

GUIDE TO

# ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATION FOR DEAF WOMEN

Recommendations for adapting support services  
through technology and in person.



**Guide to accessible communication for Deaf women.  
Recommendations for adapting support services  
through technology and in person.**

Publication date: November 2020.

**Translation**

Dwain Richardson via UN Volunteering

**English Layout**

Cristina Sánchez via UN Volunteering

**Authors**

Mariana Reuter, Sordas sin Violencia  
Ester Mancera, Sordas sin Violencia  
Elisa Mottini, Sordas sin Violencia  
Sabrina Grinschpun, Sordas sin Violencia

[www.sordassinviolencia.com](http://www.sordassinviolencia.com)

**Production**

Mariana Vaccaro, Mujeres Urbanas

**Design**

Majo Galanda, Mujeres Urbanas

This guide is produced by Sordas sin Violencia, a programme designed to help Deaf women in situations of gender-based violence. In producing this guide, group and individual consultations were held with many Deaf women in a number of provinces spanning different regions across Argentina. These women were of all ages and educational levels and used different methods of communication.

Sordas sin Violencia has support from the Spotlight Initiative, a global partnership between the European Union and the United Nations to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls. Argentina has placed emphasis on eradicating femicides. Sordas sin Violencia also has active support from civil society, unions, and the private and academic sectors.



<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4. Legal framework</b>	<b>23</b>
1.1 Adopting a proactive mindset: seeing is changing	6	4.1 Women's rights	24
1.2 Sharing success stories to develop inclusive policies	8	4.2 Rights of Persons with Disabilities	25
		4.3 The right to communicate	25
<b>2. Violence against Deaf women</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5. Challenges</b>	<b>27</b>
2.1 Deaf women	10		
2.2 Gender-based violence + inaccessible support services = double oppression	11		
<b>3. An accessible support process for Deaf women</b>	<b>12</b>		
3.1 Publicity	13		
3.2 Languages	14		
Spanish: the other language in Argentina			
Argentine Sign Language: a natural language			
3.3 Accessible forms of communication	16		
Audio support			
Written support			
Audiovisual (video) support			
3.4 Effective communication	19		
3.5 Deaf culture from a gender perspective: an innovative methodology	20		

1

# Introduction

This guide is a response to the **need to adapt support and consultation services for women facing gender-based violence** through technological and face-to-face mechanisms aimed at including people from the Deaf community<sup>1</sup>.

Argentina’s legislation acknowledges that women and children with disabilities are often at greater risk of experiencing violence, injuries and abuse inside and outside their homes<sup>2</sup>.

Methods of communication and guidance need to be adapted to make them accessible for women in the Deaf community. Emergency systems operating through telephone services should be designed through an inclusive framework that considers Deaf women who do not speak, read or write Spanish proficiently. Argentine Sign Language (ASL) is their natural language of communication.



**We need to identify the barriers to break down to make forms of communication accessible.**

**It is essential to include Deaf team members to manage public policies and ensure they are truly inclusive.**

1 The CAS (Confederación Argentina de Sordos) adheres to the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) and therefore capitalizes “Deaf” to identify people using sign language and recognized as part of the Deaf linguistic community. When “deaf” is lowercased, it refers to people with hearing loss, a medical condition helped by audiological rehabilitation.

2 Convención sobre los derechos de las personas con discapacidad, Ley 26.378. Available at <http://servicios.infoleg.gob.ar/infolegInternet/anexos/140000-144999/141317/norma.html> (in Spanish only)

# 1.1

## Adopting a proactive mindset: seeing is changing



This document will seek to **raise awareness of the barriers Deaf women encounter** while finding critical ways to escape from situations of gender-based violence. Clearly identifying barriers is the first step in removing them.

Implementing practical measures is the second step. **This means making recommendations about adapting support processes** that are inaccessible and providing user-friendly information with an intersectional approach from a gender-based, rights-based and disability-based perspective.



*I needed to reach out for help several times. However, I felt discouraged.*

*I first asked someone in my workplace to call the telephone hotline, as I couldn't communicate myself. I didn't feel comfortable confiding in strangers.*



**L.R., 43,**  
a mother of two who escaped from a situation of violence.

The Deaf women without violence programme, the SSV (Sordas sin Violencia), started out in a group of Deaf women and other hearing professionals in 2014. This programme developed the first mechanism specifically created to serve and support Deaf women in situations of violence and facilitate access to comprehensive public support services that are available to hearing women.

This initiative was developed by two civil society organizations: **Enlaces Territoriales para la Equidad de Género**<sup>3</sup> – ‘Territorial Links for Gender Equality’ – a non-profit association that works to prevent and eradicate gender-based violence from a rights-based and intercultural perspective, and FUNDASOR<sup>4</sup> (Fundación de Padres y Familiares de Personas Sordas para su Integración), which serves the needs of families with Deaf members and makes communication accessible for the entire family.

**To empower Deaf women** and help them achieve autonomy and live a life free of violence, Sordas sin Violencia created a support model that has proven effective.



3 Additional information about Enlaces Territoriales para la Equidad de Género can be found at <https://www.enlaces.org.ar/sobre-enlaces-ingles.html>

4 Additional information about FUNDASOR can be found at <https://www.fundasor.org.ar/> (in Spanish only)

**1.2**

## Sharing success stories to develop inclusive policies

This reference material was put together based on findings from the work of Sordas sin Violencia in making services fully accessible. **It contains resources to adapt communication services for Deaf women.** When we think about gender-based violence, the first call or request for information deserves particular attention. Accessibility is the decisive factor that opens or closes a door to a woman in need of help.

**We would like to share some success stories to educate and raise awareness about Deaf culture among the public, and particularly among those in public service.**



### This guide was designed as a tool

For those working in **public and private service sectors** and those responsible for ensuring access to such services.





2

# Violence against Deaf women

## 2.1

### Deaf women

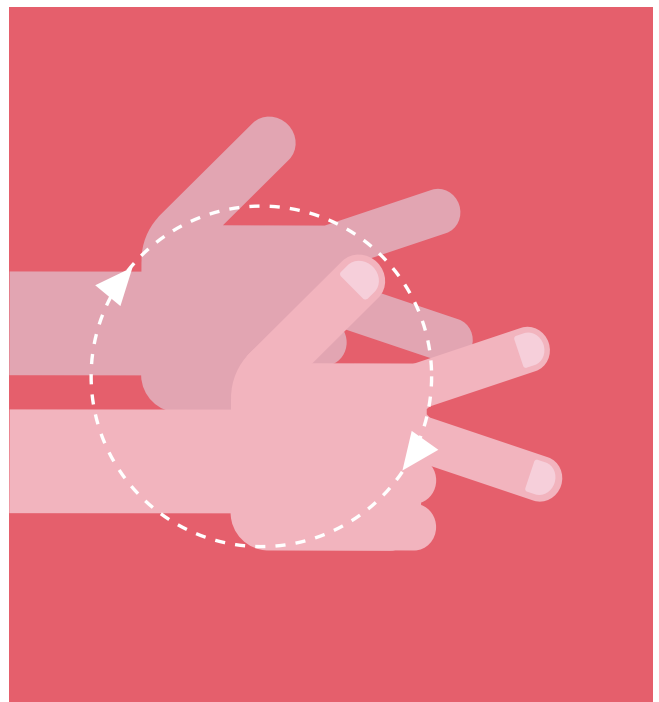
A wide variety of women and forms of communication can be found within a group of Deaf people. **These women communicate in sign language, which in some cases was learned early in life, while others learned it later upon coming into contact with the Deaf community and then adopted it as part of their identity.**

It is more suitable to refer to these individuals as 'Deaf' than 'non-hearing', 'hearing-impaired' or 'people with hearing losses'. These titles place emphasis on the loss of hearing and were widely circulated by the predominant medical community. 'Deaf-mute' and 'deaf-and-dumb' are pejorative and inaccurate because Deaf people do not suffer damage to their vocal cords and are not mute: **they communicate in sign language.**

Deafness is a cultural identity. Using sign language means you belong to a culture that experiences life visually, and one that is constructed through its own unique way of perceiving and representing the world.



Deafness is a cultural identity.



## 2.2

## Gender-based violence + inaccessible support services = double-edged oppression

Historical women's movements in Argentina have grown and become mass movements over the last decade. They have sparked major protests **against misogynist violence in the streets, positioning their core demands in public and media circles.**

The mass media has started to identify as femicides/feminicides the killing of women simply because they were women, address the need for comprehensive sexual education in schools, and lay on the table the issue of legalizing abortion. Problems that first arose in private spheres started to take on a social dimension, denaturing sexism and other gender-based aggression. This kind of information that raises awareness about the subject and makes it possible to identify violence against women is available in Spanish, which is not the language of Argentina's Deaf community.

Newspapers, websites, television<sup>5</sup> and radio stations across Argentina are not accessible to the Deaf. Consequently, information about women's rights is not shared among Deaf communities. The lack of ownership of this issue normalizes the abuse women suffer.

**Furthermore,** many mechanisms offering support services for women who suffer violence are still not suitable for helping Deaf women, as there are neither Argentine Sign Language interpreters nor Deaf mediators. The lack of accessibility leads to mistrust; many women prefer not to risk being victimized again, making Deaf women who need help invisible.

The State's role as a guarantor of human rights is decisive to ensure Deaf women and girls enjoy a life free of violence and discrimination. Public policies must consider the Deaf community, for it is the State's responsibility to provide access to institutions that warn, guide and protect women.

It is a public responsibility to guarantee effective communication. Deaf women who approach any support service are in a critical and dangerous situation. It cannot, however, be left to these women to make themselves heard. Mechanisms and tools that consider their language and provide proper treatment are key.



**Public policies must consider the Deaf community, for it is the State's responsibility to provide access to institutions that warn, guide and protect women.**

<sup>5</sup> This medium becomes accessible when accompanied with Spanish subtitles and a Spanish Argentine Sign Language (ASL) interpreter.

3

**An  
accessible  
support  
process for  
Deaf women**

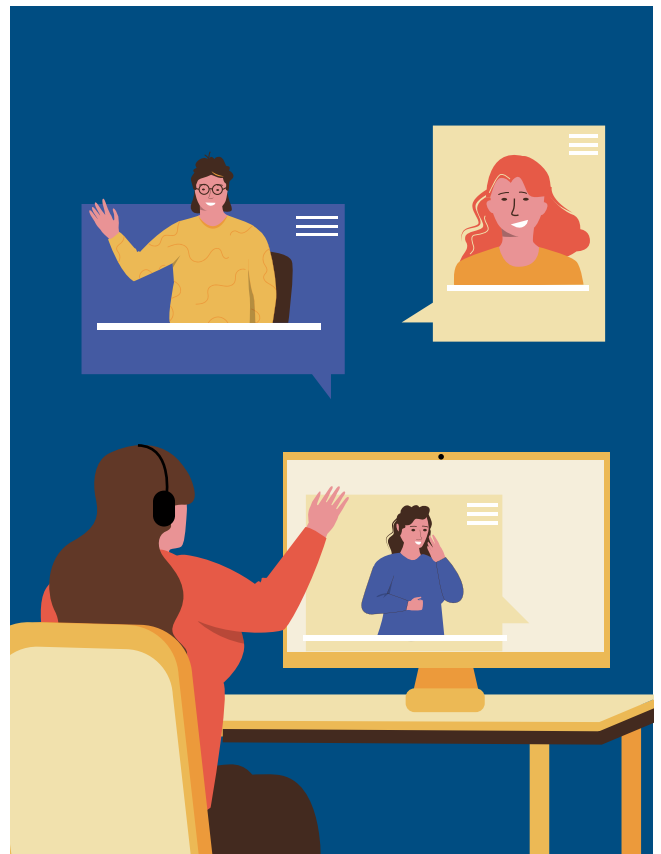
Support services specialized in violence must be accessible for Deaf women to find help. This means several factors must be considered in communication strategies to ensure effectiveness, including **the way the service is publicized, language used, forms of communication, and linguistic and cultural respect** to promote Deaf engagement and integration within teams.

### 3.1

## Publicity

People first need to know there are public places they can turn to in an emergency and how to contact them. However, many of these services are publicized as 'hotlines', and are even better known by their number than their name (e.g., 911 for emergencies).

Accessible services for the Deaf must go hand in hand with publicity campaigns designed **to reach out to the Deaf community, using Argentine Sign Language and subtitles.**



## 3.2 Languages

Many environment-related factors have a hand in communication among Deaf women, e.g., whether there are hearing or Deaf people in the family, the schools they attended, the level of education attained, and socioeconomic status.

A widespread perception among the hearing community is that Spanish is also the native language of the Deaf in Argentina, assuming that the Deaf can read and write Spanish even though they cannot hear. But for most Deaf women, Argentine Sign Language (ASL) is the primary language through which they communicate and belong to the community. Spanish is a second language<sup>6</sup> they only know partially.

### ES Spanish: the other language in Argentina

Spanish is the official language in Argentine society, in which the Deaf community is immersed, and for them Spanish functions as a tool to converse with those who can hear. Spanish is used only when needed at work, in schools and out in public; this is the other language<sup>7</sup>. **A large percentage of Argentina's Deaf community cannot understand Spanish<sup>8</sup>.** The Deaf women who use Spanish work with a number of resources at various levels of proficiency

**Orality:** Ability to verbally express oneself in Spanish.

**Lip reading:** Understanding spoken Spanish by visually interpreting lip movement.

**Reading written Spanish**

**Writing in Spanish**



### Argentine Sign Language: a natural language

Argentine Sign Language has visual and spatial features, with phonological components such as movement, stops, handshape, location, palm orientation, and expression/non-manual signals that combined provide meaning. Like other languages, Argentine Sign Language is not universal; it comes with variations by age and region and is independently developed within each Deaf community<sup>9</sup>.

**Argentine Sign Language has no written form.**

**Argentine Sign Language has its own grammar.**

<sup>6</sup> In Argentina, the Deaf learn Spanish as a second language through explicit teaching, whereas Argentine Sign Language is visual and can be naturally acquired through contact with others using the same language.

<sup>7</sup> Curso de Lengua de Señas Argentina, Parte 1. María Ignacia Massone and Rocío Anabel Martínez, 2012, page 37 (in Spanish only).

<sup>8</sup> According to "Sistematización SSV PNUD," a report by Sordas sin Violencia, the Deaf community has one of the highest levels of illiteracy among people aged 40 to 79, second only to people with intellectual disabilities. Illiteracy is more prevalent among people 50 and older (between 4% and 6% of the Deaf community). Programa Sordas Sin Violencia: Servicio de Asistencia, Acompañamiento y Acceso a la Información de Mujeres Sordas Víctimas de Violencias, page 2 (in Spanish only).

<sup>9</sup> Guía sobre comunicación accesible en Lengua de Señas Argentina, produced by INADI, (in Spanish only).

**This means that sign language components are organized and combined differently from Spanish.**

Given these characteristics, the Spanish written by Deaf people is often structured differently to that of native speakers. To ensure support services that use written communication remain accessible, they must have staff members with training in Argentine Sign Language, able to accurately interpret messages from and for the Deaf, thereby providing full accessibility.

Individuals have **different ASL skill levels and linguistic abilities** within Argentina's Deaf community. When dealing with gender-based violence, Deaf women need to name situations of abuse to identify them. Some terms describing certain key actions have no ASL signs because, like Spanish, ASL is a living, dynamic language that continues to develop.

When enquiring about the circumstance in which Deaf women find themselves, support service professionals need to be aware of and trained to deal with these gaps in the language and implement strategies to explain concepts without signs.



There is no one-to-one match between sign language and spoken language units. It is the meaning behind words that is interpreted from one language to another.

Words such as "abuse," "threat" and "attacker" have no ASL sign, or if such a sign exists, it is not well known. Therefore, each word must be specifically explained, as explained below.

To ask a woman if she has been threatened, it is recommended that specific questions be asked (e.g., 'Did they strangle you?' 'Did they have a knife?' 'Did they shove you?').

Visual material produced by ASL- and Deaf culture-trained professionals, together with Deaf people acting as Deaf consultants, is a great way to define concepts such as a restraining order.

It should not be assumed that a Deaf individual understands the meaning of each word and concept interpreted in sign language. The team needs to ensure that everyone is referring to the same concept and that understanding is mutual.



Words such as "abuse," "threat" and "attacker" have no ASL sign approved by the Deaf community.

### 3.3

## Accessible forms of communication

Communication channels were designed for those capable of hearing. Let us take a look at the barriers Argentina's Deaf community is still faced with when accessing and attempting to make full use of different contact systems.



“How would you like us to communicate?” That is the key question to ask a Deaf person getting in touch for help.

Audio support

NOT ACCESSIBLE



Telephone calls



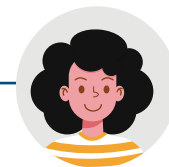
Voice messages and memos

Audio communication leaves Deaf people completely isolated.



***I have a high school student facing a major family problem that's very complicated. I feel I don't have enough information.***

*I don't know what it feels like to call a consulting service helpline. I could never do that. We need to receive more information to help this student and others. This isn't the only situation; there are many others. We need to think about how we can help students in the future.*



**S., Deaf woman**  
who teaches in a school for the Deaf.



**Written support**

NOT FULLY ACCESSIBLE

**A significant percentage of the population is illiterate and cannot access written support**



Email



Text messages



Online chats

Only a fraction of people within Argentina’s Deaf community are bilingual, i.e., they understand written Spanish in addition to Argentine Sign Language. Even fewer can write Spanish.

People in the Deaf community who have knowledge of Spanish are met with additional difficulties:

Spanish has a **different grammatical structure** than ASL, the natural language for the Deaf.

**Vocabulary.** Given the lack of access to communication and information, there is a breadth of unfamiliar terms and concepts.

The Deaf **perceive their environment by sight.** Focusing on writing in the chat box while also paying attention to one’s surroundings makes interaction difficult.

To develop empathy with their interlocutors and decode messages correctly, those receiving messages from the support centre must be trained in Deaf culture and rely on a Deaf person working as a cultural and linguistic mediator. The hearing community is generally unable to understand the written expression of the Deaf.

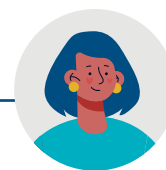


Sentences in any language must be written **clearly and concisely.**



**I wrote text messages in WhatsApp. I didn’t feel comfortable, though, because chatting makes you nervous.**

*You’ve got to pay attention to your surroundings and write at the same time!*



**L., Deaf woman**  
who tried to contact a support service by chatting in Spanish.

**Audiovisual (video) support**

ACCESSIBLE



**Video calls**



**Video files**

Face-to-face conversations in person or through virtual platforms make it possible to communicate in sign language provided non-manual aspects, movements and hands can be seen clearly (medium close shot). This is crucial for communication.

**To get a clear view during video calls, give the points below some thought.**



**Turns.** Wait your turn to speak; do not speak at the same time. Whether the person using sign language is a Deaf woman contacting support services, an interpreter or a mediator, be sure they are in the main display so participants can see them.



**Framing.** People's faces and hands must remain within the camera's field of view, from head to chest (medium close shot).



**Lighting.** To decode non-manual aspects and facial expressions and, occasionally, read people's lips and correctly interpret the direction of movements in space, be sure there is adequate lighting on the head, hands and arms.



**Mouth.** The mouth provides a lot of information for the Deaf. Avoid blocking the mouth with microphones, face masks or other items.



**Clear screen.** Check that no superimposed graphics (such as banners, slides, watermarks and logos) or other objects obstruct vision.



**Clothing.** Articles of clothing must contrast with skin tone and have strong, plain colours without patterns. This will make for clearer visual communication, preventing fatigue and distraction.



**Occasionally, Deaf women in my community consult me to help them contact medical or other professionals.**

*They also ask me for advice to communicate better with Zoom; some women use it, others don't, but they all need to express themselves in sign language and feel supported.*



**R.G., a Deaf woman from the Argentine Northwest**

In addition to choosing a technological support that makes it possible to communicate visually, accessible support services for Deaf women must rely on a professional team to serve the aggrieved women empathetically, efficiently and safely. It is crucial to create a team of three people trained in gender-based violence and Deaf culture, including Deaf people, sign language interpreters and specialized professionals.

It is also advisable to replicate a team of three for in-person support services and include Deaf people because they are familiar with their own particular needs.



**It is essential to be familiar with Deaf culture to engage in effective communication with a Deaf person.**

## 3.4

### Effective communication

Deaf culture<sup>11</sup> is predominantly visual, created on the basis of sign language. Communicative interaction among members of this culture is an essential socialization and group cohesion tool. Most social interaction in the Deaf community is between people in Deaf organizations, clubs and other spaces.

Among the Deaf who live among a hearing majority, there is a sense of union and identification grounded in the visuospatial way the Deaf community perceives the world and in their shared experience of discriminatory attitudes from the hearing community.

'Nothing about Us, Without Us'. This is the basic motto of the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It refers to the inclusion of Deaf people in teams working for the Deaf.

<sup>11</sup> Cultural and linguistic identity for the Deaf was acknowledged in the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Article 30, subsection 4.

## 3.5

## Deaf culture from a gender perspective: an innovative methodology

The SSV programme resulted from violations committed against Deaf women through attitudinal and communicational barriers in support centres that should have offered support and help. This experience kickstarted a methodology for action with new characteristics: it is designed from a social perspective of disability with a gender approach. SSV is particularly known for being created by the Deaf and hearing, for and with Deaf women.

**The key feature of a support and information access team for Deaf women who are victims of violence is that it includes three profiles: a professional with training in violence and gender issues, a Deaf mediator and a sign language interpreter.**

“

**A neighbour gave me an address to report violence. As a Deaf person, I wondered how I could resolve my situation.**

*I went anyway, though I was faced with many barriers. Hearing people saw me, but I couldn't communicate with anyone. I felt oppressed. I entered the waiting room and saw another Deaf person. She was there as a mediator for another Deaf woman. I called to her, she saw me, and I told her my entire story. I was full of emotion because it was the first time I could communicate. (...) Little by little, my emotions changed; I started feeling better about myself because I found a solution to everything. It is important that these services have Deaf interpreters and mediators.*

”



**L. was able to escape violence**



## A professional with training in gender-based violence

- Is capable of hearing and deals with cases of gender-based violence.
- Must have familiarity with Deaf culture.
- Establishes communication with Deaf women needing help through the sign language interpreter, who relies on the Deaf mediator.
- Is a team member and communicates mainly in the predominant spoken language. Though the professional does not use sign language, they are prepared to keep a written record of cases for follow-up. **Ideally, they should be trained in sign language. It is key to gain knowledge of the language for more seamless, empathetic communication.**



## Sign language interpreter<sup>12</sup>

- Is a communications practitioner who interprets sign language meaning into the predominant spoken language and vice versa. The interpreter requires specific knowledge of interpretation, such as techniques, methodologies and strategies, and continuous contact with the Deaf community.
- **This involves cognitive work to guarantee the quality of support and requires familiarity with the Deaf culture and training in gender-based violence.**



## A Deaf mediator

- Belongs to the Deaf culture, uses sign language, and masters the predominant spoken language in its written form.
- Receives Deaf women, whom she can connect with through empathetic communication, building comfort and trust.
- Works in a team with the interpreter to ensure effective communication.
- Gives advice on emerging issues relevant to the Deaf community.
- Intervenes during conversations to ensure Deaf women completely understand the information provided and vice versa.
- Must have training in gender and violence as well as familiarity with human rights.
- **This role guarantees effective communication to prevent Deaf women from being victimized again.**

<sup>12</sup> A “sign language interpreter” is the name given to someone who interprets spoken dialogue or signs from one language and culture to the other. “Translators” and “translate” are used to describe the written process from one language to the other. (Ética y procedimiento profesional para Intérpretes de Lengua de Señas, Viviana Burad, 2000 pages 31 and 32). [Spanish only]

## **Empathy**

Empathy opens doors to communication. It is the key component that must be present. If the Deaf think their addressees will not understand them, this will discourage them from seeking help, counselling or protection. They will be sure to be understood when a Deaf mediator is on the other side of the screen or desk.

## **Training**

All team members must be trained in gender-based violence and Deaf culture.

## **Registro de datos y seguimiento**

To facilitate and expedite follow-ups, information about the women supported and help provided must be entered into a system.



# Legal framework

4

## 4.1

## Women's rights

## CEDAW

In 1979, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**. The Convention marked a milestone in the history of women's rights worldwide. Argentina approved the Convention under Argentine law (Ley Nacional 23.179) in 1985. It has benefitted from constitutional status since 1994.

In 1995, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, a plan to promote women's rights, was adopted based on CEDAW. States parties committed to stepping up efforts to ensure **equal enjoyment of all human rights** and fundamental freedoms for **all women and girls** who face multiple barriers such as culture or disability<sup>13</sup>.

The Beijing Platform for Action warns that the failure to protect and promote human rights is a matter of concern to all States. It requires governments to take urgent steps to fight and eliminate violence against women, a strategic goal for governments to **guarantee that women with disabilities, who are especially vulnerable, obtain access to available services and information in relation to violence against women**<sup>14</sup>.

The Beijing Platform for Action stresses that violence against women is exacerbated by social pressures, such as inadequate efforts by public authorities to promote awareness of and enforce existing laws, and the absence of means to address the causes and consequences of violence. It also underscores the need to provide workers holding public positions with training in human rights and set up effective mechanisms to investigate and punish rights violations committed by any public servant<sup>15</sup>.



**In 2011, Argentina strengthened the recognition of violence against women by granting constitutional status** to the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women (known as the '**Convention of Belem do Para**', signed in 1994). It was also endorsed by Argentine law (Ley Nacional) No. 26.485, 'Comprehensive Protection to prevent, punish and eradicate violence against women in areas where they develop their interpersonal relations'.

<sup>13</sup> Beijing Declaration, point 32, page 4. Available at <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPFA%20S.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Beijing Platform Action, Chapter 4, Objective D: "Violence against women". Available at <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPFA%20S.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> Beijing Platform Action, page 105. Available at <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPFA%20S.pdf>



## 4.2 Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Women and girls living with disabilities are subject to many forms of discrimination. They are also exposed to a greater risk of violence in and outside the home, per the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which Argentina ratified under Law No. 26.378 in 2008.

Argentina has committed to taking actions that would ensure people living with disabilities fully and equally benefit from all human rights and basic freedoms. In this regard, the State must ensure there are appropriate forms of support and that all protection services consider age, gender and disability<sup>16</sup>.

In its preamble, the Convention acknowledges that 'disability is an evolving concept and that disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others'. It is crucial that information and communication be accessible.

## 4.3 The right to communicate

The Pact of San José, which has constitutional status in Argentina, acknowledges that the right to freedom of expression includes the right to 'seek, receive, and impart information and ideas of all kinds'<sup>17</sup>. Other rights may be accessed by exercising this key right.

Communication is the main barrier Deaf women face when exercising their rights. In Argentina, the Deaf communicate using their own language, Argentine Sign Language (ASL)<sup>18</sup>.

Language brings people in linguistic communities together. It is worth highlighting that the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights (UDLR) 'proclaims the equality of linguistic rights, without any non-pertinent distinctions between official/non-official... majority/minority languages'<sup>19</sup>.

Though exercising linguistic rights depends mostly on available resources, the Declaration states that it would be unfair to negate the validity of these rights by claiming a lack of means. The Declaration calls for a unified international commitment that compensates for deficits and makes the rights of all people equally viable.

16 Convención sobre los derechos de las personas con discapacidad - Ley 26.378, Artículo 16.

17 American convention on Human Rights "Pact of San Jose, Costa Rica", Article 13.

18 Curso de Lengua de Señas Argentina, Parte 1. María Ignacia Massone y Rocío Anabel Martínez, 2012, page 32.

19 Declaración Universal de Derechos Lingüísticos, page12.

Language groups have 'the right to receive attention in their own language from government bodies and in socioeconomic relations' (Article 3.2, UDLR)<sup>20</sup>.

'All language communities are entitled to have at their disposal whatever means of translation into and from other languages are needed to guarantee the exercise of the rights contained in this Declaration (Article 11, UDLR)'.

'All members of a language community have the right to interrelate with and receive attention from the public authorities in their own language. This right also applies to central, territorial, local and supraterritorial divisions which include the territory to which the language is proper (Article 16, UDLR)'.

**The duty to acknowledge and use Argentine Sign Language in public services remains unfulfilled.** Historically, rights for the Deaf community have been violated due to daily communicational barriers preventing people from fully exercising their rights.



20 Declaración Universal de Derechos Lingüísticos, page 15.

# Challenges 5



When women suffering violence feel encouraged to share their stories and ask for help, they are taking the first crucial step in **escaping from violence. Communication with support and consultation services related to gender-based violence plays a pivotal role.**

Public institutions and the means of contact they offer need to commit to providing accessibility for Deaf women through the State, which provides guidance and emergency services. This will avoid Deaf women from being victims of double oppression when exercising their rights.

It is imperative and vital to adapt public communication platforms and processes to eliminate barriers in access to communication and information for the Deaf. To achieve this, it is essential that Deaf culture be incorporated into support services. This will be possible only by integrating the Deaf into these services.

In this sense, comprehensive work teams are crucial. This means having teams that include an agent trained in gender issues, violence and Deaf culture, a sign language interpreter, and linguistic and cultural Deaf mediator, both also trained in gender issues and violence. This will be the only true way for rights to be restored, strengthening empowerment and the development of a full, violence-free life plan.



Among the Deaf women who shared their experience of contacting public support services, one demand stood out: **a specific public communication channel for the Deaf.** It was suggested that calls be received by a Deaf woman and a sign language interpreter at the same time. Also proposed was the creation of a mobile application offering information about support services and the specific topic of accessibility.



**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

**Burad, V.** (2008). Ética y procedimiento profesional para Intérpretes de Lengua de Señas.

**Convención sobre los Derechos de las Personas con Discapacidad.** (2008). Retrieved from <http://servicios.infoleg.gob.ar/infolegInternet/anexos/140000-144999/141317/norma.htm> [Spanish only]

**INADI.** (s.f.). Comunicación accesible en lengua de señas argentina. Retrieved from <http://inadi.gob.ar/contenidos-digitales/producto/guia-comunicacion-accesible-en-lengua-de-senas-argentina/> [Spanish only]

**Ley de protección integral para prevenir, sancionar y erradicar la violencia contra las mujeres en los ámbitos en que desarrollen sus relaciones interpersonales.** (2009). Retrieved from <http://servicios.infoleg.gob.ar/infolegInternet/anexos/150000-154999/152155/norma.htm> [Spanish only]

**Martinez, M. I.** (2012). La etnografía como punto de partida epistemológico y metodológico & Aspectos sociolingüísticos: comunidad lingüística, lingua franca, diglosia. En Curso de Lengua de Señas Argentina. [Spanish only]

**OAS.** (1969). American convention on Human Rights "Pact of San Jose, Costa Rica". Retrieved from [https://www.oas.org/dil/treaties\\_B-32\\_American\\_Convention\\_on\\_Human\\_Rights.htm](https://www.oas.org/dil/treaties_B-32_American_Convention_on_Human_Rights.htm).

**OAS.** (n.d). Inter-American convention on the prevention, punishment and eradictaio of violence agiants women "Convention of Belem do Para". Retrieved from <http://www.oas.org/juridico/english/treaties/a-61.html>

**Programa Sordas Sin Violencia.** (s.f.). Guía de recomendaciones para el acceso a la justicia de mujeres Sordas víctimas de violencia de género. Retrieved from <https://www.sordassinviolencia.com/sordassinviolencia-Guia-de-recomendaciones.pdf> [Spanish only]

**Programa Sordas Sin Violencia.** (s.f.). Salud integral accesible para mujeres Sordas. Retrieved from [https://www.sordassinviolencia.com/SALUD\\_INTEGRAL\\_ACCESIBLE\\_PARA\\_MUJERES\\_SORDAS.pdf](https://www.sordassinviolencia.com/SALUD_INTEGRAL_ACCESIBLE_PARA_MUJERES_SORDAS.pdf) [Spanish only]

**Programa Sordas Sin Violencia.** (s.f.). Sistematización SSV PNUD. Buenos Aires. [Spanish only]

**UN.** (1979). Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women New York, 18 December 1979. Retrieved from <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CEDAW.aspx>

**UN.** (1995). Fourth world Conference on Women Beijing Declaration. Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/declar.htm>

**UN.** (2006). Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-2.html>

