Purpose

This paper reports the work progress of the Working Group on Promoting Sign Language (the Working Group) of the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee (RAC).

Background

2. In preparing the 2007 Hong Kong Rehabilitation Programme Plan (RPP), the RPP Review Working Group (Review Working Group) had discussed the issues on the use of sign language, including promoting the use of sign language and standardising sign language. In the light of the Review Working Group’s recommendations, the RAC agreed that a working group
Rehabilitation Advisory Committee

should be set up at suitable juncture, with a view to further considering the issue and map out the way forward.

3. Meanwhile, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (the Convention) has entered into force for the People’s Republic of China, including the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and the Macao Special Administrative Region, since 31 August 2008. The purpose of the Convention is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity. As stipulated in a number of clauses in the Convention, State Parties have the obligation to take appropriate measures to promote the use of sign language, including facilitating the learning of sign language.

4. In response to the comments put forward by the Review Working Group and to prepare for the implementation of the Convention, a working group was set up in December 2009 with the agreement of the RAC, with a view to assisting the RAC in advising the Government on ways to promote the use of sign language.
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Composition and Terms of Reference of the Working Group

5. The Working Group comprises members of the RAC, hearing impaired persons, sign language interpreters and representatives from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) of the rehabilitation sector and the education sector. Representatives of relevant government bureaux and departments would attend meetings for discussion as and when necessary. The terms of reference and membership of the Working Group are set out in Annex 1. The Convenor of the Working Group is Miss CHAN Chiu-ling, Ophelia. As at October 2011, a total of seven meetings, a public consultation session and an international sharing session have been held.

Work Progress and Recommendations

Strategic Directions

6. Following detailed discussion and analysis of the present situation on the use of sign language, sign language interpretation service and training, etc, the Working Group recommended that a sign language promotion programme should be formulated along the following three major strategic directions:

(i) To promote the use of sign language in daily life;
Rehabilitation Advisory Committee

(ii) To encourage the public to learn sign language with a view to promoting inclusion; and

(iii) To discuss with the Education Bureau on ways to encourage hearing impaired students to learn sign language.

7. The Working Group considered it necessary to enhance sign language interpretation service in daily life in such areas as law, health care, welfare, entertainment, etc. In particular, the Working Group encouraged frontline staff of the government departments, NGOs and public service agencies to learn sign language to facilitate their communication with service users with hearing impairment.

Exchange with stakeholders

8. A public consultation session on the promotion of sign language was held on 13 September 2010. More than 100 hearing impaired persons from 16 local deaf organisations, institutional representatives and other stakeholders were briefed on the aims and objectives of the Working Group, and consulted on their views surrounding the use of sign language. The comments put forward by the participants are listed in Annex 2, and their major viewpoints and concerns are summarised as below:
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(i) it was generally considered that, as a first step, basic sign language should be promoted to the public;

(ii) it was considered that encouraging government departments and public agencies to step up the use of sign language could help persons with hearing impairment (especially hearing impaired elders) to have better access to daily information and improve their quality of life;

(iii) there was a concern about public awareness of the deaf culture. It was hoped that there would be better public understanding of the psychological situation, habits and communication modes of persons with hearing impairment and various needs in their daily life;

(iv) there were concerns about the training of sign language interpreters and the current situation of the supply and demand of sign language interpretation services;

(v) there were divergent views on the standardisation of sign language; and
(vi) there were exchanges of views on the pros and cons between sign language education and oral language education, and sharing of visions on this subject.

9. The Working Group also noted the written submissions from the Centre for Sign Linguistics and Deaf Studies of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (Annex 3), Hong Kong Deaf Union (Annex 4) and the Hong Kong Society for the Deaf (Annex 5) on how to promote the use of sign language in Hong Kong. Generally speaking, the Working Group considered that the three major strategic directions proposed to promote the use of sign language were basically in line with the views of various stakeholders.

10. To explore the way forward for sign language education, the Working Group visited the Centre for Sign Linguistics and Deaf Studies of the Chinese University of Hong Kong on 16 February 2011 to learn about its sign linguistics training programmes, relevant research projects (e.g. Jockey Club Sign Bilingualism and Co-enrolment in Deaf Education Programme) and community services, and learnt about its various printed or electronic learning facilities and research resources. The Centre plans to develop a sign language database for

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1 Chinese version only
2 Chinese version only
3 Chinese version only
Rehabilitation Advisory Committee

Hong Kong entitled Hong Kong Sign Language Search Engine (「香港手語搜尋器」). With this system, students can find out the various forms of signs for the same terms in future.

11. In addition, the Working Group held a sharing session on 17 May 2011, where Professor Marc Marschark, an internationally renowned scholar, and Mr. Markku Jokinen, President of the World Federation of the Deaf, were invited to Hong Kong to share their international experience in deaf education and promotion of sign language. The meeting had an attendance of about 50, including members of the RAC and the Working Group, representatives from agencies for the hearing impaired, the Education Bureau and schools for the deaf as well as individuals with hearing impairment, etc. The Hong Kong Association of the Deaf also submitted their supplementary views to the Working Group after the meeting, as set out in Annex 6.

Programme Plan

12. The Working Group has discussed the issue of sign language standardisation (i.e. formulation of a standardised sign language). Having consolidated the views of various stakeholders, the Working Group concluded that, as majority views, standardisation of the sign language was not the priority. Instead, we should at present put our emphasis on the promotion and
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popularisation of basic sign language, thereby facilitating the development of sign language in a free environment. The Working Group expected that after the sign language culture had been deep rooted in Hong Kong, a common form of local sign language would be evolved over time.

13. After taking into account the outcomes of meetings, the views collected during the sharing sessions and the submissions from various agencies for the hearing impaired, the Working Group worked out a programme plan to promote the use of sign languages. The programme plan covered four major areas, namely sign language training, daily life application, community promotion and education. Upon the endorsement of the programme plan by the RAC in March 2011, various sign language promotion initiatives have been rolled out. Some of the projects that required funding support by the Sub-committee on Public Education on Rehabilitation have been incorporated into the public education and publicity programme for the promotion of the Convention in 2011-12 for implementation by phases.

(A) Sign Language Training

14. At present, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) provides subsidy for some NGOs in the rehabilitation sector (including the Hong Kong Society for
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the Deaf, Hong Kong Association of the Deaf, Lutheran Church-Hong Kong Synod and Chinese Young Men's Christian Association of Hong Kong (YMCA)), so as to provide free sign language interpretation service for the hearing impaired in need. For hearing impaired persons who need sign language interpretation service in their daily life (for instance, when seeking medical treatment, attending job interviews and making oaths), they can contact the organisations concerned to make an appointment with sign language interpreters. At present, about 10 sign language interpreters are available for booking. According to the information provided by the Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS), the aforementioned organisations serving persons with hearing impairment currently run elementary, intermediate and advanced sign language courses on a regular basis, and have provided sign language training for SWD, Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) and Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) before.

15. In view of the keen demand for such service, the Working Group suggested that the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) should work with the rehabilitation sector to provide sign language training courses for the frontline staff of government bureaux/departments and public agencies, with the aim of providing the basic knowledge on local deaf culture in Hong Kong and sign language interpretation, as well as the keys to effective communication with the hearing impaired. The Working Group also suggested that the Government
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should provide subsidy to participants for enrolling in advanced sign language courses of various levels after completion of the basic training course.

16. The first round of sign language training courses organised jointly by the Civil Service Training & Development Institute (CSTDI) and HKCSS had been held from July to August 2011. There were about 100 participants who came from SWD, Labour Department, LCSD, Home Affairs Department, Registration and Electoral Office, Housing Department, Department of Health, Inland Revenue Department, HKPF, Immigration Department, Customs and Excise Department, Correctional Services Department, Fire Services Department, Legal Aid Department, Student Financial Assistance Agency, Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, etc. The CSTDI will organise more such courses having regard to the overall demand. It is expected that a new round of sign language training courses will be held from February to March 2012.

17. The Working Group considered that large enterprises in the service sector, particularly those with frequent contact with the hearing impaired in their daily life, should be encouraged to provide basic sign language training for their staff. The Working Group would study specific measures in this respect in due course.
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18. In addition, the Working Group also encouraged sign language interpreters to enrich their exposure to the sign language through frequent contact with the hearing impaired of different ages, culture and background. This included acquainting themselves with the various popular terms and jargons adopted in sign language. By doing so, they would be able to apply their sign language more flexibly and extensively.

(B) Daily Life Application

TV Information

19. The Working Group suggested encouraging TV channels to provide sign language interpretation for breaking news and live broadcast of important government information, such as Legislative Council (LegCo) meetings, Policy Addresses, Budget Speeches and other public announcements of the government, so as to facilitate equal participation in society by the hearing impaired.

20. According to the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau, the Broadcasting Authority (BA) had all along been encouraging the two licensees (ATV and TVB) to cater for the needs of the hearing impaired as far as possible. Both licensees agreed to strengthen their subtitle services accordingly. The BA had also stipulated in the licensing conditions to require ATV and TVB to enhance the subtitle service in phases to cater for the needs of the hearing impaired.
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impaired. The Working Group welcomed the enhancement of subtitle services by the two licensees. However, since not all hearing impaired persons could fully grasp the meaning of the subtitles, the Working Group suggested that TV licensees should seriously consider providing sign language interpretation during designated news sessions, so as to safeguard the right to language of the hearing impaired.

21. Since January 2010, the LegCo has launched a pilot video webcasting service which can accommodate 100 web viewers at any one time to cover some of the meetings of LegCo and its committees. Simultaneous sign language interpretation is provided for Council proceedings on Question Time, the delivery of Chief Executive’s Policy Addresses, Chief Executive’s Question and Answer Sessions and the delivery of Financial Secretary’s Budget Speeches.

Medical Services

22. For more effective utilisation of sign language interpretation resources, the Working Group suggested examining, together with the Hospital Authority (HA), the feasibility of providing video relay service for sign language in public hospitals.

23. Having regard to the suggestions of the Working Group and the hearing impairment organisations on the video relay technology and priority pilot areas,
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the HA conducted a number of video relay drill tests for sign language at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Specialist Out-patient Clinic from June to September 2011 to assess the stability of different networks and softwares to facilitate the running of real-case tests. The HA would consolidate the views of hearing impaired patients, sign language interpreters and healthcare personnel and conduct further review, with a view to drawing up the timetable and the way forward.

24. The provision of video relay service for sign language in public hospitals is indeed a breakthrough, which is expected to relieve the shortage of sign language interpreters. The Working Group will work closely with the HA to implement the scheme.

Cultural Activities

25. To facilitate the use of public cultural venues and facilities by persons with hearing impairment, the Working Group was of the view that LCSD should consider enhancing the provision of barrier-free facilities, including the provision of sign language guided tour services.

26. In July 2011, the Hong Kong Society for the Deaf sent a written submission to the LCSD on the improvement of public museum facilities. The specific suggestions included enhancement of sign language and written
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information, improvement of guided tour facilities and acquisition of hearing aids, etc. On 27 September, the LCSD gave a reply to the suggestions on audio guided tours in museums, audio-visual programmes and hearing assistive devices. Noting that the reply was mainly a description of the existing services, the Working Group would arrange meetings with the LCSD to examine ways to further improve the barrier-free facilities to facilitate the use of the services by people with hearing impairment.

Sign Language Self-learning Platform

27. Given the increasing popularity of smart phones, the Working Group proposed to encourage the sector to develop smart phone applications for sign language education, as a tool to promote the learning and application of sign language among young people.

28. The Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB) allocated funds to the Hong Kong Sign Language Association in 2011-12 for developing a barrier-free sign language communication self-learning platform (無障礙手語溝通自學平台). The production of this smart phone application, which includes Apple and Android versions, was completed in August 2011 and was then open for public use. The self-learning platform was also available on the internet. Currently,
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99 terms of sign language are provided. Sign language learning cards are published in parallel as part of the overall promotion programme.

(C) Promotion in the Community

Community Inclusive Activities

29. The Working Group proposed to include the promotion of sign language as one of LWB’s main themes for the annual public education activities on rehabilitation and provide financial subsidy to NGOs, public agencies and the 18 District Councils to organise various inclusive activities to promote the basic sign language and the deaf culture. The proposal has been supported by the RAC.

30. In 2011-12, nine projects under “Hearing Impairment” category were funded by the LWB, incurring a total amount of over $600,000. The funded activities were multifaceted and included the production of a short film and DVD in sign language version to promote the Convention, a series of diversified sign language promotion activities (e.g. sign language courses, sign language songs contests, school seminars and carnivals, etc), programmes to promote employment of persons with hearing impairment (e.g. training of sign language tutors, workshops on sign language and the deaf culture, vocational referral services, etc), and the Third Hong Kong Deaf Festival, etc. The 2011
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International Day of Disabled Persons, a major public educational programme, also adopted barrier-free communication (including the promotion of the use of sign language) as the theme and encouraged districts to design inclusive activities for different target groups.

Sign Language Minuter Series

31. Noting that TV and the internet are effective channels for publicity, the Working Group suggested collaborating with the Radio Television of Hong Kong (RTHK) in producing a series of 5-minuters on Hong Kong sign language, so as to promote basic sign language among the public through daily life. The representatives of the Working Group would serve as advisors to this project. The programme entitled “Sign Language Capriccios” (手語隨想曲), would have ten episodes and would invite youth idols and hearing impaired sign language experts as artist. The programme was scheduled for broadcast on four TV channels at different time slots from 4 December 2011 to 5 February 2012 (every Sunday). Concurrently, this programme would also be uploaded to the RTHK and social networking websites, so as to attract audience at all levels, particularly the younger generation.

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4 ATV Home (11:00am), TVB Jade (3:20pm), Cable TV Channel 10 (11:25pm) and Hong Kong Broadband TV (10:50pm)
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(D) Education

32. Given the divergent views among various parties on how best to introduce sign language education into the existing education system and the far-reaching implications, the Working Group considered that this issue could hardly be fully addressed at the Working Group in the short run. It therefore suggested that at this stage, the views collected should be relayed to the EDB for consideration for the time being.

33. On 8 August 2011, the Centre for Sign Linguistics and Deaf Studies of the Chinese University of Hong Kong made a written submission on the sign language and deaf education in Hong Kong (Annex 7). In the submission, it highlighted the key role of sign language on the education of deaf children, and called on the Administration to provide corresponding sign language supporting services and enhance teacher training so that hearing impaired children could have access to education on an equal basis with others. Such proposals had been referred to the EDB for reference.

34. In attendance at the Working Group’s Fourth Meeting, representatives of the EDB briefed members on the present situation of education for hearing impaired children and exchanged views with them. After the Meeting, the EDB further submitted a report on 26 August 2011, setting out the latest
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situation of studying of sign language by the hearing impaired school children (Annex 8).

The Way Forward

35. The Working Group will examine other sign language related issues as appropriate, such as sign language tutor training, training and accreditation of sign language interpreters, quality of sign language interpretation service, use of sign language in deaf schools, etc.. The Working Group will continue to collaborate with the HA for the study and implementation of out-patient video relay service for sign language. It will also work with the rehabilitation sector, relevant government departments, public agencies and various sectors of the community to press ahead the programme plan on the promotion of sign language by stages, with a view to facilitating the barrier-free communication and access to services of persons with hearing impairment, and fostering the mutual understanding between the hearing impaired and others, thereby achieving full inclusion in society.
Rehabilitation Advisory Committee

Labour and Welfare Bureau

December 2011
Rehabilitation Advisory Committee
Working Group on Promoting Sign Language

**Term of Reference**

To assist the RAC in advising the Government on measures to promote the use of sign language.

**Proposed Membership**

**Convenor:** Miss CHAN Chiu-ling, Ophelia, BBS

**Non-official Members:**
- Prof CHAN Che-hin, Chetwyn
- Mr CHAN Kam-yuen
- Mr LEE Hong-kong, Hansen, MH
- Mr LEE Kar-fai, Philip
- Ms SO Lai-chun, Ann, MH
- Mr YU Bun
- Mr CHAN Kwok-yung
- Ms Wendy MAK
- Ms Agatha TANG (representative of HKCSS)
- Mrs Winnie WONG
- Mr WONG Kai-fung
- Prof TANG Wai-lan, Gladys
- Mr KO Nam
- Ms LAU Lai-fong

**Ex-officio Members**: Commissioner for Rehabilitation
Assistant Secretary (Rehabilitation)

**Secretary:** Senior Executive Manager (Rehabilitation)

* Representatives of other relevant Government bureaux/departments to be invited on a need basis
Exchange Session on Promotion of Sign Language

Date: 13 September 2010 (Monday)
Time: 7:30pm - 9:30pm
Venue: Room 201, Duke of Windsor Social Service Building, Wanchai

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<tr>
<th>Hearing impairment organisations / self-help groups</th>
<th>Summary of views</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong Society for the Deaf</td>
<td>● In order to cater for the needs of the hearing impaired persons in daily life and encourage them to participate in cultural and entertainment activities, it is suggested to encourage:</td>
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<td>(i) the provision of sign language interpretation of news report on TV at least once a day;</td>
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<td>(ii) the provision of sign language interpretation of public announcements (e.g. traffic diversion and typhoon information);</td>
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<td>(iii) the strengthening of sign language training for frontline staff of government departments;</td>
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<td>(iv) the provision of sign language interpretation at report rooms of divisional police stations;</td>
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<td>(v) the provision of sign language interpretation at Accident and Emergency Departments of public</td>
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<td>Hearing impairment organisations / self-help groups</td>
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<td>hospitals in 18 Districts;</td>
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<td>(vi) the installation of “simultaneous sign language interpretation machine” at museums and exhibition venues;</td>
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<td>(vii) the provision of sign language interpretation for live webcasts at news.gov.hk and yahoo; and</td>
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<td>(viii) the provision of simultaneous sign language interpretation for stage performances.</td>
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<td>• As many people in society have misunderstandings about people with hearing impairment, it is suggested that the Government should, through promoting the use of sign language, encourage the public to have more contact with and get a better understanding of the deaf culture.</td>
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<td>• It is suggested that the Government should review the inclusive education policy and provide appropriate support to hearing impaired students.</td>
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<td>Hong Kong Association of the Deaf</td>
<td>• Noting that the existing education for deaf children focuses on verbal language, it considered that if it is supplemented with sign language, it would be conducive to more effective learning of deaf students.</td>
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<td>• The International Congress on Education for the Deaf held</td>
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<td>Hearing impairment organisations / self-help groups</td>
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<td>Summary of views</td>
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<td>in Vancouver, Canada in July openly admitted the mistake of the resolution of the 1880 Congress in Milan to remove the use of sign languages from education programmes for the deaf. The Congress also confirmed the importance of sign languages to the education for the deaf. It is suggested that the Government should learn lesson from the above development and promote the use of both sign language and verbal language in teaching in Hong Kong.</td>
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<td>• It is opined that there is an imminent need to enhance sign language interpretation services and increase sign language interpretation training.</td>
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<td>• It is suggested that Hong Kong should make reference to overseas experience and establish a sign language interpreter classification system, so as to give due recognition to the status of sign language interpreters and enhance the quality of sign language interpretation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• It is suggested to promote a standardised sign language so that members of the public can get in touch with the deaf culture, thereby promoting communication between hearing impaired persons and normal hearing persons.</td>
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<td>• It is suggested to make use of various technologies (e.g. webcam systems) to assist the deaf in communicating with</td>
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<td>Hearing impairment organisations / self-help groups</td>
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<td>the outside world.</td>
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<td>• It is hoped that the Government would provide more support for the hearing impaired through legislative and administrative measures.</td>
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<td>Silence Association</td>
<td>• It is pointed out that the demand for sign language interpretation is in fact very large, but there are not many sign language interpreters in Hong Kong.</td>
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<td>• It is suggested that a pamphlet on sign language learning should be published to introduce simple sign language and the deaf culture to the public, so as to help the hearing impaired to integrate into the workplace.</td>
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<td>• Given that sign language has its specific grammar, it is suggested that the Government should consider enhancing the statutory status of sign language and make sign language a language subject.</td>
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<td>• It is suggested that TV programmes with sign language should be shifted to a better time slot.</td>
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<td>• It is suggested that the Working Group on Promoting Sign Language of the RAC should have hearing impaired representatives.</td>
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<td>Hearing impairment organisations / self-help groups</td>
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<td>Y’s Men’s Centre for the Deaf of Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong</td>
<td>- It is reflected that the sign language in Hong Kong is disorganised in its development and is not standardised.</td>
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<td>The Centre for Sign Linguistics and Deaf Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong</td>
<td>- Given that schools for the deaf are highly valuable as far as deaf culture inheritance is concerned, it is hoped that the Government would not close those schools.</td>
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<td>- It is reflected that there are deficiencies in local education for the deaf. Sole reliance on verbal language learning will substantially reduce the learning effectiveness.</td>
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<td>- It is hoped that parents of hearing impaired students will be told that apart from arranging cochlear implant surgery and verbal language learning for their children, they can also choose to let their children learn sign language. Parents can also make use of sign language to foster parent-child relation with their hearing impaired children and facilitate their learning and growth.</td>
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<td>- It is hoped that the Government would provide parents of hearing impaired children with three choices: sign language education, verbal language education, and two-medium (verbal and sign language) education; and promote the use of sign language.</td>
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<td>- It is reflected that the deaf at different ages and of different</td>
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<td><strong>Hearing impairment organisations / self-help groups</strong></td>
<td><strong>Summary of views</strong></td>
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<td>associations have different forms of sign language, but there is no need to make deliberate efforts to standardise the sign language. We should accept variations in sign language and respect each other’s difference. Sign language will evolve over time and it is believed that ultimately a common form will be established by usage.</td>
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<td>• It is suggested that sign language interpreters should have knowledge about different forms of sign language used by the hearing impaired at different ages/of different groups, so as to provide comprehensive services for them.</td>
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<td>• It is reflected that there is a shortfall in sign language interpretation services in public agencies. It is hoped that the Government would further promote the use of sign language and strengthen interpretation service and training on sign language.</td>
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<td>• It is suggested that the Government should subsidise staff of public agencies (e.g. public hospitals) to learn sign language and acquire professional qualification, so that they might provide support to hearing impaired patients when necessary. This is conducive to effective allocation of human resources.</td>
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<td>• It is suggested to encourage services employees (e.g. staff</td>
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<td>Hearing impairment organisations / self-help groups</td>
<td>Summary of views</td>
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<td>of restaurants) to learn basic sign language.</td>
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<td>• It is suggested that the Government should promote the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities through different channels so as to minimize misunderstandings of the deaf.</td>
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<td>Lutheran School for the Deaf</td>
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<td>• It is suggested that children’s TV programmes on the use of sign language be produced to provide normal hearing children with chances of exposure to sign language, thereby promoting inclusiveness in society.</td>
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<td>• Reflecting the inconvenience faced by the deaf in daily life, it asked the Government to enhance support on all fronts and encourage more people to learn sign language, with a view to facilitating communication between the normal hearing and the hearing impaired persons.</td>
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<td>Fun Forest</td>
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<td>• It is suggested that more sign language interpreters be trained up and employed, with a view to promoting the deaf culture and assisting the deaf in taking part in cultural life.</td>
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<td>• It is suggested that an assessment system for sign language interpretation be put in place.</td>
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<td>• It is suggested that retail trade employees be encouraged to</td>
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<td>Hearing impairment organisations / self-help groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friends of Deaf</td>
<td>● It is concerned about the inconsistency in sign language expressions for the names of places in Hong Kong.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Hong Kong Bauhinias Deaf Club                    | ● It is expected that more accredited sign language interpreters be trained up to assist the deaf in meeting the needs of daily life (e.g. schooling).  
● It is suggested that a tele-sign-language-interpretation centre be set up. |
| Hong Kong School for the Deaf Alumni Association | ● The chaotic development of sign language in Hong Kong is reflected, for instance, two different terms are expressed in the same way, which is rarely the case for the deaf of the older generations.  
● It is reflected that there is still room for improvement regarding sign language education and that the glossary of terms on sign language are rather inadequate. |
| Hong Kong Sign Language Association              | ● It is reflected that sign language interpretation is very important to the deaf in addressing their basic necessities.  
Promotion on the use of sign language can help bridge the communication gap between the normal hearing and the hearing impaired persons.  
● It is hoped that the Government will support this |
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<tr>
<th>Hearing impairment organisations / self-help groups</th>
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<tr>
<td>Association’s promotional activities on the wider use of sign language by enhancing public awareness of 66 basic sign language terms in respect of apparel, dining, living and travel.</td>
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</table>
| Hong Kong Federation of the Deaf | • It is opined that it is better to standardise Hong Kong sign language.  
• It is suggested that some deaf people be invited to act as ambassadors for promoting sign language, in a bid to boost participation of the deaf. |
手語發展推廣立場書

《殘疾人權利公約》已在中國正式生效，並適用於香港特別行政區。這意味著特區政府必須採取一切適當的立法、行政和其他措施，實踐《公約》的內容，保障殘疾人士的權利。該公約的宗旨是促進、保護和確保所有殘疾人士充分和平等地享有一切人權和基本自由。

在香港，聾人面對著各種各樣的問題，在日常生活中不時遇到無理的偏見及不被尊重的做法，他們的基本權利－尤其是使用手語溝通的權利－並沒有得到應有的認同和尊重。在這個情況下，聾人實在難以融入健聽社會。政府有責任推行有效的宣傳活動，提高社會的聾人意識，包括幫助公眾認識聾人的文化和手語，培養尊重聾人權利的態度，公平地看待聾人，並提供無障礙設施（手語和中文字幕），以確保不同中文讀寫程度的聾人均獲得各種資訊和無障礙的學習，建立真正聾健共融的文化。

香港中文大學語言學及現代語言系手語及聾人研究中心的一班聾人員工，在中心的鼓勵和支持下，合作撰寫本立場書，以表達對聾人教育、家長教育、手語翻譯服務以及推廣聾人文化和手語的訴求。本立場書有以下四個主要的項目：

(一) 聾人教育
(二) 家長教育
(三) 手語翻譯服務
(四) 推廣聾人文化和手語

(一) 聾人教育

1. 國際間對手語的認同

2010年7月，在加拿大的溫哥華舉行了第二十一屆國際聾人教育會議，在會議的開幕典禮上，主辦單位正式承認於1880年在意大利米蘭舉行的第二屆國際聾人教育會議禁止聾人教育使用手語的決定是錯誤的。這次溫哥華的會議確認了手語在聾人教育中的重要性，並呼籲全球各國確保在聾人教育中能接受並尊重不同的語言和溝通模式。會議的主辦單位更把不同國家人士支持的簽名收集成書，寄給聯合國。

這件甚具歷史意義的事件代表了全球的聾人教育學者均認為聾人教育應包容不同的教育模式，不應單一的選擇某一種教學模式。換句話說，口語教學、手語教學和雙語教學等不同的選擇應同時存在，讓不同特殊學習需要的聾童都可得到平等的學習機會。正如香港平等機會委員會在《殘疾歧視條例教育實務守則》第16章中也提及到，教育服務提供者需要確保：

16.2.1 提供貨品、服務或設施的地點是有殘疾的學生可以到達的；
故此，只要有聾童需依靠手語學習，學校應該盡量提供，而政府亦應考慮這需要，並確保負責教師有接受足夠的手語訓練。

2. 手語在聾人教育的角色

手語有助聾人理解課堂內容
現時在香港，聾童從小便接受口語訓練，方便將來和健聽人士溝通，融入社會。但是聾人在單一「口語教學」的環境下學習，效果往往未如理想，原因是大部份的聾人即使在助聽儀器的輔助下，仍不能單靠口語充份理解課堂上的教學內容，導致學習進度強差人意。事實上，不少聾人畢業後，常常抱怨自己的母校(包括聾人學校)和其他學院沒有使用手語教學，使他們無法掌握教學內容。最後，他們都變得沒有信心繼續進修。以下的剪報正好反映他們的苦況：

「聾人爭取了整整三十年，希望以手語教學，時至今日仍是看老師的口形學習為主。標榜「融合教育」的模式其實是「打壓聾人」，剝奪了他們自己的語言。」
「這對聰人來說十分困難，他們聽不到，漸漸習慣不管明白與否，都點頭示意，導致了大部份聾人的教育程度普遍不高。」 5/9/2010 明報 《聾人世界的電影聲音》

我們認為，聾人需要以手語、唇讀和筆談等不同方法去配合，才能達致最佳的學習效果。所以，聾人教育是必須加入手語教學的。

手語有助教學進度
過往香港聾人教育其中一個癥結問題，是聾校的教學內容過於簡單，跟主流學校相距甚遠。課堂上沒有有效的溝通渠道，是導致聾校減省課程的主要原因之一。據我們的觀察，大部份聾人學校中五學生的教育水平，只及主流學校的中一或中二的程度。由於聾人的讀寫能力普遍不高，能擠身大專院校的聾人可謂少之又少。教育水平低落，大大減少了聾人就業的選擇，除了造成收入偏低、生活拮据的惡性循環外，亦令聾人在社會上難以得到肯定和尊重。更甚的是，聾童的家長會對聾人教育和聾人學校失去應有的信心。

我們認為，聾人有權利得到良好、具質素的教育。對聾人來說，學習口語固然重要，但是手語教學也不能忽視，兩者缺一不可。香港聾人急需的，是具備專業教學資格的聾人老師、明白和尊重聾人社群的健聽老師及手語翻譯員，透過使用一個無障礙的語言—手語—讓聾人掌握必須具備的知識。聰生的學習內容也必須跟主流學校的一樣。當聰生打好了語文的基礎，具備跟健聽學生相等的知識，自然有信心繼續進修。當社會上越來越多聾人能完成高等教育，而一般聾人教育水平也相對提高，他們的就業機會便能大大增加，社會人士對聾人的誤解也會隨之而減少。在這個情況下，聾健才有機會達到真正的共融。
手語在聾校及主流學校的角色
香港的聾人學校因融合教育的發展逐步減少，現在只剩下一所聾校。近年來，絕大部份的家長都不願意讓聾童報讀聾校，一方面也害怕負面的「標籤效應」，另一方面是他們對聾校的教育質量沒有信心，導致聾校收生嚴重不足，一間接著一間「倒閉」了。

我們認為，聾校是聾人社群的支柱，也是孕育、維持手語及聾人文化的地方，實有存在的價值。對於難以在主流學校學習的聾生來說，聾校能為他們提供另一個教育的選擇。因此，我們希望聾校不要被全面取締，亦建議改革現有的教學方法，加入手語教學，提升教育質量，恢復家長對聾校的信心。

至於現在於主流學校就讀的聾生，他們在學習上遇到的困難至少有三方面。一，缺乏手語支援的情況下，他們要透過自己不能完全理解的口語去「猜測」老師的授課內容，實在非常困難。試想想，要在課堂上完全掌握新知識，對於健聽生來說，尚且不是一件易事，更何況是有聽力障礙的學生呢？二，由於沒有有效的溝通方法，聾生的吸收能力較弱，一般會比健聽學生需要更長的時間學習同等的課程，但是在現行的融合教育政策下，老師實在無法為聾生提供足夠的額外支援。三、老師及學校職員未有對聾生及健聽生一視同仁，很多時候忙於照顧健聽學生而忽略聾生的需要。

我們認為，在主流學校中的聾生同樣是需要通過手語學習的。提供手語翻譯服務是其中一個可行的選擇，如果學生本身未懂得打手語，便需要首先學習手語。只有這樣，他們才可以有信心掌握教學內容，跟上主流學校的教學進度。

聾人老師的重要性
聾人老師是聾人教育中不可或缺的重要元素。原因是聾人老師可以成為聾生的模範，帶出正面的信息，令聾生知道只要肯努力，聾人是有能力和機會可以成為社會的棟樑。另外，聾人老師基於以往的經驗，一般較健聽老師更理解聾生在學習上和生活上的需要。

可惜的是，現時香港提供老師培訓的大專院校均沒有手語翻譯。有志繼續進修的聾人往往要自掏腰包聘請手語翻譯員，加上現時手語翻譯員人數不足，良莠不齊，影響了聾人的學習。

我們認為香港需要開辦專為聾人教育而設的教育課程，讓聾人準老師和健聽準老師報讀。有關課程應以手語授課並設有口語翻譯；若用口語授課，則應設有手語翻譯，以確保健聾學生均能獲得無障礙的學習。
專上教育的手語支援

除了基礎教育外，香港的專上教育同樣欠手語的支援。不少有潛質的聾人放棄繼續進修的最大原因是大學院校都沒有附設手語翻譯，學生往往需要自費聘請翻譯員，令他們卻步；以往亦有一些已入讀大學院校的聾人因支援不足無法完成學業。

我們認為政府應立法要求所有大學院校提供免費的手語翻譯，以保障聾人獲得專上教育的權利。

3. 對政府的建議

總括來說，就手語在聾人教育中應該扮演的角色，我們對政府有以下的建議：

i. 保留現有的聾校，為聾生提供主流學校以外的選擇。

ii. 鼓勵聾人學校及有收錄聾生的主流學校使用手語教學。我們認為在開始推行的階段，政府可參考中國政府劃出深圳成「發展特區」的方法，首先找一間學校嘗試使用「手語教學」教導聾生。政府亦可參考內地推行聾人教育的經驗，在香港引入手語雙語的教學模式。在累積相當經驗後，再設立專門為聾生學習而設的資源中心，為其他有錄取聾生的主流學校提供支援。

iii. 要求教導聾生的老師學習手語，原因是手語乃聾人的語言，學習手語是尊重聾人擁有其語言的權利和保障聾人權益的做法。

iv. 資助健聽老師和不懂自然手語的聾人老師報讀手語課程。

v. 除了聾人老師和懂手語的健聽老師外，主流學校也需要聘請手語翻譯員提供教學上的支援。

vi. 有錄取聾生的主流學校，需要開辦關於聾人文化、聾人知識及手語的課程，作為課外活動、班主任課及德育培訓的課程之一，目的是令校內的健聽學生認識聾人社群，學習尊重不同的文化，建立聾健共融的環境。

vii. 開設聾人教育的師訓課程，給有志從事聾人教育工作的聾人及健聽人報讀。

viii. 立法要求所有大學院校提供免費的手語翻譯，以保障聾人獲得專上教育的權利。
(二) 家長教育

1. 給予家長全面的資訊 – 手語的重要性

現時，政府是有向聾童的父母提供各項服務的資料，例如助聽器、人工耳蝸、口語訓練、入學選擇等，但甚少提及手語對聾童語言及認知發展的重要性，因此大部份父母對手語仍然存有誤解。事實上，大量的研究已經證明了手語有助聾童在語言、社交及認知等各方面的發展。因此，我們認為父母有需要亦有權利知道以下數點：

i. 直至目前為止並沒有科學根據證明手語會妨礙聾童學習口語；
ii. 兒童學習語言的黃金時期是零至三歲，因此初生聾童應盡早接觸手語。為了提供良好的溝通環境，當家中有聾嬰時，健聽父母、兄弟姐妹以至親戚(如祖父母、舅父、姨媽等)都應該學手語；
iii. 無論是使用口語或手語，父母需要盡早跟聾童建立有效的溝通，因為語言獲得的延誤，除了影響語言表達外，更會影響日後的教育成就。使用手語能確保聰童可以無障礙地跟父母溝通，建立良好的親子關係；
iv. 家長需要儘量跟聾童作全方位的溝通，透過手語向聾童解釋各種的事情。這是因為手語是聾人教育中必要卻不是足夠(necessary but not sufficient)的條件。意思是說，即使用了手語，我們只是減少了語言的阻礙。但是兒童的學習，有九成的知識是從日常生活中自然汲取的（incidental learning），除了父母直接親子的溝通外，健聽的兒童會透過有意無意間聽到親友的對話、電視、收音機等等獲得知識。相反，只有一成的知識是從課堂老師的教導中學到的（參看 Napier 2007）。換句話說，父母需要在一般日常的溝通之外，盡量用手語向聾童解釋身邊的事物，例如有關親人的消息、在路上見到的新事物、親友间的對話，甚至收音機上的新聞，以彌補聾童因聽力問題而失去的學習機會。如果能做到這一點，聾童入學的時候便可以跟一般的健聽兒童一樣，有豐富的生活知識，幫助他們理解學校的教學內容，避免因為缺乏一般常識而拖慢學習進度。

2. 對政府的建議

我們建議政府作出以下的措施，加強對家長的支援：

i. 無論是聾人或健聽的家長，政府首要幫助他們以積極樂觀的態度接受孩子聽力受損的事實。
ii. 政府應鼓勵並支援所有聾童的健聽家人學習手語。不少北歐國家(如芬蘭、挪威和瑞典等等)都支持聾童家長學習手語的政策。例如芬蘭政府資助聾童父母學習手語 100 小時 (Erting 1994)，挪威政府則全數資助父母於聾童出生後 16 年內四十星期學習手語的學費(參看http://www.batod.org.uk/index.php?id=/publications/on-linemagazine/models/norway.htm)。瑞典政府要求聾童父母於聾童出生後四年內學習共 240 小時的瑞典手語，如果聾童父母正在領取失業救濟金的話，更可以免費報讀手語課程(Timmermans 2005)。
iii. 政府應鼓勵聾童（不論是深度或弱聽的）和他們的家人、親戚和朋友學習手語及聾人文化，加強溝通，減少誤解及隔膜，讓聾童能在心智及社交等各方面健康成長。
iv. 政府可参考外国一般的做法，为聋童的家长及亲戚提供全面而中肯的资讯，让他们真正了解
聋童的需要，作出适当的选泽，例如：聋童的需要跟健听儿童有什么分别？怎样的沟通方式
才最适合个别聋童的需要？有什么方法可帮助聋童学习阅读？人工耳蜗有什么好处、坏处和
限制？

v. 现时为家长提供资讯的机制，大多是为健听家长而设的，例如儿童体能智力测试中心于
2004年协助家长成立香港聋障人士家长协会，让健听的聋童家长分享教育孩子的资讯、聋
人教育、沟通方法、解决沟通问题的方法等等。我们建议此类组织可主动邀请生了聋童的聋
人父母多些参与这类活动，除了可以彼此交流教养子女的心得外，更可以让其他健听父母多
认识手语和聋人社群。
(三) 手語翻譯服務

1. 手語翻譯服務的現況

對所有的聾人來說，生活上面對的最大困難，莫過於跟健聽人溝通。健聽人是用口語來溝通，但聾人是用手語來溝通的。要解決聾健的溝通問題，首要任務是改善現有手語翻譯服務的質和量。

本港現時有超過九萬位聾人或弱聽人士（政府統計處，2008），但只有十位左右的政府法定語文組注冊手語翻譯員，可見翻譯人手嚴重不足，而且翻譯員的質素參差不一，根本無法應付聾人對翻譯的需求。以下的例子，說明了聾人在生活各個層面中因溝通問題而產生的不便:

i. 例如聾人到餐廳購買食物時，未能用口語告訴餐廳職員他們的選擇，職員聽不懂聾人的說話或看不懂他們的口形，很多時候會顯得不耐煩，令聾人感到不安及不被尊重。又例如一般銀行都會標榜『以客為先』的服務，可惜服務的對象似乎並不包括聾人，因為沒有手語翻譯員在場，一些原本是簡單的財務問題往往變得很複雜，費時失事。

ii. 聾人到醫院或診所求診時，不能用口語和醫務人員溝通，而醫務人員亦不懂手語，又沒有手語翻譯幫忙，造成嚴重的溝通障礙。另外有不少醫院的門診或急症室都是採用聲音廣播通知病人入診症室的，但經常發生的情況是聾人聽不到廣播，即使聾人事先通知了職員，職員也可能因工作繁忙而忘記了通知聾人，造成不便。

iii. 現時聾人如果要在大專院校唸書，必須自行聘請手語翻譯員，可惜翻譯員人數不足，大大增加了聾人進修時面對的困難。

iv. 現在有不少預約服務，例如預約看醫生或在餐廳預訂座位等，都必須使用電話，因此聾人要時常麻煩健聽人幫忙。

v. 電視上的新聞一般只有字幕而沒有手語翻譯，但不少聾人中文讀寫程度有限，理解上有困難。如遇上突發的事件，往往連字幕也欠奉，令聾人得不到重要的資訊。

vi. 最近一些報章報導醫院增設傳真預約服務，但隨着現代電腦科技的發展，希望加設視像手語翻譯預約服務。

2. 對政府的建議

針對以上的問題，我們有以下的建議:

i. 鼓勵從事服務性行業（例如飲食、銀行等）的員工學習基本手語，以便跟聾人顧客溝通。試想想，外國人到餐廳吃東西，服務員會以英語或食品圖示跟客人溝通。聾人到餐廳吃東西，服務員也應該用手語或筆談和聾人溝通。

ii. 鼓勵在公營機構（如：入境處、醫院及警局等）工作的員工先學習基本手語，以協助使用該機構服務的聾人跟健聽的職員溝通。當社會普遍接受這種做法時，政府可資助略懂手語的員工報讀專業的手語翻譯課程，以增加手語翻譯員的數目。
iii. 任何有錄取聾學生的大專院校都必須聘請最少一位的手語翻譯員，協助聾學生明白課堂內容。在大專院校工作的翻譯員需要持有由大學頒授的專業手語翻譯學位資格，以確保翻譯的質量。更重要的是，翻譯員要預先理解課堂內容，避免出現誤譯的情況。

iv. 在預約服務方面，可考慮開設透過網上視像傳送的即時傳譯服務。這些服務可以在銀行和醫院等公營機構使用。

v. 在所有新聞節目中加上手語翻譯，使聾人得知重要的資訊。

vi. 最後，也是最重要的一點，是政府在資源上協助推行手語翻譯的專業訓練，增加翻譯人員的數目。我們也認為，手語翻譯員必須接受專業訓練及持有大學頒授的專業手語翻譯學位，才能確保翻譯的質量。手語翻譯員亦需要理解聾人間因年齡及教育背景不同而引致的手語的差異，確保能按服務對象的需要作出最適切的翻譯。手語翻譯員資格的考試評核也應該有能操流利香港手語的聾人參與。
(四) 推廣關於聾人文化和手語
1. 社會上對聾人及手語的誤解
    現時社會上對聾人及手語仍存有不少的誤解，以下是一些常見的例子：
    i. 大部份健聽人以為手語不是語言，不理解手語是揉合手部動作和面部表情的自然語言。不少健聽的父母因為感覺手語「不好看」，不讓健聽的兄弟姐妹跟聾人用手語或動作來溝通，剝奪了聾人跟家人溝通的權利。又例如有健聽的父母和聾的子女外出，子女在街上碰到其他聾人，很自然地用手語交談，父母馬上故意避開，害怕其他路過的人知道自己的子女是聾的，甚至因此責罵子女，令聾人受屈。
    ii. 不少健聽人認為助聽器對聾人有很大的幫助，若聾人戴上它後就能跟健聽人一樣可以聽到任何聲音。這種想法其實是錯誤的，助聽機只是輔助的工具，戴上它仍只能有限度地聽到聲音，很多時候聾人即使戴了助聽器，仍然不能清楚分辨聲調，例如 se1 些、se2 寫、se3 瀉、se4 蛇、se5 舍、se6 射的分別。
    iii. 有些健聽人遇見一些外表長得漂亮的聾人時，會嘆息他/她是個聾人，這種想法的背後其實代表了健聽人以為「聾」是一種需要人同情的殘疾。但其實聾人認為「聾」的意思只是聽不到而已，沒什麼大不了，也沒甚麼值得可憐的。
    iv. 聾人到餐廳吃飯時，想用紙筆來寫字點菜，有時侍應以惡劣的態度回應，甚至粗魯地把紙筆拋給聾人，令聾人感覺受歧視。
    v. 現時一般社會設施均沒有考慮聾人的需要，例如聾人在乘搭地鐵時無從得知關門前的警示聲音。
2. 對政府的建議
    針對社會人士對聾人及手語的誤解，我們有以下的建議：
    i. 很多聾人和健聽人都不認識什麼是《殘疾人權利公約》。政府應該向普羅巿民加強宣傳公約的內容，長遠有助改善聾人在社會上的待遇。
    ii. 很多健聽人不理解聾人的背景、困難、生活上的需要等等。政府應該多加宣傳，促進聾健共融。
    iii. 免費報紙越來越普遍，讀者層面廣。政府不妨考慮資助聾人團體利用報紙宣傳有關聾人的資訊，例如手語教學圖片、笑話、聾人文化、困難等等。
    iv. 以前週日早上播出的《時事摘錄》及現時周日早上播出的《識多一點點》有加入手語翻譯，但都不是在黃金時間內播出，收看的人有限。我們建議把節目改在黃金時間播出，方便更多人收看，從而減少健聽人對聾人和手語的誤解。
    v. 建議增加《聾人新聞》，聘用聾人擔任主持，用手語來報導新聞，配以廣東話翻譯，一方面可以避免誤譯和漏譯的問題，另一方面也便利健聽人學習自然手語，加強聾健共融。
    vi. 電視常播出《英語一分鐘》、《普通話一分鐘》和《韓語一分鐘》等節目，讓市民了解不同的語言和文化。在推廣聾人文化和手語的時候，政府也可以考慮製作《手語一分鐘》的節目，不過，由於手語的表達渠道有所不同，要讓普羅大眾明白這個語言，開始的時候需要較
長的時間，我們建議製作《手語五分鐘》的電視節目，讓不同的人學手語，例如聾童家長、警寕、老師等等。但節目內的手語不應統一，否則很多聾人會反對。因為香港手語有些詞語在打法上有差異，有些手語是源自不同聾人學校的聾人社群，我們應該尊重各個聾人社群的語言文化，不能隨便抽出一個手語字，而略去其他的體系。

vii. 拍攝宣傳短片，示範在不同的處境下（例如醫院、學校、辦公室等）健聽人應如何與聾人溝通。這些短片有助市民大眾接納和理解聾人的需要，減少不必要的誤會。

viii. 希望政府設立公共設施時考慮聾人的需要。

最後，我們希望藉此立場書重申，健聽人不應視聾人為病人，他們只是操手語的族群，跟其他的少數民族沒有多大分別。香港聾人社群有相當高的自我認同感，手語是他們自己的語言。我們懇請香港政府根據聯合國《殘疾人權利公約》的建議，保障香港聾人應得的權利，早日消除健聽人對聾人的誤解，最終達致聰健共融的和諧社會。我們認為:

「聾人需要的，不是同情，而是機會。」

參考文獻:
政府統計處。2008。《從綜合住戶統計調查搜集所得的社會資料：第四十八號專題報告書》。香港：政府統計處綜合住戶統計調查組(一)。

香港中文大學 語言學及現代語言系 手語及聾人研究中心 聾人員工
二零一零年十月七日
研究中心聾人員工名單:
沈柏基   朱君毅   邱紫紅   路駿怡
盧瑞華   蔡偉雄   潘頌詩   余煒琳
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對於手語是否妨礙聾童口語學習一事，馬夏克（2004：7，刑敏華譯）有這樣的評述：「有些父母誤以為學習手語會干擾他們聾小孩的口語學習，因此他們盡可能長期抗拒手語。然而手語似乎能夠支持口語的學習，包括人工電子耳蝸佩戴者；而且並沒有證據證明這種干擾。家長延緩孩子學習手語，為的是希望孩子可以獲得更好的說話技巧，這種論點已被顯示沒有任何益處。」

對於聾童學習語言的關鍵期，馬夏克（2004：7，刑敏華譯）說：「我們知道生命的第一年是基本語言技巧發展的時候，嬰幼兒兩歲到三歲的階段常被認為是語言學習的關鍵期。自然語言的學習無可取代，因此等小孩到三歲至四歲以後才開始獲得語言並不是正常的事情。」

對於語言獲得延誤的影響，馬夏克（2004：3，刑敏華譯）這樣說：「在幼兒期間，不管是聾或聽力正常的嬰兒都會學習很多環境內的人和事物，以及有關如何與他人相處的方法。然而，很多聾童的語言獲得遲緩，還有我們經常看教育上成績的聾童；這些都在指出所有現象的發生是有共同早期根源的。有時我們誤認為這些遲緩現象可能是因為聾障的原因，或是因為聾童不會使用口語的緣故。但是聾父母所生的聾童他們卻不會呈現這些困難，因此我們不能以聰障或使用手語等理由來解釋這些現象。相反地，目前可找到的研究指出，聾童學習或發展上的遲緩，最可能的原因是由於缺乏親子間有效的溝通所致——通常不是太過偏重口語就是太偏向手語。」
致康復諮詢委員會「推廣手語工作小組」建議書

香港手語文化聯盟（手盟）的成立，是為了團結聾人，發揮最大的力量，以達至「鞏固及推廣聾人手語，凝聚及發揚聾人文化」的宗旨。手盟由非政府資助的聾人自務組織「香港聾啞協會」、「香港聾劇團」、「真鐸啟喑學校校友會」、「紫荊聚集」、「聾之友」、「香港聾人會」以及「香港手語協會」組成核心機構，「香港聾人體育總會」及「無言天地劇團」則為支持機構，並由「香港手語協會」擔任秘書處。

手盟對康復諮詢委員會為實踐《殘疾人權利公約》有關「承認和推動手語的使用」此一條文而成立「推廣手語工作小組」大表支持，并希望能在各方面與工作小組及受社署資助的非政府機構（NGO）攜手合作，為此，手盟提出以下建議，希望工作小組能予以考慮：

認識聾人文化，令聾健共融
要使手語普及化，就需要讓社會大眾對聾人社群有基本的了解，而推廣對象亦應包括聾人在內。工作小組可考慮與18區區議會合辦「聾人文化推廣週」，以巡迴展覽及舉辦活動的方式向社會大眾簡述聾人的生活、教育、社交、文化，澄清一般人對手語的誤解，此舉可減少社會大眾因不明白聾人的行為特性而導致無意的歧視，亦可提高聾人對自我身份的理解與認同；而有關活動，可廣邀來自不同組織及階層的聾人一起擔任「推廣大使」的角色。

推廣手語，使手語普及化
要有效推廣手語於社區中使用，並廣被公眾及聾人所接受，就需要精挑細選涵蓋「衣」、「食」、「住」、「行」，以及最易於讓公眾自行學習及可於日常生活中使用的手語詞彙（可參考香港手語協會籌辦的「手語普及運動」內容），活動並應由聾人擔當「手語大使」的角色。

規範手語，讓溝通無障礙
自對聾人實施口語教育政策至今，手語一直被禁止在課堂使用，手語詞彙因而未能有效的承傳及使用，此外，教育政策未能配合聾人的溝通需要，以致現年輕一代的聾人成為四不及：1)理解能力不及；2)書寫能力不及；3)口語能力不及；4)手語能力不及，因而被剝奪接受高等教育的機會，亦減弱了聾人在社會就
業的競爭力。雖然如此，少部份擁有良好的閱讀及理解能力，對手語有超卓的認識與極佳的手語溝通技能，但卻未有機會接受高等教育的聾人仍大有人在。

為了鞏固及推廣聾人手語，手盟聯合上述聾人共同成立「手語規範化」工作小組，並已完成港鐵全線各站（不包括輕鐵站）的手語站名規範工作，現時正準備就香港十八區區名及熱門旅遊景點進行規範化工作。手盟希望工作小組能對手盟的「手語規範化」工作小組提供政策上的支持，推廣經手盟規範化的手語詞彙，並協助尋求經濟上的支援。

**增加聾人代表加入工作小組**
手盟希望工作小組能增加聾人代表，以配合《公約》第二十九條「參與政治和公共生活」第二項「積極創造環境，使殘疾人能夠不受歧視地在與其他人平等的基礎上有效和充分地參與處理公共事務，並鼓勵殘疾人參與公共事務」的條文，與工作小組緊密合作。

**手盟成員代表**
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香港聾人會會長高楠先生
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香港聾人福利促進會
推廣手語意見書
2010 年 12 月

香港聾人福利促進會建議在推廣手語工作方面可循以下三個面向進行討論：

I. 推動公衆學習手語
II. 在不同場合/生活範疇提供手語傳譯(翻譯)
III. 向公衆推廣聾人文化及特性

I. 推動公衆學習手語
推廣手語的目的是使聾障人士融入社會，而手語既是一種溝通語言，有愈多人能
使用手語，則愈有助聾障人士融入社會。以下為推動公衆了解/學習手語的建議：

1.1. 製作以手語為題的政府宣傳片(API)，內容以介紹聾障人士的溝通特性。

1.2. 在不同渠道製作教授手語或認識手語的節目：

a. 手語節目專輯：過去有不少電台曾製作過教授英語、普通話等的節目 (如近
期港台的反斗英語)，既然聯合國殘疾人權利公約中已確認手語推動的重要性，
建議製作教授手語的專輯。

該節目可在各免費電視台頻道，以及在公共交通的廣播頻道 (如巴士路訊通，或
西鐵、九鐵車廂內等) 播放。

b. 互聯網：製作“5 分鐘學習香港手語”或與手語相關的專欄，利用互聯網互動功
能吸引網友免費學習 簡單日常手語。

c. 開發智能手機 App 程式：香港人日常接觸電腦/智能手機的時間愈來愈長，建
議開發一些程式，帶出推廣手語 的訊息。

1.3. 在政府部門推廣手語的工作
政府如能帶頭推廣手語，私人企業亦會陸續參與，使手語普及。政府部門為前線
員工安排手語課程，履行消除殘疾歧視的責任，達致真正的傷健共融。而且政府
各部門的辦公人員亦應該學習簡單手語，以便能應付聾人的查詢，在或提供服務
時，作出簡單的溝通。

政府除了安排員工參加手語課程外，亦應該撥出資源，聘用聾人出任手語導師，
除了可以協助他們融入社會外，亦可令他們自食其力，貢獻社會。
II. 在不同場合/生活範疇提供手語傳譯(翻譯)
增加手語傳譯(翻譯)是推廣手語中一個重要範疇，聾人在攝取資訊方面落後於一般人，主要因為是他們因聽力困難未能得到即時的聲音資訊(包括由政府公佈、立法會辯論以至日常工作會議等)，由於無法明白這些即時對話和溝通的內容，因而影響聾障人士未能完全參與討論，甚至難於表達所想，這大大阻礙他們融入生活，以及造成一般人對聾障人士能力的誤解。

以下的建議不但能協助聾障人士有平等機會攝取資訊，更能引起公眾明白手語傳譯對聾障人士的重要性，以及增加對聾障人士應享有權利的認知。

2.1 政府宣傳短片及官方網頁中加上手語傳譯
現時政府宣傳短片從未有加插手語傳譯，建議在香港政府一站通內政府宣傳短片提供手語傳譯：此外，為協助部分聾障人士了解政府的資訊及政策，建議政策諮詢網頁(如醫療改革第二階段諮詢)及與聾障人士相關的網頁(如聯合國《殘疾人權利公約》網頁)，加設手語短片版。

2.2 突發事件、直播的政府重要新聞公佈
正如廣播管理局有對免費電台提供字幕規定，我們建議電視台制定手語翻譯的規定，為突發事件、直播的政府重要新聞公佈(例如：豬流感、全港市民關心事件(如行政長官選舉、施政報告、財政報告、立法會會議等)提供翻譯，因這些消息通常是因直播而未能提供字幕，亦不會重播，聾障人士未能明白有關內容，並減低他們參與各項社會、文化及政治活動的機會。

2.3 公共醫院傳譯服務
為公共醫院設立手語傳譯服務，使各區醫院包括急症室當遇到有需要的病人，能儘快傳召手語傳譯人員，協助醫生第一時間得知病人狀況，及時給予診治，並能為其他應診的聾人提供傳譯服務。

2.4 博物館傳譯服務
現時只有香港藝術館提供一個月兩次的手語傳譯服務，建議其他博物館也提供手語傳譯。此外，現時博物館會提供播放導賞錄音器材，可供參觀人士借用，只要按展品編號便可聆聽錄音介紹。

建議康文署考慮開發手語導覽服務系統，製作手語影片導賞，利用智能手機或各種可攜式播放器供借用，只要按展品號碼，便可觀看相關展品的手語介紹片段，又或可以提供檔案程式，下載至私人手機。近年資訊科技的發展，已有不少例子可供參考，視像影片導賞取代錄音也可供一般人使用。可參考澳門旅遊局為旅客提供的「掌上澳」。

III. 向公衆推廣聾人文化及特性
手語是聾人文化不可分割的部分，在推廣手語的同時，必須同時介紹聾人文化，才能使公衆真正認識聾人的情況，若沒有這些基本理解，一般人不明白聾人的文化、習慣和困難，手語推廣往往事倍功半。

例如在工作上，一個以手語為主要溝通媒介的聾人，他的工作能力與常人相同，只因聽力困難影響溝通，但上司卻堅持要求聰障僱員要以讀唇溝通，又不願意以文字提供工作指示，致使該名僱員感到望，覺得受到歧視。這位上司因爲不明聰障人士的溝通需要，他若能學習一些簡單手語，已足夠協助日常溝通，何社公衆對聰障人士的理解有限，亦不明白他們的處境，因此要公衆接納和樂意使用手語，亦需要以不同的手法，以潛移默化的方式使公衆了解聾人文化及特性，從而採用不同協助聰障人士的措施。

3.1 融合教育
從 2001 年起，很多聰障學生已到主流學校就讀，建議向老師及學生提供公衆教育課程，教授手語以及介紹聾人文化，促進他們對聰障人士的了解。

3.2 製作深入認識聰障人士的節目，以及加入打手語人士擔任主持
近年，平機會及勞福局皆有製作以殘疾人士為題的電視專輯，但通常每個界別的殘疾人士只有一集時間，難於使公衆全面了解聰障人士的情況。本港現時以殘疾人士為題的節目並不多，如香港電台的非常人物生活雜誌。但電視節目則只有香港電台的識多一點點及時事摘錄，但主要以手語傳譯爲主，並非表達聰障人士的情況或想法。

台灣電視台(公共電視台)有製作以聰障人士為對象的節目(「聰聽看」)，由聰障人士做主持，並以手語作爲溝通語言，配對對白及字幕，內容包括教授手語、報導各行各業聰障人士情況、聰障人士與健聽人士相處，社區 資訊，但內容也包括其他殘疾人士，可以讓健聽及其他不同殘疾的人士觀看；更重要的是因爲有聰障人士參與製作，從節目中可帶出聰障人士的想法、觀點及角度。

3.3 對電視廣播的規定
香港聾人福利促進會曾經就廣播事務管理局在 2009 年就「本地免費電視節目服務牌照中期檢討」提交意見書，當中曾建議持牌機構必須製作若干比例的節目，以期達到維護殘疾人士權利、促進殘疾人士融入社會，以及僱健共融的目的。因爲在免費電視節目服務牌照中現時有規定電台要製作以青少年、長者及聽障人士為對象的節目，但並沒有製作以聰障人士為對象之節目的規定，或規定若干比例的節目必須照顧各個殘疾人士(包括聰障人士)的需要。
其中聽障人士當然是其中一個指定對象，可仿效台灣電視台（公共電視台）有製作以聽障人士為對象的節目，由聽障人士做主持，並以手語作為溝通語言，配以對白及字幕，也可以讓健聽及其他不同殘疾人士觀看。

電視台有社會責任，根據公約精神，電視台亦須視殘疾人士為其服務對象之一，政府必須訂立長遠政策，規定電視台或電子傳媒製作持續節目，才能把共融概念植入公眾心中，傷健共融才能成為本土文化的一部分。

3.4 推廣國際聾人節
9月最後一個周日是國際聾人節，國際社會亦會於9月最後一周舉辦推廣聾人文化活動。本地聾人機構及團體亦會響應舉辦活動，但由於資金及場地不足，往往推廣活動局限於地區性，難引起社會關注。建議政府確認9月最後一個周日為國際聾人節，協助本地聾人機構及團體舉辦全港性活動，如民政事務局特別協助提供常規性的場地和撥款資助等。
Submission of HKAD to the Joint Meeting on Deaf Education & Promotion of Sign Language
Committee on the Promotion of Sign Language of Advisory Committee on Rehabilitation

(17 May 2011)

Present situation:

1. Limited number of certified sign interpreters;
2. Limited training of sign language and deaf studies programmes in HK;
3. Using aural teaching of deaf students; suppressing the manual approach in teaching;
4. Limited deaf students in tertiary education;
5. Limited retraining programmes for deaf unemployed;

Recommendations:

1. Introduce sign interpreter training and assessment;
2. Provision of sign interpreter for deaf students educational support;
3. Establish deaf studies training of deaf educators;
4. Promote sign language among the hearing society and in schools;
5. Introduce sign language for training of teachers;
6. Provide financial support for deaf in attending overseas training, conferences and exchange;
7. Introduce daily signed news & educational programmes on TV;
8. Reintroduce subvention to Deaf Association to provide services to the Deaf;
9. Introduce sign interpretation for government departments and use of SMS for appointments;
10. Set up relay centres for sign and simultaneous interpretation services;
11. Provide sign interpreters for deaf elderlies in homes.

Prepared by

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Sign Language and Deaf Education in Hong Kong –
Recommendations to the Working Group on Promoting Sign Language,
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August, 2011

Introduction

1.1 Sign language is a natural language with a full-fledged grammar

Recent advancement in Sign Linguistics and Sign Language Acquisition research have enabled us to reconsider the role that sign language may play in bringing up deaf children. The proposal “Sign Bilingualism” is built upon the assumption that sign language can partner with spoken language in supporting the language, cognitive and social-psychological development, as well as education, of deaf children (Grosjean 2010, Plaza-Pust 2008). In fact, faced with accumulating evidence from sign linguistics research, and
subsequent to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in relation to deaf education, the Organizing Committee of the 2010 International Congress on the Education of the Deaf made a public apology to the Congress and Deaf Communities worldwide for having deprived Deaf people of access to sign language and Deaf teachers in deaf education for 130 years. This apology was accompanied with a landmark decision to urge the restoration of sign language and Deaf teachers in educating deaf children in whichever educational setting where this need is called for. There are different modes of sign bilingual programmes in the world, many of which are implemented in deaf educational settings. Parallel to this development, there have been an increasing number of programmes in the world that attempt to bring Sign Bilingualism in line with inclusive education. This model is implemented in mainstream environment supplemented with sign language support in classroom learning, either in the form of interpretation or co-teaching by a deaf teacher as far as possible. Whichever approach the school adopts in their effort to support deaf children in receiving education, one needs to comply with expectations set internationally which attempt to address fundamental issues of language in deaf education and basic human rights of Deaf people.

Below are the major recommendations prepared by the Centre for Sign Linguistics and Deaf Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, and The Center for Education Research Partnerships, National Technical Institute for the Deaf, Rochester Institute of Technology.

2. **The right for the deaf children to grow up sign bilingual**

2.1 Deaf children should have the right to become sign bilingual (Grosjean 1999). They should be provided with both sign and spoken language input as both languages are linguistically equal in status. Access to sign language should be made as simple and direct as possible for children born Deaf and hard-of-hearing, and the same provisions should be available to their families. A website to house the translation of Grosjean (1999) into different languages can be found at http://www.francoisgrosjean.ch/the_right_en.html

2.2 Sign language should not be regarded as a remedial or ‘last resort’ strategy for deaf children, after they have experienced the insurmountable difficulty in improving their
speech only to be branded a failure case at the end. In fact, all these unnecessary and inhumane strategies can be avoided if their spoken language training or development is supported by sign language. Language acquisition research involving deaf children has already proven beyond doubt that sign language is a natural language and has the advantage of supporting deaf children in capitalizing on the critical period effects. There is no evidence, and there never has been any evidence, that deaf children's learning of sign language will interfere with the learning of spoken language (Spencer and Marschark 2010). Because of erroneous assumptions to the contrary, adequate provisions established by the government are necessary to ensure maximal access to linguistic input through sign language in deaf children’s early language development. This should be facilitated and secured with clearly stated education policies by the government.

3. The role of Sign Language in Deaf Education

3.1 As stated by the Education Bureau (2010a) “[t]he aim of special education in Hong Kong is to provide children with special needs with education to help them develop their potential to the full”, students should be given provisions that can effectively remove their barriers to learning and develop their strengths (Education Bureau, 2010b). Also, Lane, Pillard, and Hedberg (2011) emphasize that Deaf individuals should be viewed as “SEEING” persons when the definition is based on their strengths, not weaknesses. As a full-fledged natural visual language which is fully accessible to deaf students without barriers, the acquisition of a sign language has proved to be effective in assisting them in developing a good foundation for language to support academic learning and literacy skills development. Therefore, the role of sign language in educating deaf children should be clearly stated in the local education policies, and appropriate services and teacher training programmes should be developed accordingly.

3.2 Given the diverse needs of students, “teachers can no longer adopt one single teaching approach for all students, nor can they expect all students to attain the same academic standard.” (Education Bureau, 2010b, p.1). There should not be only “one solution for all deaf students”. Educational options have to be made available to deaf
infants since birth if early intervention is regarded as a necessity. The provision of sign language as part of early intervention does not mean that the role of spoken language should be downplayed, quite on the contrary, speech training should be encouraged as far and early as possible too, but parents and teachers should be educated about the limitations facing their deaf child, and not to undermine the importance of sign language in their development.

4. **Sign language support in different educational settings**

4.1 According to the Article 24 (2b) and (3c) of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, all deaf and hard-of-hearing children should have the right to “access an inclusive, quality and free primary education and secondary education on an equal basis with others”, they should receive education that is “delivered in the most appropriate languages and modes and means of communication for the individual” (United Convention, 2006). To respond to these recommendations, it is high time the Government provide sign language support in deaf education, in both segregated and mainstream settings in Hong Kong at all levels.

4.2 As a natural language with a full-fledged grammar, sign language should be used as an additional medium of instruction, alongside with spoken language, for deaf children in both preschool and school-aged settings.

5. **Parental guidance**

5.1 Parents should be explained explicitly the pros and cons of the different options of deaf education. Considering that there are long-standing misconceptions about sign language among parents and professionals in Hong Kong, public education is necessary to achieve an intelligent understanding of the role of sign language in language development and education of deaf children.
6. **Training for teachers**

6.1 Deaf education is not simply special needs education or integrated education. Specific knowledge and competency should be required for a registered teacher for the Deaf. Therefore, as in other countries, teachers for the Deaf should be trained in a separate programme and awarded with special qualification.

6.2 As mentioned in the Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities proposed, all teachers for the Deaf should be qualified in sign language (United Convention, 2006), which means a sign language proficiency requirement should be set for teachers or professionals involved in Deaf education who may be educational psychologists, audiologists and language pathologists.

6.3 Besides acquiring sign language skills, teachers for the Deaf should learn about Deaf identity, Deaf culture and Deaf awareness preferably taught by Deaf adults, in order to develop a positive, non-deficit-oriented attitude about Deafness.

6.4 A system of educational interpreters should be developed for in-class support of Deaf students. The role of interpreters should not be restricted to sign interpretation, but also educational support.

7. **Training for Deaf teachers**

7.1 As advocated by the Organizing Committee and the British Columbia Deaf Community during the International Congress on Education of the Deaf (ICED) held in Vancouver 2010, Deaf participation and collaboration should be promoted in both special and mainstream school settings with deaf children. Fluent Deaf signers should be employed as teachers as far as possible, and set as Deaf models for the students in school.

7.2 Deaf adults should be provided with equal educational opportunities for training to become Deaf teachers for the Deaf. The government has the obligation to support sign interpretation services when Deaf adults undergo these training processes.
8. **Equal opportunities in education**

8.1 Deaf students should have equal opportunities for participating in class- and school-level activities although they are using a visual language, other than a spoken language, in all kinds of educational settings.

8.2 The contents of the curriculum and the aspired goals and educational outcomes for Deaf students should be the same as hearing students.

8.3 In special schools for the Deaf, sign language should not be used as a medium of instruction only, it should be considered as part of the school curriculum and be taught as a separate subject.

9. **Public education**

9.1 The public should be educated on the following:

i. Sign language has linguistic status as a language having an independent grammatical system. It is not gesture or the signing version of a spoken language. "Sign language" is used as a general term here, but each country has its own sign language (e.g., American Sign Language, Russian Sign Language, Hong Kong Sign Language), and some countries have more than one;

ii. Sign language is the language used by the Deaf community. As a natural language, it does not adversely affect, but support, the learning of other languages, be they signed or spoken;

iii. Deaf people have the rights to be given oral language and sign language training, and to receive education through these two languages in any educational settings where they find themselves.

**Reference**


The Use of Sign Language by the Hearing Impaired Students in schools

Education Policy

- The aim of special education in Hong Kong is to provide children having special needs with appropriate education to help them develop their potential to the full, achieve as much independence as they are capable of, and become well-adjusted individuals in the community. Under the existing education policy, students with severe special educational needs (SEN) or multiple disabilities are referred to special schools for intensive support services based on the assessment and recommendation of specialists/medical practitioners and subject to parents’ consent. Therefore, students with severe or profound hearing loss (including those who might depend on the use of sign language in communication) are referred to schools for children with hearing impairment upon the assessment of audiologist and parents’ consent.

- Special schools would, according to the abilities, learning and communication needs of the hearing impaired (HI) students, adopt the most appropriate communication means (including oral, sign language or total communication approach) in their daily teaching. Special school teachers would train HI students to use their residual hearing for listening comprehension and lip-reading skills for helping them to master the skills in communicating with other HI or hearing people.

- EDB encourages HI students with lesser degree of severity to study in ordinary schools so that they would study together with their hearing counterparts and benefit from each other. EDB also provides additional resources, professional support and teacher training for ordinary schools to facilitate the latter in providing appropriate support to students with SEN.

Factors to consider when selecting communication modes

- HI students need to receive the maximum language input since their early childhood, whether through oral language, sign language or other communication approaches (such as auditory-verbal method, total communication method or sign-supported Chinese method, etc.). As each student has different abilities and inclinations, it is not appropriate to adopt one single communication means or teaching method in educating HI students. When considering which communication mode to be adopted for a certain child, the factors one should consider include: the degree of hearing loss – the amount of residual hearing left, whether early identification and intervention has been provided, how early the child has started to use appropriate assistive listening devices,
whether there are any other deaf relatives at home, the language used for daily communication at home (i.e. the mother tongue) and whether the child has any other learning disabilities, etc.

- Organizations that provide services for preschool HI children such as the child assessment centres under the Department of Health or the Hospital Authority as well as the child care centres under the Social Welfare Department, etc. have the obligation to explain to parents about the different communication modes and options that are available for their HI children.

The use of sign language in schools

Special Schools (Lutheran School for the Deaf)

- The Lutheran School for the Deaf (LSD) has employed both hearing and deaf teachers and deaf teaching assistants. The hearing teacher uses both oral language and sign language in daily teaching, supplemented by other visual strategies (such as written text, pictures, real objects and body language, etc) to enhance the students’ comprehension and effectiveness of learning. Where necessary, the deaf teaching assistant would use sign language to convey the teaching content to those students who are unable to benefit from the oral communication mode. The deaf teacher conducts lessons through sign language. Besides, the school will arrange sign interpretation in morning assemblies, seminars, teachers’ meetings, extra-curricular activities as well as parent / teacher training activities where necessary.

- To promote the use of sign language, LSD regularly organizes training for their students, parents and teachers. The school also promotes the awareness of sign language and inclusive culture in the community by organizing sign language workshops/seminars and inclusive activities etc. for HI students and teachers of ordinary schools.

- LSD recognizes the need to continue developing the use of sign language in teaching for the school, and has thus set up a working group on using sign language in teaching (手語教學工作小組) in the 2011/12 school year. With the collaboration of the professional staff of EDB, the school has worked out a mechanism of using sign language in teaching, as well as the direction and strategies for enhancing the effectiveness of learning and teaching through the use of sign language so as to further improve the qualities of education for students with hearing impairment. The above-mentioned working group has targeted to compile a school-based handbook on the rationale and practice of using sign language to supplement teaching (手語輔助教學的理念及實踐手冊) in early 2011/12 school year expounding their concept and direction of development of using sign language in teaching. EDB will work together with the school to continue developing the project.
Ordinary Schools

- Ordinary school teachers use oral language in daily teaching or communication with students. With a view to facilitating the HI students to use their residual hearing to acquire subject knowledge, the teachers will use different visual strategies, contextual cues, body language, written text and gestures, etc. to enhance the students’ comprehension and learning effectiveness.

- EDB will actively collaborate with the “Rehabilitation Advisory Committee – Working Group on Promoting Sign Language” to promote sign language in the school sector.

Teacher Training

- EDB is committed to providing teacher training for helping teachers understand the needs and learning difficulties of HI students as well as equipping them with the skills in supporting these students. In the 2007/08 school year, EDB has launched a 5-year teacher professional development framework on integrated education to provide structured training to serving teachers in ordinary and special schools. The framework consists of courses on SEN pitched at different levels including the 30-hour Basic Course, the 90-hour Advanced Course (with the learning and teaching for students with HI as one of the elective modules) as well as the 60-hour Thematic Course on “Education of Students with Hearing Impairment” (with information on different communication modes available for HI students and deaf culture).

- We have been closely monitoring the condition of teacher training and reminding schools to arrange appropriate teachers to receive special education training so as to strengthen the teachers’ professional competence in supporting students with SEN (including students with HI). EDB has run the Thematic Course on “Education of Students with Hearing Impairment” in both the 2008/09 and 2009/10 school years. In order to attract more teachers to receive training on teaching students with HI, we have launched a Thematic Course on “Education of Students with Hearing Impairment and Speech and Language Impairments” in the 2010/11 school year. Feedback from teachers on the Course was positive.

- The 5-year teacher professional development framework on integrated education will be completed in the 2011/12 school year. We will conduct a review of the framework and consider the way forward. In addition, we are actively liaising with the education sector (including ordinary schools, special schools and tertiary institutes) on how to further improve the training content so that students with SEN (including HI students) will receive more apt and appropriate support.

- EDB also encourages schools, having regard to the needs of their HI students, to recommend teachers to attend training courses on sign language conducted by schools.
for children with HI or other organizations.

Education Bureau
August 2011