

WFD – Korean Federation for the Protection of the Disabled (KFPD) - Memorandum of Understanding

WFD, as the first international disability organisation, signed a Memorandum of Understanding for cooperation with the North Korean disability organisation on 9th of February 2012 in Helsinki, Finland.

The signed agreement recognises of the strengthening the cooperation between the two organisations bring mutual benefit to both parties and also to the world deaf community. It aims to develop cooperation between the two organisations with the view of further improving the living conditions and equal opportunities of North Korean deaf people in all fields including deaf education, deaf culture, arts and deaf sports.

The agreement is also a significant first step for deaf North Koreans to join the world deaf community as WFD and KFPD combine their efforts to facilitate and promote the foundation of a National Association of the Deaf in DPR Korea (North Korea).

WFD History a Labor of Love for Author Jack R. Gannon

In 1994 author Jack R. Gannon did not know that writing a history of the World Federation of the Deaf would become a part of his family's life for seventeen years. That's how long it took to document the first fifty years of the WFD. Now Dr. Gannon can look back and enjoy the fruits of his labor.

Creating a book began with three authors: Dragoljub Vukotić of the former state of Yugoslavia, who was elected vice-president of the WFD at the founding congress in 1951 and then elected as president in 1955. He served in that role until 1987 and continued to be involved in developing the book until his death in 1997. Cesare Magarotto was the hearing son of the founder of the Ente Nazionale Sordo-Muti (ENS) of Italy and a principle organiser of the Founding Congress of the WFD in Rome. His dedication to the WFD as general secretary is evident from his 36 years of service (1951-1987). The third member of the trio was Jack R. Gannon of the U.S.A. When colleagues Vukotić and Magarotto passed on, Dr. Gannon alone remained to complete the task.

Vukotić, always gracious and giving, had compiled his personal reflections of the WFD congresses he had presided over. His text was often a starting point for understanding the work of WFD. Yet there was much more information needed to understand the nature of the times, events at the meetings, and direction of the WFD. Writing the WFD history involved intense research and contact with almost every national

association. Dr. Gannon amassed volumes of material sent by organisations and colleagues who shared the history of deaf education and life in their region. Simply keeping track of incoming mail, faxes, email and occasional personal deliveries became a challenge. The complexity of the task was compounded by language differences, conflicting information and ever-changing technology.

The WFD History publication offers more than a synopsis of meetings; it is a window into the landscape of life for deaf people from every continent. Dr. Gannon took great care to bring context to the task by incorporating the history leading up to the 1951 founding of WFD, as well as a discussion on the great diversity of deaf people worldwide. Within each decade of WFD actions, Dr. Gannon includes summaries of what happened during the time, and each Congress is analysed for actions and changes. Quotes, some uplifting and others disturbing, give a sense of the times and issues faced.

Dr. Gannon insisted on inclusion of personal biographies of each awardee of the International Solidarity Merit Award. While others encouraged him to leave this tedious task and not include it in the publication, Dr. Gannon (who might be considered slightly stubborn) put his foot down on behalf of the individual leaders. He argued that to understand the stories of these recipients was a path to grasping the incredible challenges the WFD faced. Their biographical information would help readers understand how the WFD changed over time. Their work also demonstrated the ways that WFD adapted to new ideas, seeing what should be retained and recognising what to jettison.

Dr. Jack and Mrs. Rosalyn Gannon were awarded the WFD International Solidarity Merit Award at the XVI World Congress in Durban, South Africa. Nominated by the USA National Association of the Deaf with great appreciation for their dedication to increasing world understanding of Deaf history and Deaf life, the Gannons were greatly honoured by the recognition. "We studied the biographical information of all of the International Solidarity Merit Awardees over the past 50 years," said Dr. Gannon. "Their stories reveal the barriers they worked through, over and around, the attitudes they faced and changed, and the connection they felt with deaf people from their home countries as well as those from far away. Their work and commitment touched and inspired us. To now receive the same award and be listed among them is deeply touching."

Dr. Gannon dedicated the WFD History publication "to the visionary founders of the World Federation of the Deaf, to those who lit the flame for our national organisations and to the leaders who continue to carry the torch." May we all, like Dr. Jack and Mrs. Rosalyn Gannon, "carry the torch" for the next generation.

Written by Jean Bergey, Gallaudet University

To order the WFD History publication, see **Page 20**.

BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

WORLD FEDERATION OF THE DEAF: A HISTORY, by Jack R. Gannon

World Federation of the Deaf: A History is a comprehensive overview of the first 50 years of the WFD. From its foundation as an idea during a chance meeting of friends from Italy, Austria and Yugoslavia in 1949, through its 50th Anniversary in 2001, this book covers it all! Highlights of the quadrennial WFD Congresses, board meetings and the decades as well as quotations taken from Congress proceedings show our changing world views through the issues of the day. Also included are biographies of all WFD award winners, histories of the Deaf associations in each member country of the WFD, and a colour section of international stamps recognising the deaf and disabled communities.

Jack R. Gannon – “My hope is that this book will become an important resource for Deaf people everywhere to better understand the remarkable efforts of our leaders who founded and sustained the WFD and our national organisations of the Deaf. At the same time this book can serve to enlighten those who are not deaf and share our struggle for human rights and the celebration of human difference.”

This soft cover book has 566 pages and has over 250 photos, including endnotes and index. The book costs USD \$80.00 and is available through National Association of the Deaf, (NAD) USA. Shipping charges will be calculated based on weight and destination. Upon receiving your order, NAD will contact you with the shipping cost. Brokerage fees, taxes, duties and customs charged by the country package are being shipped to be the responsibility of the purchaser.

Here is the website link to order the book: <http://www.nad.org/WFDbook>

PERSPECTIVES ON THE CONCEPT AND DEFINITION OF INTERNATIONAL SIGN, Dr. Johanna Mesch

International Sign (IS) is commonly used at the General Assembly (GA) of the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) and of the International Committee of Sports for the Deaf, and also in many other international meetings and events. The status of International Sign as a language has been debated for a long time due to its flexibility and possibilities as a communication system. A dictionary of Gestuno (The British Association of the Deaf 1975) was published for use in international communication, especially for conferences. It had a

limited vocabulary, and did not include any grammar. The system of Gestuno itself is no longer used to communicate. International Sign Language (ISL) is the other most used term. Today, the term International Sign (IS) is preferred because IS varies depending on the language background of the signers who use it.

The publication on the **Perspectives on the Concept and Definition of International Sign** is now available in PDF format from the World Federation of the Deaf General Secretariat. If you would like a copy of it, please be in contact with Ms. Phillipa Sandholm, email: [phillipa.sandholm\(at\)kl-deaf.fi](mailto:phillipa.sandholm(at)kl-deaf.fi)

COUNTRY NAME-SIGN

A popular book published for WFD (2003) - Collection of data: Japan Institute for Sign Language Studies and Tomas Hedberg, Swedish National Association of the Deaf. The Country Name-Sign books are available in the WFD General Secretariat.

If you would like to order a copy, please do contact by email: [orders\(at\)wfdeaf.org](mailto:orders(at)wfdeaf.org) and then we will send you an invoice for payment of the order.

DEAF PEOPLE & HUMAN RIGHTS

A report written by Ms Hilde Haualand, researcher and Mr Colin Allen, project coordinator and report assistant.

The “Deaf People and Human Rights” report is based on a survey that is, up until now, the largest knowledge database on the situation of Deaf people. The lives of Deaf people in 93 countries, most of which are developing countries, are addressed. The Swedish National Association of the Deaf and the World Federation of the Deaf initiated the survey, with funding from the Swedish Agency for International Development Co-operation (Sida) and the Swedish Organisations of Disabled Persons International Aid Association (Shia).

The report is available on the WFD Website in English and International Sign. You can also order a DVD of the report in International Sign for postage fee (11 €).

If you wish to receive the DVD, please contact WFD General Secretariat Office at [orders\(at\)wfdeaf.org](mailto:orders(at)wfdeaf.org).