

# eDEAF Sensitization Workshop Handout

## Who is eDEAF?

The Deaf community is one of the most marginalized groups in South Africa. This is because of the fact that they cannot communicate freely with people who are able to hear. As a result, Deaf people are often regarded to be incompetent nor intelligent, and therefore not fit to be employed. However these assumptions are far from the truth!

This is where we, **eDEAF**, come into the picture. The unemployment rate amongst Deaf people is very high due to a number of debilitating factors such as:

- low standards of education in schools for the Deaf;
- very low levels of literacy;
- limited access to information on radio and television; and
- restricted interpersonal communication.

**eDEAF** was formed to address this pressing need of Deaf people and is a Deaf owned BEE company, established to provide a holistic service to the employer and the deaf employee. **eDEAF** will be a distinctive, recognizable and respected brand.

## Vision and Mission of eDEAF

### VISION

**eDEAF's** vision is to bridge the gap between aspirant Deaf employees and the business environment.

### MISSION

**eDEAF's** mission is to train and empower the Deaf community and to introduce them to the world of employment as an integral and efficient part of the business and private sector

## What does eDEAF do?

### TRAINING:

- Labour Law, Work ethics, Personal Budgeting, etc.
- ABET
- SETA services
- Microsoft training

### PLACEMENTS:

- About 400 Deaf employees in 28 companies
- Maintain a database of available job seekers
- Visit companies after placement to follow up with manager and staff members
- Received positive feedback from employers.

## Who are Deaf people?

Deaf people in South Africa form a group of people who use South African Sign Language (SASL) as their first language which is generally their primary form of communication. Deaf people all over the world view themselves as belonging to a linguistic minority with its own culture, Deaf Culture. The South African Deaf community has its own language, South African Sign Language (SASL) and in South Africa – South African Deaf culture.

Estimates of the number of Deaf people who use SASL as a primary language vary greatly, from 700 000 to 2 millions users. A request has been made to the Human Sciences Research Council (South Africa) to include this measure has part of the Census 2011.

## What is South African Sign Language (SASL)?

SASL is the primary language used by many in the Deaf community and is a language with its own grammar, syntax and structure, which is different from a spoken language.

Although SASL is not one of South Africa's 11 Official languages, the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa recognizes the role and importance of sign language in general by encouraging further developments and the promotion of "sign language" in South Africa.

The majority of fingerspelling handshapes used in South Africa is based on the one-handed fingerspelling alphabet as shown on Addendum 1

### Is SASL a language?

Yes, SASL is natural language like other languages with its own grammar, syntax and structure, which is different from a spoken language.

### Fingerspelling

- Fingerspelling is **NOT** SASL but part of SASL
- Fingerspelling is easy to learn and an useful tool to:
  - spell people's names or other proper nouns, such as places or organization names that do not have a designated SASL sign
  - spell words from spoken language that don't have a designated sign, such as slang or profession-specific jargon
  - spell words that you do not know the SASL sign for

### Sign Names

- For many Deaf people, their given names are meaningless until they arrive at their schools for the Deaf where they are given their sign name
- Being given a sign name is seen as a rite of initiation into the Deaf community.
- Sign names refer to particular features or attribute used to identify one from others.

### Facial expression

- Are generally known as NMF (Non Manual Features)
- Play a vital role in SASL as grammatical markers
- Act as adjectives and adverbs to supplement to the signs themselves to enhance their meaning

### Deaf culture

All over the world, Deaf culture has its own history, language, shared values, social standards, and traditions, which are handed down from generation to generation.

When talking about this group of people who use SASL as their first language, they are referred to as "Deaf" and is written with a capital "D" – in the same way as one refers to "Jews" using a capital "J". When talking about people with a hearing disability, usually from a medical view, they are generally referred to using a lower case "d".

### History of Deaf employment

65 -70% of Deaf people in South Africa are unemployed

#### REASONS:

- Poor Education for the Deaf
- Less than 10% Deaf learners attend university
- About 30% of Deaf people receive qualifications from learnerships or college experience job barriers

## COMMON PROBLEMS

- Unemployed Deaf people have skills and knowledge like other people but are able to complete the job faster.
- Underpaid
- Lack of promotion opportunities
- Communicate breakdown between Deaf and other staff members, supervisors and managers
- Lack of communication about:
  - Employment contract
  - Discrimination in the workplace
  - Labour Law Act

## What is a SASL interpreter?

In South Africa, SASL interpreters facilitate the cross-cultural communication necessary in today's society by converting a spoken language into SASL and vice-versa. However, these SASL interpreters do more than simply translate words—they relay concepts and ideas between languages. In addition, they must be sensitive to the cultures associated with their languages of expertise. SASL interpreters interpret between spoken communication and sign language. SASL interpreting requires that one pay attention carefully, understand what is communicated in both languages, and express thoughts and ideas clearly.

There are two modes of interpreting: simultaneous, and consecutive. Simultaneous interpreting requires interpreters to listen and speak (or sign) at the same time someone is speaking or signing. Ideally, simultaneous interpreters should be so familiar with a subject that they are able to anticipate the end of the speaker's sentence.

SASL interpreters are generally required to do simultaneous interpreting to ensure that the flow of communication is maintained.

## What are SASL interpreters used for?

Facilitating interpersonal communication

Positioning of the SASL interpreter when communicating between Deaf and hearing people

- Clear line of sight must be maintained

Neutrality

- Interpreters are just a tool of communication and their role is to convey interpersonal information

Code of ethics

- Interpreters are required to maintain confidentiality
- Interpreters have standards to adhere to
- Interpreters have a code of conduct

## In Conclusion

### Deaf people

- Communicate using SASL
- Deaf culture has its own history, language, shared values, social standard, and tradition which are transferred from generation to generation.

### Background

- Viewed by their hearing parents mainly through the medical view
- Feel isolated at home and social with hearing family and friends
- Bind together at Deaf social clubs

Sources: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South\\_African\\_Sign\\_Language](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_African_Sign_Language)  
[www.deafsa.co.za](http://www.deafsa.co.za)  
[www.signingsavvy.com/browse-fingerspelling](http://www.signingsavvy.com/browse-fingerspelling)  
[www.signgenius.com](http://www.signgenius.com)  
[www.bls.gov/oco/ocos175.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos175.htm)  
[www.saslinc.co.za](http://www.saslinc.co.za)  
[www.edeaf.co.za](http://www.edeaf.co.za)

# Addendum 1

