved through close collaboration between Deaf adults and community based workers. Examples were given from Mozambique and Tanzania, where, it is estimated that, only 1% of Deaf children attend school.

Support for the development of Sign Language at the community level is another essential part of the process of preparing for inclusive education. The capacity building of organisations of Deaf people helps to provide a community of Deaf adults who can teach Sign Language and provide positive role models for Deaf children and their parents. The work of Action on Disability in Development (ADD) in Northern Uganda was described.

The benefits of employing Deaf adults in the classrooms in schools for Deaf children were highlighted through examples in Africa where high standards of education have been achieved. Many of the Deaf teachers are ex-pupils of the school and are very keen to improve the situation for the next generation of Deaf children. Inclusive education could pose a threat to this very positive development, if it means that such schools would close. The fear of hearing teachers threatens the employment of Deaf teachers, because of the ease with which the latter are able to communicate with Deaf children. Increasingly the education of Deaf children is becoming 'more professional', and therefore more dominated by a medical model, as many hearing teachers of Deaf children are sent to the North for training.

A pre-school initiative to introduce sign bilingualism into a school for Deaf children in Nanjing, China, was described. There are important differences between China and other countries of the South in terms of the high levels of literacy achieved and the unifying force of the written word. It is estimated that 60% of all Deaf children are in schools for Deaf children compared to only 1% in some African countries. The increasing dominance of the medical model of Deafness in China, however, means that there is a strong emphasis on a 'cure' at the pre-school stage through intensive oral-auditory methods. There is also a decline in the influence of Deaf teachers of Deaf children and the predominant method of teaching is through Sign Supported Chinese. Deaf girls are under-represented throughout Chinese schools for Deaf children, but the situation is worse in rural areas.

The Government of Papua New Guinea (PNG) introduced changes in the pre-service training of teachers in 1991 in order to promote inclusive education. PNG has a mostly rural and scattered population of 4 million people and over 770 languages. There is only one school for Deaf children in PNG, which is situated in the capital and is a day school. A community-based home-contact scheme, an inclusive kindergarten and a screening programme was developed by Callan Services for Disabled Persons to support the Government's policy. Hearing children learned to sign naturally by being educated together with Deaf children and they have acted as interpreters in primary school for teachers whose signing skills are limited.

In Afghanistan Deaf clubs and classes have been set up by SERVE, a British charity, despite the lack of a basic infrastructure and the ongoing civil war. SHIP, SERVE's Hearing-Impaired Programme, has a CBR programme which has been very active in identifying Deaf children and in developing appropriate local solutions to their educational needs. Classes for Deaf children are taught in local village schools after school hours. SHIP has trained existing teachers in Sign Language skills to enable them to teach these classes. Deaf girls are taught in the home of a female teacher because they are not allowed to attend school. A Sign Language dictionary has been produced and there is a growing interest among parents and siblings in learning to sign.

Key issues arising from the presentations and subsequent discussion are summarised at the end of the report. The issues are discussed under the following headings: Inclusion; Sign Language; Deaf Culture and Community; Listening to the views of Deaf people; Interpreters; and Training. The seminar highlighted the fact that western terms, such as inclusion, should be informed by the experiences of the income-poor countries of the South. In particular the social model of Deafness, which has prevailed for so long in Africa, has given rise to a large number of schools for Deaf children including Deaf teachers on their staff, and some of these schools have been set up by Deaf people and have Deaf head teachers. The Salamanca Statement recommends the inclusion of disabled children in mainstream schools, but it makes an exception of Deaf children because of the need to learn Sign Language. Although there are some excellent examples quoted in this report of community-based schools for Deaf children, it is not possible in the near future to provide education for all Deaf children in separate schools for economic, cultural and logistical reasons. The only realistic option for most Deaf children in the South is to attend their local school, or to remain at home. Appropriate community-based support for the children, their families and teachers, and the opportunity of meeting other Deaf people would help to ensure their inclusion in society.

# Introduction

The main mission of EENET is to facilitate conversation internationally on inclusive education. EENET is particularly committed to supporting enabling initiatives in the income-poor countries of the South where many children do not go to school for reasons of poverty, disability, ethnicity, gender and racial identity. It is recognised that education is much broader than schooling and that families and communities have an important role to play in the education of their children. Indigenous and traditional forms of education should be respected as appropriate educational provision, which complement formal schooling, and/or replace formal education where children are excluded.

This seminar was organised by EENET to help provide greater clarity about the key issues in the education of Deaf children in the South and to enable practitioners to share their experiences. There were 24 participants from 10 different countries and with experience from many other countries. There was unfortunately only one Deaf participant, although several others were invited. Almost half of the participants were teachers of Deaf children from the South, currently studying for Masters degrees in Manchester and Birmingham. There were several participants who were invited because they weren't specialists in Deaf education, but have been involved in Deaf issues in the general context of education and development. This enabled an exchange of ideas and interpretations which rarely takes place.

Controversy and confusion over communication methods and educational context have often constituted a barrier to progress. Vast resources are invested in building schools for Deaf children, in developing audiology services and in training hearing teachers of Deaf children by Northern donors. Yet the overwhelming majority of Deaf children in most countries in the South are not in school. Those that attend schools for Deaf children often receive an inappropriate education which alienates them from their families and communities. Individual Deaf children, who attend their local school, are likely to feel isolated and frustrated unless they are enabled to develop appropriate communication skills. The inadequacy of educational provision for Deaf children is not confined to the South, however. Deaf ex-pupils are very critical of the education system in many Northern countries. The key issue in the South is the very large number of children who have no access to any form of education and the financial, cultural and logistical difficulties in addressing their exclusion

The promotion of Deaf Culture, Community and Language and the recognition of Deaf people as a linguistic minority are issues which concern organisations of Deaf people in the North. In the income-poor countries of the South, where most of the population lives in rural areas, difficulties with communication and transport mean that Deaf people only tend to organise themselves in urban areas. Although there is an increasingly active Deaf movement in the South, the reality for many Deaf children is that they grow up in a small village where they may only rarely meet another Deaf person.

It is EENET's mission to support practitioners in critically reflecting upon, and documenting, their work, and to disseminate it to those who have limited access to information and material resources. It is important to consider the meaning of inclusion and inclusive education in the particular cultural context and not to import solutions from the North. The experience of the inclusion movement and the Deaf Rights movement can help to inform practitioners as they develop more inclusive practices with and for Deaf people in the South, but it should not dominate their thinking. The meaning of inclusion for Deaf people in the family, the community, the school and at the policy level should be considered as a whole. Education does not take place in a social vacuum.

# Inclusion and Deaf Education: Should they Co-exist?

Joseph Kisanji: University of Manchester

**1.1** Inclusive education is a process, not a goal. There are five possible notions of inclusive education, and inclusive practices may be based on one or more of these notions in a given country at any one time.

1. **Reduction of the number of children in special schools**  
   The integration of disabled children in regular schools and the gradual reduction of the number of children in special schools is often equated with inclusive education.
2. **Education of all children in the local school**  
   This is a moral notion of inclusive schooling. All children with special needs ought to be educated with their peers so that they can be accepted as valued members of their local community.
3. **Inclusive Education as 'Effective Schools for All'**  
   This notion demands that schools should change in order to meet the learning needs of all children in a given community. It seeks to improve the learning outcomes of students academically, personally and socially. There are strong links here with the school improvement and effectiveness movement. Effective schools see pupils experiencing difficulties in learning as indicators of the need for reform. This represents a shift in the conceptualisation of barriers to learning. The individual child is no longer seen as the problem, instead the curriculum and teaching methods require reform.
4. **Inclusive education as meeting the individual needs of all learners**  
   The focus here is on meeting the individual needs of all learners in the classroom. It is argued that regular school systems will only begin to be inclusive when children described as having special needs form an integral part of the wider diversity in classrooms.
5. **Partnership with the community**  
   This notion of inclusion differs from the above notions because it is not only concerned with school issues. The school is not only located in the community, but it is an integral part of it. All children, whatever their learning needs, go to their local school. Parents and community members play an active role in the school and the school takes part in the development activities of the community.

"Partnership with the community is perhaps the best entry point for introducing more inclusive practices for Deaf children in the income-poor countries of the South, where only a tiny minority are currently attending school."

# Families as Essential Stakeholders

**Elina Lehtomaki: University of Jyvaskyla, Finland**  
[Read more detailed article](http://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/elina.php)

**2.1** It is estimated that only 1% of Deaf children attend school in Tanzania and in Mozambique. According to CBR workers in these countries most Deaf children are not identified until they reach school age and haven't learned to speak. They tend to be sent home from school because of their inability to speak, but are not referred to the education or health authorities and so are not recorded anywhere as being out of school.

**2.2** An important aspect of the CBR work in Mozambique is to bring families together and to facilitate collaboration. By introducing them to disabled adults they are able to provide the family with a perspective on the life span of their child. Deaf adults can help to enlighten parents of Deaf children about what to expect in adulthood. Families can play an important role in campaigning for their Deaf children's right to quality education and participation in the community.

"Deaf people and their families are key partners or stakeholders in the implementation of inclusive education because they live with Deafness in their daily lives and so can act as valuable change agents for raising awareness about Deafness in communities."

**2.3** The key points arising from this presentation are as follows:-

**(a)** Education policy planners, decision-makers and teacher educators tend to overlook Deaf people and their families as key resource people. Yet education is carried out in the community, the schools are often built and owned by the community and the goal of education should be to benefit the community.  
**(b)** The most inclusive families are those that persist in developing some form of communication with their Deaf family members. A wide variety of communication methods are used, such as drawing pictures, mime, lip-reading, gestures and basic signs.  
**(c)** Inclusion in the home and family provides a firmer basis for inclusion in the community and in wider society.  
**(d)** Although communication difficulties are often a barrier to the inclusion of Deaf children, the lack of awareness among families about Deafness is often a far greater barrier. The CBR team in Mozambique gave the following examples of the need for greater awareness: "Two families living next door to each other discovered for the first time that they each had a Deaf family member." And "An adult Deaf woman had only just discovered that the woman she thought was her mother was actually her aunt. No-one had explained this to her before."  
**(e)** Deaf people do not have the experience of being a hearing person or of having a Deaf child, similarly parents do not have the experience of being Deaf. It is therefore important that parents and Deaf people work together in raising awareness.  
**(f)** Inclusion should be about the whole life span of a Deaf child. Focusing exclusively on inclusion in education is too limiting.  
**(g)** Families are essential for economic security in the income-poor countries of the world. It is therefore particularly important that Deaf children are fully included in their families.

# Teaching Sign Language to Parents of Deaf Children

**Judith Collins: Centre for Deaf Studies, University of Durham**  
[Read a more detailed article](http://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/collins.docx)

**3.1** In the mid-1980s Judith taught BSL to the mainstream nursery staff, parents, neighbours and friends of a Deaf boy who lived in a small village in the UK. The work included story-telling, encouraging the children to learn through play and supporting the teacher. This was unusual at that time in England when most Deaf children did not have any access to formal Sign Language teaching and Deaf adults, such as Judith, were not involved in the education process. This demonstrated the following to other parents and schools:

**(a)** It is possible for a Deaf person to work and to teach Sign Language;  
**(b)** Deaf children can learn on equal terms with hearing children when they have access to Sign Language;  
**(c)** Parents can learn Sign Language in order to communicate with their children;  
**(d)** There was a need for training and support for Deaf adults in how to work with children in an educational setting.

**3.2** Bilingual education for Deaf children has only developed where the local authority supports a change in policy. Leeds has adopted a bilingual policy, but those Deaf children who belong to ethnic minorities, are exposed to three languages: Punjabi at home, and English and British Sign Language at school. The outcomes were as follows:

**(a)** Home-school links were developed through home visits and the establishment of an Asian mothers' group.  
**(b)** A fathers' and older brothers' group was also established at a later stage.   
**(c)** When the family members' signing fluency improved, they were able to communicate directly with their children and with the Deaf adults, without needing a Sign Language or a Punjabi interpreter.   
**(d)** It is essential to make the link between parents, Deaf adults and educators at the earliest possible stage in a Deaf child's life. Native users of BSL can teach parents how to respond to their baby in basic signs. Teaching parents in the home environment how to respond to their baby's developing communication needs from a very early age was perhaps the most valuable aspect of the work.

**3.3** Judith has recently been involved in teaching a course about Sign Language and Deaf issues for members of the Black Deaf community and their parents in South Africa. The home language of Black Deaf children is also different from the language of education and so they face similar difficulties to those of the Asian community in the UK. For many of them the idea that Sign Language was an authentic language of its own was a new concept. This knowledge has given them greater confidence in their communication skills.

# A Community-based Sign Language Programme in Uganda

**Rebecca Yeo, Action on Disability and Development**  
[Read a more detailed article](http://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/ugandasl.docx)

**4.1** Action on Disability and Development (ADD) works with groups and organisations of disabled people in 13 countries in Africa and Asia to help build their capacity to campaign effectively for inclusion in society. The Deaf Development Programme in Lira, Northern Uganda, is the only programme supported by ADD which is exclusively for Deaf people. It was started three years ago by Gloria Pullen, a Deaf staff member from the Centre for Deaf Studies at the University of Bristol, together with Ugandan colleagues. Uganda is one of the few countries in the world where Sign Language has been written into the constitution. There is also political representation at all levels of government. Currently there are 46,000 places for disabled people, both male and female. There are five disabled people in parliament, one of whom is Deaf.

**4.2** The aims of the programme in Lira are as follows:

**(a)** To bring Deaf people together;  
**(b)** To help with their communication needs;  
**(c)** To support Deaf people to work for equal rights.

**4.3** Originally the plan was to follow a similar process as with other disabled people's groups, but when they first started to meet with Deaf adults they had to devote an enormous amount of time to listening to accounts of their experiences and answering questions before they could develop the programme. Some of the main achievements of the programme are as follows:

**(a)** The programme involves teaching Sign Language to Deaf children and their parents. This has enabled the children to attend local schools.  
**(b)** Deaf children are supported in the schools by Sign Language interpreters provided by the Education Assessment and Resource Services (EARS) programme. The interpreters are paid by the government and by DANIDA. (For a discussion of the issues about interpreters see Key Issues.)  
**(c)** Sensitisation workshops on Deafness have been held for families of Deaf children;  
**(d)** Deaf awareness events have helped to inform the wider public to promote a better understanding of the educational potential of Deaf children.  
**(e)** The organisation of Deaf people has produced awareness raising videos about AIDS and other relevant issues for Deaf people.

**4.4** One of the main pre-occupations of the Deaf adults is to ensure that the next generation of Deaf children does not experience the loneliness and frustration which they themselves have experienced.

# The Inclusion of Deaf Adults in the Education of Deaf Children

Doreen Woodford: Initiatives on Deaf Education

**5.1** Initiatives on Deaf Education in the Third World was established in 1985 in response to the needs of practitioners in the South for information and networking opportunities. The information and views expressed in this paper are informed by Initiatives' Partners in the South, though primarily in Africa.

"You cannot educate Deaf children without Deaf adults. The education of Deaf children needs and benefits from the inclusion of Deaf adults at all stages."

**5.2** Key issues

**(a)** Deaf adults are the most obvious human resource available for the education of Deaf children, yet they are so often overlooked;  
**(b)** The education of Deaf children needs and benefits from the participation of Deaf adults;  
**(c)** There should be no ceiling to the position that a Deaf person can hold;  
**(d)** A Deaf person is not automatically suitable as a teacher of Deaf children just because he or she is Deaf;  
**(e)** Willingness to include Deaf people appears to be greater in some African countries, than elsewhere;  
**(f)** Many countries limit inclusion, if it takes place at all, to the teaching of art and vocational, rather than academic subjects. Employing Deaf adults as 'helpers' in the classroom, rather than as teachers, is also very common;

Teacher inclusion in the People's Democratic Republic (PDR) of the Congo

The headteacher of the school at Kisangani, in the PDR of the Congo, is Deaf and 50% of the teachers are also Deaf. The head provides in-service training for the teachers, who are mostly ex-pupils and do not have any formal qualifications beyond whatever was obtained during schooling. Everyone uses Sign Language at all times, and new teachers have to learn as rapidly as possible. There are 130 students who are educated in French and in Zairean Sign Language and the standard of education is very high. The head has been responsible for starting at least nine other schools in the Congo. The wife of the headteacher, who is also Deaf, teaches a small class of Deaf children on the other side of the river. The children had been crossing the river to attend the main school until the small class was started.

**5.3** Some of the reasons for the inclusion of Deaf adults in schools for Deaf children are as follows:

**(a)** There is a shortage of people available to teach Deaf children;  
**(b)** There is a lack of knowledge of Sign Language among hearing teachers;  
**(c)** There is less emphasis on speech, possibly because of the absence of speech therapists;  
**(d)** Deaf people have taken the initiative to set up schools for Deaf children;  
**(e)** Deaf adults had to struggle in their childhood and they are concerned to improve the situation for the next generation;  
**(f)** Good relationships between schools and the national associations of Deaf people;  
**(g)** Deaf staff are often ex-pupils of the school and it is rare for them to have any formal qualifications beyond whatever was obtained during schooling;  
**(h)** The influence of Andrew Foster, a Deaf Black American who set up schools and churches in African countries, lives on. The headmaster at Kisangani is a former Foster pupil.  
**(i)** A social model of Deafness prevails in the communities where Deaf adults have been included in education.

**5.4** Barriers to the inclusion of Deaf adults in the education of Deaf children:

**(a)** The lack of opportunities for Deaf children to progress from primary to secondary education;  
**(b)** The fear of hearing teachers who feel threatened by competent Deaf adults because they are able to relax in the company of Deaf children, and sign and interpret with ease;  
**(c)** The training of hearing teachers in universities overseas;  
**(d)** The increasing professionalisation of the education of Deaf children.

"The inclusion of Deaf children in their local schools could work against the inclusion of Deaf adults in the education of Deaf children."

**5.5** It is important to distinguish between being born Deaf and becoming deafened because of the effect which deafness has upon language development. The following definitions were agreed upon:

**Deaf:** Children who are born Deaf and those who become Deaf in the first two to three years of life before developing spoken language.

**Deafened:** People who have once been able to hear, but have lost their hearing from the age of 3 years and above.

**5.6** In all countries there are more partially-hearing and Deafened people than congenitally and pre-lingually Deaf people. This is even more true of Africa, where there is a very high incidence of acquired Deafness. This is an important fact to bear in mind when considering the equalisation of opportunities for Deaf people and between Deaf and deafened people. Full inclusion will only have been achieved when all groups of Deaf people are fully included.

# Sign Bilingualism in China

Alison Callaway: Centre for Deaf Studies, University of Bristol

**6.1** The Centre for Deaf Studies in Bristol has been involved in supporting a sign bilingual project in Jiangsu province at Nanjing Deaf School since 1994. The main system of communication in Deaf schools in China is Sign Supported Chinese, so this project represents a significant change. A pre-school experimental class was set up in 1996. Initially this involved one hour per day of tuition in Sign Language taught by a Deaf teacher. Now two Deaf teachers spend a longer period of the day with the children and they are collaborating more with the hearing teachers. The class was set up in a school for Deaf children, rather than as part of the government's pre-school programme, because historically Deaf teachers have played an important role in these schools and signing, both 'methodically' in the classroom and 'naturally' outside the classroom, is a well-established mode of communication.

**6.2** China is very different from many other income-poor countries in the impressive results it has achieved in education. Before the Communist regime came to power in 1949 the literacy rate was only 20% and in 1982 it had risen to 77%. The literacy rate in India by contrast in 1982 was 36%. There is a very strong emphasis on the written word in China because it is a unifying force. It enables people who speak many different dialects to communicate through writing. Chinese is a pictographic language of 2500 pictographs which have to be learnt by rote in the first 3-4 years of school.

**6.3** Key issues in China

**(a)** Lack of early exposure to language Most Deaf children start school at the age of seven, or even later. They therefore have limited opportunities for language development in the crucial pre-school years, with the exception of the 10% of children who are born to Deaf parents and are exposed to Sign Language from an early age.  
**(b)** There are many children with significant residual hearing in schools for Deaf children If there was better pre-school provision and integration policies many of these children could be educated in mainstream schools.  
**(c)** The segregation of Deaf children and the diminished role of the family The role of the family is diminished when Deaf children are sent to large, residential schools for Deaf children. Parents of Deaf children attending the Nanjing pre-school class as day pupils have not shown any interest in learning Sign Language. This lack of home-school contact and communication further segregates the Deaf children.  
**(d)** The role of Sign Language Sign Language is seen as an educational tool with which to learn the Chinese language. It is not seen as a language in its own right.  
**(e)** The role of Deaf teachers The role of Deaf teachers is being 'phased out' as the demand for higher qualifications increases.  
**(f)** Deaf girls are at an educational disadvantage Deaf girls are under-represented in schools for Deaf children, particularly in rural areas. Their lack of access to education will mean that they have less access to Deaf Culture.

# Developing Inclusive Services in Papua New Guinea

**Sian Tesni, Christoffel Blinden Mission**  
[Read a more detailed article](http://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/pngsian.docx)

**7.1** This paper described the process of developing a more inclusive education service in Papua New Guinea. The Ministry of Education worked in partnership with Callan Services for Disabled Persons and with the financial and technical support of Christoffel Blinden Mission (CBM). Below is a summary of the key points arising from the paper:

**(a)** Papua New Guinea (PNG) has a rural population of 4 million people and there is one day school for Deaf children in the capital city, Port Moresby.  
**(b)** In 1991 the Government decided to introduce changes in the pre-service training of teachers in order to achieve inclusive education.  
**(c)** Callan Services (for Disabled Persons), a national NGO, developed a three-year special education curriculum, which could be incorporated into the existing teacher education programme. They did this with the support of Christoffel Blinden Mission (CBM).  
**(d)** The curriculum included units on hearing impairment and deafness.  
**(e)** Each of the 10 teacher training colleges is within reach of a Special Education Resource Centre (SERC). These centres provide essential hands-on, community-based support to the student teachers.  
**(f)** Callan Services established a community-based 'home contact' scheme, an inclusive kindergarten and pre-school, and a screening programme.

**7.2** It took over two years to develop this service. Some of the positive aspects are outlined below:

**(a)** The family and community are exposed to, and educated about, the needs of Deaf children;  
**(b)** Hearing and Deaf children learn to communicate with each other in a free and open environment without preconceived prejudices or fears;  
**(c)** Teachers communicate fluently through Sign Language, when necessary;  
**(d)** Hearing children grow up signing freely and naturally with Deaf children. As the children grow together through to the primary level, the hearing children act as interpreters for teachers who have not yet learnt Sign Language or do not sign fluently;  
**(e)** Deaf children, and their need for signed communication, are accepted within the community.  
**(f)** The Deaf community has an important role to play in providing support both at the community level and within the education system. Deaf adults generally have a positive role to play within rural communities in PNG and are allowed to inherit, whereas people with certain other disabilities do not have this right. Deaf adults marry and contribute to village life in their role as craftsmen and gardeners. A few examples have been cited where communities with several Deaf members have developed their own signed communication system.

# Overcoming Barriers to Inclusion in Afghanistan

**Soo Choo Lee, SERVE**  
[Read a more detailed article](http://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/afghdeaf.docx)

**8.1** Afghanistan has been devastated by 20 years of continual conflict since the Russian invasion in 1979. Since they withdrew in 1989 there has been a civil war for the control of the country. In 1996 a Muslim fundamentalist group, the Taliban, emerged as the major power. The infrastructure has been almost completely destroyed. Teachers are scarce and unmotivated, and school books, furniture and teaching equipment are supplied by UNICEF and other international NGOs. Of the estimated population of 17 million, approximately one third have been killed, disabled or displaced.

**8.2** There seems to be a higher prevalence of deafness in Afghanistan because of injuries caused by mines, bombs and torture, and because of the poor health services. Consanguinous marriage further increases the chances of children being born with impairments. Serve (Serving Emergency Relief and Vocational Enterprise) is a British Christian charity, founded in 1972, whose main work is in Eastern Afghanistan. Serve's Hearing Impaired Project (SHIP) was established in 1992 in Peshawar, Pakistan, in response to the growing needs of Deaf Afghan refugees and is funded by CBM and Radda Barnen. After working successfully with 60 Deaf children and adults in Peshawar and the surrounding refugee camps, the project was relocated to Jalalabad in Afghanistan.

**8.3 OVERCOMING BARRIERS**

**8.3.1 Lack of infrastructure**

Many school buildings have been destroyed. The rebuilding of schools provides opportunities to negotiate new arrangements for Deaf children. CBM has enabled two classes of Deaf children to be set up in a mainstream school which they have helped to rebuild.

**8.3.2 Lack of services for Deaf people**

**(a)** A school for Deaf children was started which now caters for 60 children. The school also functions as a training and resource centre.  
**(b)** Three Deaf clubs have been established with over 50 Deaf adults. They attend literacy and Sign Language classes and other recreational activities. Over 30 Deaf adults have completed their apprenticeship with master craftsmen, identified by SHIP, and are now in employment. Others continue to learn trades such as tailoring, bicycle repair and sweet-making supported by the local community which has offered its skills in basic trades.  
**(c)** Over 80 Deaf children aged 5-12 have been identified by SHIP's CBR programme in 10 villages. None of them have ever attended school. The local CBR committee approached the education authority and asked for teachers to be trained in Sign Language. They could not afford extra teachers, so SHIP has trained existing teachers in Sign Language skills.  
**(d)** Ten classes of Deaf children have been set up, one in each village, which are taught after school hours. (Schools are open for approximately 3 hours per day.)

**8.3.3 Images**

Photographs, pictures of living things, puppets, dance and music are banned. Teachers improvise by using mud, palm leaves and nut shells and drawing stick figures with no faces.

**8.3.4 Lack of access to information**

There is a desperate shortage of books and training materials. Most professionals have emigrated. Learning by rote is the principal method of teaching. The few NGOs working in Afghanistan share resources and have begun to produce their own textbooks, including some for teaching Deaf people. The first book of Jalalabad regional Sign Language, recorded by Deaf people, was published in 1995 with 620 signs. A revised edition was published in 1998 with 1200 signs. Parents and siblings of Deaf children are showing a growing interest in attending Sign Language classes.

# Summary of Key Issues Arising

**9.1 Inclusion**

**9.1.a** There was a lack of clarity about what we mean by inclusion. This is not unique to the debate about Deaf issues and inclusion, it is a common problem in many meetings. Inevitably participants came with their own preconceived ideas about what the term inclusion means and whether it is possible for Deaf children to be included in mainstream schools. In India, for example, the National Institute for the Hearing Handicapped organise 'camps' in villages to prepare the community members for the inclusion of the Deaf children in their local school. **In future meetings the range of options for the inclusion of Deaf children in education should be made clearer, with concrete examples.**

**9.1.b** The harsh reality for the majority of Deaf children is that they are excluded from any kind of education in the income-poor countries of the South for economic, cultural and logistical reasons. It is not possible to provide education for all Deaf children in separate schools for Deaf children, as this tends to be the most expensive form of education. One of the major disadvantages of residential schools for Deaf children is that they diminish the role of the family. Children tend to become dislocated from their family's language, culture and way of life and this has far-reaching consequences for their adult lives, especially in income-poor countries where families provide individual family members with long-term economic security.

**9.1.c** The following excerpt from the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (para 21) indicates that the needs of Deaf children are viewed differently from the needs of children with other impairments:

"Owing to the particular communication needs of Deaf and deaf/blind persons, their education may be more suitably provided in special schools or special classes and units in mainstream schools."

**9.1.d** Although this may be a valid viewpoint in a Northern context, where resources are relatively plentiful, the likelihood of all Deaf children being educated in special schools and units in a Southern context is very remote.

**9.1.e** Inclusion is essentially a Western, or Northern term, developed in a Northern context where the medical model of disability and deafness predominates, and where there are enormous institutional barriers to inclusion. Practitioners in the North have a great deal to learn from those who work in very difficult, but very different, circumstances in income-poor countries, where the social model of deafness is more prevalent and the term 'inclusion' is interpreted according to the particular culture and context.

**9.1.f** Inclusion is not only about schooling, however. We should not belittle the impact and importance of community learning and the involvement of community members in formal schooling. Families and communities can play a very valuable role in the education of Deaf children. Similarly teachers have a great deal to learn from the community. We need to support ways of facilitating an exchange of learning between teachers, community members and the children themselves.

**9.1.g** The involvement, or inclusion, of Deaf adults in the education of Deaf children is not only desirable, but essential. Deaf adults are a valuable community resource. Examples were given of Deaf adults working as headteachers and teachers of academic subjects in schools for deaf children in some countries in Africa. The increasing prevalence of the medical model of deafness and the over-professionalisation of Deaf education in Africa, however, was seen as a threat to the continued inclusion of Deaf adults in education.

**9.2 Sign Language**

"Educational policies should take full account of individual differences and situations. The importance of Sign Language as the medium of education among the Deaf, for example, should be recognised and provision made to ensure that all Deaf persons have access to education in their national Sign Language." Framework for Action, Salamanca (Para 21).

**9.2.a** In Northern countries opinions are split between those who argue for segregated education because of the need to develop Sign Language and Deaf Culture and those who advocate for integration in the interests of improving spoken language skills. Interestingly supporters of sign bilingualism are less concerned with the location of the children and more concerned to ensure that Sign Language is used as a basis for learning an oral language. Sign bilingualism, when done well, ensures an understanding and appreciation of both Deaf and hearing cultures. Whatever method of communication is adopted in whatever educational context, Deaf children should have access to their national Sign Language. Rule 5 of The UN Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities makes a clear statement about accessibility to information and communication:

"Consideration should be given to the use of Sign Language in the education of Deaf children, in their families and in their communities. Sign Language interpretation services should also be provided to facilitate the communication between Deaf persons and others."

**9.2.b** A more detailed discussion is needed about the teaching and learning of Sign Language in the South. Greater clarity is also needed about how Sign Language can be promoted at family and community level so that children can have access to education in their village schools. It is necessary to balance the needs of Deaf people to have access to Sign Language, while at the same time guaranteeing their right to remain members of their immediate communities.

**9.2.c** Future meetings should also cover some basic facts about the effects of deafness on the natural acquisition of language. The implications of educational inclusion should be considered in the light of the inaccessibility of spoken language to Deaf children, especially in countries where audiological services are non-existent.

**9.3 Deaf Culture and Community**

**9.3.a** When two Deaf people come together, there is the beginning of a Deaf community and of Sign Language. This does not necessarily have to happen in an educational setting. An example was given from Mozambique of a Deaf awareness campaign which revealed that two Deaf children had been living next door to each other, without realising that the other existed. Clearly a Deaf community does not necessarily develop spontaneously, especially where children do not attend school, and are sometimes hidden by their families. Not surprisingly, many Deaf people often feel very isolated and alone in the hearing world. In the example from Mozambique CBR workers worked alongside Deaf adults from the national association of Deaf people to raise awareness of deafness among individual families and communities in rural areas and to encourage Deaf people to meet together.

"Deaf communities tend to be stronger where schools for Deaf children exist."

**9.3.b** There is an urgent need to support the development of Deaf communities, especially where there is no school for Deaf children. The examples from Afghanistan demonstrate that this is possible, even in a country where the basic infrastructure has broken down. It is the sharing of a common language and culture, which defines Deaf communities as unique. There is no equivalent of a Deaf community among people with other specific impairments, although the disability rights movement talks about a generic disability culture.

**9.4 Listening to the views of Deaf people**

**9.4.a** The question of whether Deaf people want to be part of the inclusion process was left unresolved. It is not surprising that many Deaf adults, including the only Deaf participant, state their preference for separate schools for Deaf children. The most vocal Deaf adults have usually attended a school for Deaf children and therefore have no other experience with which to compare. Deaf children need to experience inclusion in their communities before they can pass judgement on it.

**9.4.b** There is often conflict between what parents want for their child and what a Deaf child wants. Equally there is often a discrepancy between what Deaf adults determine that Deaf children need and what parents want for their child. Parents tend to prefer to listen to the so-called experts, but Deaf adults are also experts. It is not only hearing professionals whose opinions should be sought. In a recent UK survey of perceptions of good practice by parents, Deaf students and teachers, there was no concensus of opinion. This would indicate the wide range of opinions expressed. There is a need for Deaf people to become involved in researching the needs of Deaf children in education and to have an input into policy-making.

**9.4.c** The distinction between Deaf and deafened was highlighted in the discussion. This led to a debate about the usefulness of categorising disabled people according to the degree of their impairment. It was acknowledged, however, that there is considerable inequality of opportunities available to people loosely described as 'Deaf', with deafened people having greater opportunities than those who are born Deaf. This is usually because of their ability to speak and integrate easily with hearing people.

**9.4.d** In future meetings there should be Deaf participants from the South who have a firm understanding and experience of educational issues.

**9.5 Interpreters**

**9.5.a** If Deaf people are to be more included in society the need for interpreters has to be addressed. It is important to be clear about what is meant by interpreters. It is important to clarify the terminology and be clear about the meaning of the following terms: "interveners", "communicators" and "educational interpreters". In the UK it is important to distinguish between professional and unqualified interpreters and there are strict rules about the length of time an interpreter should work. However in the income-poor countries where interpreter services are only just emerging in some countries, it is unlikely that there are officially recognised qualifications for interpreters. Family members are often employed to interpret for organisations of Deaf people.

**9.5.b** It is important to distinguish between the different types of interpreters. Interpreting skills which are required by those who work in an educational setting with very young Deaf children, whose language is only just emerging, is very different from those who work in parliament, for example, or with organisations of Deaf adults. It is essential that this distinction is made. The different skills needed in the classroom should be appreciated. Being Deaf is not automatically a qualification for being an educational interpreter.

**9.6 Training issues**

**9.6.a** The value of training teachers from Southern countries in universities in the UK should be seriously questioned. There is an enormous difference between North and South in terms of working conditions and the availability of material resources. Differences in the causes of deafness between North and South mean that there are very different populations of Deaf children in the segregated schools in the South from those in the North. As hearing teachers of Deaf children have greater access to professional training in the North, Deaf teachers are likely to become less involved in Deaf education, as paper qualifications take on greater importance than signing fluency and knowledge of Deaf Culture.

# Follow-up

**10.1** The seminar provided an opportunity for specialists (those with specific knowledge of deafness) and non-specialists to come together to discuss issues of mutual concern about inclusive education and the specific needs of Deaf children. The non-specialists were amazed by the specialists' lack of awareness of general education issues. Similarly, the specialists were surprised by the non-specialists' lack of awareness to aspects of deafness. Four international seminars provide the opportunity to address the following concerns:

**(a)** Future meetings should begin with a basic introduction to the effects of deafness on the acquisition of spoken language;

**(b)** Deaf issues need to be represented in meetings and seminars about inclusion to enable more exchanges of ideas and experiences to take place between those involved in Deaf issues and those involved in more general disability, education and development issues.  
**(c)** Practitioners involved in the education of Deaf children need greater exposure to the wider issues involved in inclusive education and need to be familiar with international documents and legislation.

**10.2 The Rights of Disabled Children, Brighton, October 1999**  
In the immediate future, Deaf issues and dilemmas regarding inclusion will be presented and discussed at the International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC) one-day seminar entitled "The Rights of Disabled Children", Brighton, UK, October 5th 1999.

**10.3 Initiatives' Conference for Parents, Malawi. May 2000**  
Initiatives for Deaf Education in the Third World is organising a conference in Malawi for the leaders of 6 parents' organisations in May 2000. There will be representatives from Kenya; Tanzania; Ethiopia; Uganda; Zimbabwe; and Malawi. The report of the seminar in Manchester, June 1999, will be made available to participants and, where possible, some of the ideas discussed.

**10.4** **International Special Education Congress (ISEC), Manchester, July 2000**  
A paper will be presented at the ISEC congress Manchester, in July 2000, on Inclusion and Deafness in the Southern context. The paper will be based on discussions held in the Manchester seminar and the ideas expressed in this report.

**10.5** **EENET Seminar on Inclusive Education, 2001**  
Deaf issues were discussed at the IDDC seminar on inclusive education which took place in Agra, India, in March 1998. A follow-up seminar has been proposed for 2001 which will be organised by EENET with IDDC's support in a Southern location. A substantial part of this seminar will be devoted to a discussion of Deaf issues, and in particular, family involvement in the education of Deaf children. The impact of deafness on language development; the teaching and learning of Sign Language; and the meaning of inclusion for Deaf children will also be discussed. This will be led by Deaf people from the South, who have an understanding of educational issues, with parents of Deaf children. Their presence in the seminar will allow an exchange of ideas to take place.

# Bibliography

Link to inclusion and deafness bibliography: <http://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/incdeafbib.docx>

**Reference:**  
**Title:** Inclusion and Deafness: A report on a seminar  
**Author:** EENET  
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