

# ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE

# DeafNET

Centre of Knowledge



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# Introduction

DeafNET Centre of Knowledge (DeafNET) was established in Worcester on 01 July 2006 in partnership with De Stichting van Effatha (SVE) in the Netherlands and the National Institute for the Deaf (NID) in South Africa.

DeafNET Centre of Knowledge (DeafNET) is a network of knowledge and expertise in the interest of people in South Africa and Africa who experience hearing loss and related communication barriers.

DeafNET is an international organisation that operates on the African continent and adjacent Indian Ocean Islands. On 12 September 2012, DeafNET was registered with the Department of Social Development as a non-profit organisation with NPO no. 104 – 108 and with the South African Revenue Services as a Public Benefit Organisation with Section 18A status, PBO Number 930 039459. DeafNET's office is located on the campus of the De Le Bat School for the Deaf in Worcester.

Its main objectives are the particularising, exchange and dissemination of knowledge, expertise and skills in order to empower all persons with hearing loss and related communication barriers on the African continent to achieve their full potential.

These objectives are achieved among others by advocacy, facilitating and promoting education, development, training, social services, spiritual and mental well-being and social justice to such persons.

The objectives are furthermore achieved through the promotion of Sign Language and other preferred means of communication of persons with Deafness, including appropriate utilisation of assistive devices.

DeafNET is committed to contribute to the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and fully supports the Eight Millennium Goals of the United Nations to make the world a safer and better place, and which makes provision to specifically address the unique needs of deaf persons and their families.

## Vision

Our vision is to be a world class network of knowledge and expertise in the interest of people in Africa who experience Deafness and related communication barriers.

## Mission

- To particularise, exchange and disseminate knowledge and expertise on issues relating to people who experience Deafness and related communication barriers;
- To empower them, their families and their communities through research and training;
- To promote their human rights in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (UNCRPD);
- To promote the improvement of health, well-being and quality of life of people with hearing loss and their families through accessible, available, affordable and appropriate services, training and media.

# OVERVIEW

## Training Programmes

- Red Star Project
- Leadership and Management
- Multi Media
- Social Competency
- Sign Language
- HIV/Aids

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## Skills Development Programme

- Scholarship Programme
- BeeKeeping Project

## Quadrenial Africa Conference

- DeafNET Africa Conference

## Campaigns

- Deaf Awareness and Marketing
- Business Projects

1. Sign Language Training
2. Interpreting Services
3. Multimedia
4. Printing Facilities

## Research

- Red Star (Review & Toolkit)
- Deaf Education & Programmes

## Information Dissemination

- Multimedia Toolkits
- Sign Language Products
- Deaf Awareness

# Our Regions



# Red Star Training Programme

The Red Star training method is DeafNET's Flagship programme and it was developed as a process or technique to be used by educators from Deaf Schools throughout Africa to achieve an increased awareness and a better understanding of a reading and written language via sign language.



The Red Star Process (RSP) is an intervention programme that offers its participants a deeper, more in-depth understanding of reading and written language via sign language. To date educators from Deaf schools throughout Africa have received this training to empower the Deaf learners at their schools and we are now introducing this training method to all educators across Africa, including South Africa.

The Red Star Process offers a bilingualism approach that was developed in South Africa by Ms Ina Senekal, an educator at the De la Bat School for the Deaf in Worcester (Western Cape, South Africa) and follows an experiential learning format. Ms Senekal defines RSP as a process used by educators to increase awareness and better understanding of the sentence construction of a reading and written language via sign language and the senses. It is based on natural language development processes and exposes learners to meaningful experiences, and the assimilation of information and expression.



When measuring the success of the intervention, it is anticipated that changes will occur in academic performance, classroom participation, interaction with the family and community involvement.

This is assessed through pre-intervention surveys that provide a baseline from which progress may be measured, and monitoring feedback once the training has taken place.

## Outcomes

- Empower teachers with skills and methodology to impart reading and writing skills for Deaf learners;
- Empower sign language skills in Deaf learners;
- Equip Deaf learners with literacy and communication abilities.

# Social Competence Model (SoCoMo)

Social competence is defined as the ability to handle social interactions within a predominantly hearing environment more effectively. In other words, social competence refers to getting along well with others, being able to form and maintain close relationships, and responding in adaptive ways in social settings.

The Social Competence Model is a coaching and development model founded in developmental psychology and behavioural psychology.

It has 4 primary objectives:

- Reinforce competent behaviour and decrease incompetent behaviour,
- Acquire expertise that helps to sustain balance between skills (social and personal) and tasks (developmental and communal),
- Establish a support network to cope with life events, social and disability-related stress; and
- Strength resilience.

It is important to foster children's social competence as they develop many skills and concepts during their early childhood years; these will serve as the foundation for their later success in school, their entry into the workforce, and their role as citizens. Throughout the programme, the individual's daily routine is used as a stage for learning different social skills.

This programme is presented to Deaf persons in Africa who experience hearing loss and related communication barriers. This includes Deaf leaders, learners, students, elderly persons, and care givers.

# Leadership and Management Training

DeafNET's Leadership and Management Programme, also called 'to equip to serve and lead program' is designed to develop potential Deaf leaders through guidance, training and inspiration. The workshop provides training to lead, sustain and coordinate projects in the field of social development in Deaf communities and to equip Deaf leaders of the National Associations of the Deaf. In addition, the workshop aims to strengthen the skills, competencies and abilities of the Deaf in Africa to serve the Deaf community.

Purpose of the training:

- To capacitate Deaf leaders to serve Deaf communities effectively and relevantly;
- To promote and support equal education and opportunities for Deaf persons;
- To sensitize the public and private sectors with regard to deafness and Sign language;
- To promote the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

The objectives for the training are to equip leaders and trainers with the following:

- Appropriate advocacy and awareness-raising skills to be able to contribute to the implementation of the UNCRPD in society;
- Skills to coordinate activities for the promotion of the health and well-being of Deaf persons and their families in the relevant countries through accessible services;
- Skills to do training in the field of public education and awareness, leadership and management, communication, and project management.

# Multimedia Services

Literacy and numeracy skills are a major concern in Deaf education. Cognitive theory of multimedia learning suggests that the learning process through graphics increases learning abilities and it increases the learners' interest in the learning process. Deaf individuals are highly responsive to visual tools including video and photographic elements and these can be structured in a way that is harmonious and will maximise the learning process and ensure the empowerment of Deaf persons through knowledge. . There is a critical need to develop and reproduce practical programme tools that can be more accessible to Deaf persons, educators, organisations and schools. These include Deaf and Hearing friendly tools and it comprises out of:

- Multimedia toolkits (see HIV/Aids Programme)
- DVD development
- Graphic design
- Videography – production and post production
- Development of Posters to address critical issues e.g. HIV/Aids, Basic Sign Language, Elections, etc.

Development is undertaken by DeafNET making use of in-house systems, own dedicated staff resources and processes to reduce costs.

## HIV/Aids Programme

- To provide Deaf accessible HIV/AIDs information and education programmes with supporting visual training & informational material
- To provide a toolkit for home-based-care workers to use during HIV Counselling and Testing (HCT), Advocacy and prevention education in settings like offices, factories, rural settings, schools, counselling rooms, prevention and care programmes, training and awareness programmes, clinics, churches and outreach teams.
- To supply highly visual toolkits to selected Deaf leaders, professionals and community based care workers in all six regions of DeafNET and the Africa Contact Group for Mental Health and Deafness

### HIV/AIDS CUBE TOOLKIT CONTENT



The HIV/AIDS Toolkit consists of 1 big HIV cube, 1 small HIV cube, a leaflet, 1 DVD (in Sign Language with subtitles in French and English) containing a guide for the use of the toolkit, a leaflet in French and English, and a HIV poster. The HIV/Aids Cube is a 7cm picture cube that presents the basic facts on HIV and AIDS in pictures in a clear and simple way. The Cube is available in standard 7cm sizes as well as a big HIV/Aids Cube for training purposes. The HIV/AIDS Cubes are 7 panel picture cubes that allow everyone to share a message in a clear, visual and simple way.

Toolkits can also be developed to address other health and environmental challenges such as malaria, Ebola, Zika virus etc, thereby ensuring that these messages reach the Deaf community.

# Sign Language Training

Persons with hearing loss may use a language that uses their bodies and the space around their bodies to convey meaning. This language is called Sign Language.

There are extremely limited resources available to educators at schools who wish to learn Sign Language. The children, who rely on the visual medium for most of their information, are thus often taught by educators who are not competent or have limited competence in a visual language.

Should Deaf people need to visit the doctor, the pharmacy, the bank, the police etc, the likelihood is extremely low that any of the persons there will have a basic competency of Sign Language. Therefore Deaf people are faced with daily enormous challenges just to communicate.

The inability of the broad public to understand the principles of visual communication and a lack of knowledge of Sign Language leads to several hundreds of thousands of people to struggle just to understand and be understood.

Demands from activists for the rights of Deaf people, requirements of the UNCRPD call on the public and private sectors in society to give equal status to Sign Language.

Extreme pressure is placed on educators of the Deaf to use Sign Language as medium for teaching in schools for the Deaf.

However, there exists a lack of provision of appropriate facilities for training and acquiring of skills where the public and teachers can learn and reach the level of Sign Language skills/proficiency/fluency required for the tasks they must perform as educators, and as general service providers.

Hearing parents of Deaf children find themselves in a desperate situation in their quest to effectively communicate with their children. The same with Deaf parents and their hearing children.

This program provides one of the most profound needs for communication pertaining to Deaf persons in society and will undoubtedly contribute towards the provision of training to Educators, the public and private sector, and general service providers by bridging the communication gap that currently exists.

DeafNET offers a short Sign Language course for educators and employees to assist them to deal with the Deaf or people suffering with Hearing loss.

The programme is accredited and NQF Level 5.



# Scholarship Programme

The promotion of education and training is an important activity for DeafNET as we seek to empower young girls that are Deaf or suffer with hearing loss by offering them the opportunity to further their education.

DeafNET allocates a bursary to young Deaf persons from Africa to access a qualification in the field of their choice at the National Institute of the Deaf (NID) College in Worcester, South Africa, or at any relevant and accessible training institution.

Accredited training provides opportunities for job placement as well as the opportunity to become full participating members of society. The intensity of the need for this service becomes more and more evident throughout the involvement in the program. The eagerness of the students in succeeding and defying all odds have been proved by the fact that many Deaf individuals would be able to have a positive change of future if given this opportunity.

Every scholarship program takes place over a period of two years and it includes all reasonable expenses e.g. flight tickets, transport, accommodation and meals, tuition, class fees, permits and visas, learning material and equipment, toiletries, and a monthly stipend.

## Interpreter Services

Sign Language Interpreters (SLI) are the voice of Deaf persons.

Sign Language Interpreting is fundamental in communication with Deaf persons.

DeafNET provides professional interpreting services to Corporate's, Governmental Agencies and Civil Society, translating the spoken word into Sign Language, allowing Deaf persons to have access to information and knowledge.



# Beekeeping Project

DeafNET aims to empower the Deaf with practical skills through our Beekeeping project, thereby contributing to poverty alleviation and by promoting sustainable development initiatives for Deaf people within rural areas.

This project was first launched in Uganda. There was an overwhelming response after a needs assessment was conducted by the National Association for the Deaf in Nigeria, Uganda, Kenya, Ghana, Tanzania, Sierra Leone and Swaziland.

It clearly shows that beekeeping is a project that can address inclusiveness and poverty alleviation, and specifically among the Deaf community in rural communities.

This project's primary objective is to reduce poverty among the Deaf in rural communities and provide an ongoing income for Deaf people.

Apiculture is the rearing of honeybees for production of honey and other bee products. It is mostly being practiced in the rural areas but it is regarded as one of the economic activities that has the potential for contributing to poverty reduction in the Deaf community.

The goal of this project is to encourage sustainable livelihoods by providing Deaf communities with beekeeping skills in the agricultural sector, so that they can earn an income and get access to the economy, thereby becoming contributing members of society.



# Our Accomplishments

The early beginnings of DeafNET can be traced back to the reach-out-and-share programmes of the National Institute for the Deaf (NID) that started in 1975. Initiatives that have contributed to the forming of DeafNET and by which we measure our impact include:

- Since 1992: The Zwelethemba Community Project
- 1997–1999: Assistance with the planning and establishment of the Schenkenfelden Lebenswelt Centre for Deaf adults with multiple disabilities near Linz in Austria
- 2004 – 2007: Serving on the mental health experts' panel of the World Federation of the Deaf
- 2004, 2007 and 2011: Participation at the World Congresses of the World Federation of the Deaf in The presentation of the Africa Workshop on Mental Health and Deafness in 2004
- 2005: The establishment of the Africa Contact Group for Mental Health and Deafness
- 2005: The presentation of the 3rd Mental Health and Deafness World Congress
- Since 2006: Leadership and Management training workshops for Deaf leaders in South Africa and other countries on the African continent including the adjacent Indian Ocean Islands.
- 2011: 3rd Mental Health & Deafness Conference (ACGMHD), Swaziland.
- 2014 to date: 3 students enrolled in our Scholarship Programme have successfully completed their studies; we currently have 2 studies enrolled.
- 2016: 4th DeafNET Africa Conference held in Johannesburg; resolutions & declaration (tools to partner with government and DPO's to serve and change lives for the better for Deaf persons in Africa)
- PHD student from Malawi is currently enrolled at the University of Stellenbosch to research our Red Star project;
- Deaf leaders actively implementing our HIV/Aids project at schools and churches in Africa since 2013;
- Bee Keeping project in Uganda growing with trained Deaf beekeepers and a Deaf project manager appointed;
- Deaf leaders: representing Deaf community and DeafNET on international platforms, such as conferences, sports arena, education, etc

## Financial & Governance Info

DeafNET Centre of Knowledge is a Non-Profit Company registered with the South African Revenue Services (SARS) as a Section 18A company.

Not for Profit organisations play a significant role in society as they take a shared responsibility with Government for the social and development needs of the country.

Preferential tax treatment is designed to assist Non-Profit organisations by augmenting their financial resources. A taxpayer making a bona fide donation in cash or of property in kind to a section 18A-approved organisation is entitled to a deduction from taxable income if the donation is supported by the necessary section 18A receipt.

# Motivation of Necessity



With up to 2% of the children born in Africa being born Deaf or acquiring acute hearing loss during childhood, the number of children who could potentially benefit from our programs is very large.

Although the majority of hearing loss is due to unknown causes, medications (like anti-malarial prophylactics) and illnesses (measles, meningitis, mumps etc.) also play a role. Figures differ from country to country regarding the number of children and the cause of the hearing loss.

It is absolutely vital that children be able to read and write in order for them to function in society. Our projects aim to assist to educate children in a classroom scenario so that they participate & enjoy their education, but also help them to participate in community affairs.

Our ultimate goal is to provide the tools and resources to as many Deaf organisations and schools for the Deaf as possible, and to empower teachers, learners, Deaf leaders, and communities and increase their participation, engagement and interaction, and inclusivity.

Deaf individuals are largely restricted from entering or gaining access to the normal labour market as they are sometimes perceived as less or differently able.

There exists an urgent need to address this inequality through training and education. It is imperative for the Deaf community to improve their ability to access mainstream labour markets and improve their financial independence and thereby their self-esteem.

The best resource for this upliftment is via education.