



# NETWORKING MAP

DEAF *ROLE MODELS*

BEST PRACTICE *COMPANIES*

BEST PRACTICE *ORGANISATIONS*



**Signs for Handshakes**



Deaf can do anything.  
Except hear.

ABOUT  
THIS 

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BROCHURE



## SIGNSFORHANDSHAKES

For Deaf youths the way into job training and the mainstream job market is still littered with barriers. Within this brochure Deaf people present their jobs, workplaces and areas of work. That way the information regarding „Deafness in the workspace“ seen here was contributed autonomously.

The profiles show various life stories und the roads taken. They are directed at entrepreneurs and Heads of HR, delivering realistic insights into future cooperative work. In addition the profiles are also a source of motivation for Deaf youths, providing first-hand information and assisting with orientation. A variety of companies and organisations are being introduced as „Best Practice“ examples. Their profiles show what Deaf-friendly workplaces can look like and how they can work in reality.



## SIGNSFORHANDSHAKES

**Signs for Handshakes (S4H)** is a two-year EU project with partners from Austria, Bulgaria, Slovenia and the United Kingdom. The project period is from October 2015 to September 2017.

**The project goals are:**

- to raise „Deaf Awareness“ on the labour market
- offer practical advice for employers on hiring young Deaf people
- increase job-opportunities for young Deaf job-candidates in the regular job market
- increase the understanding of effective methods of alternative communication in the workplace
- strengthen the use of sign language in the workplace (basic everyday signs)



S4h aims to improve opportunities for Deaf youths in the labour market.

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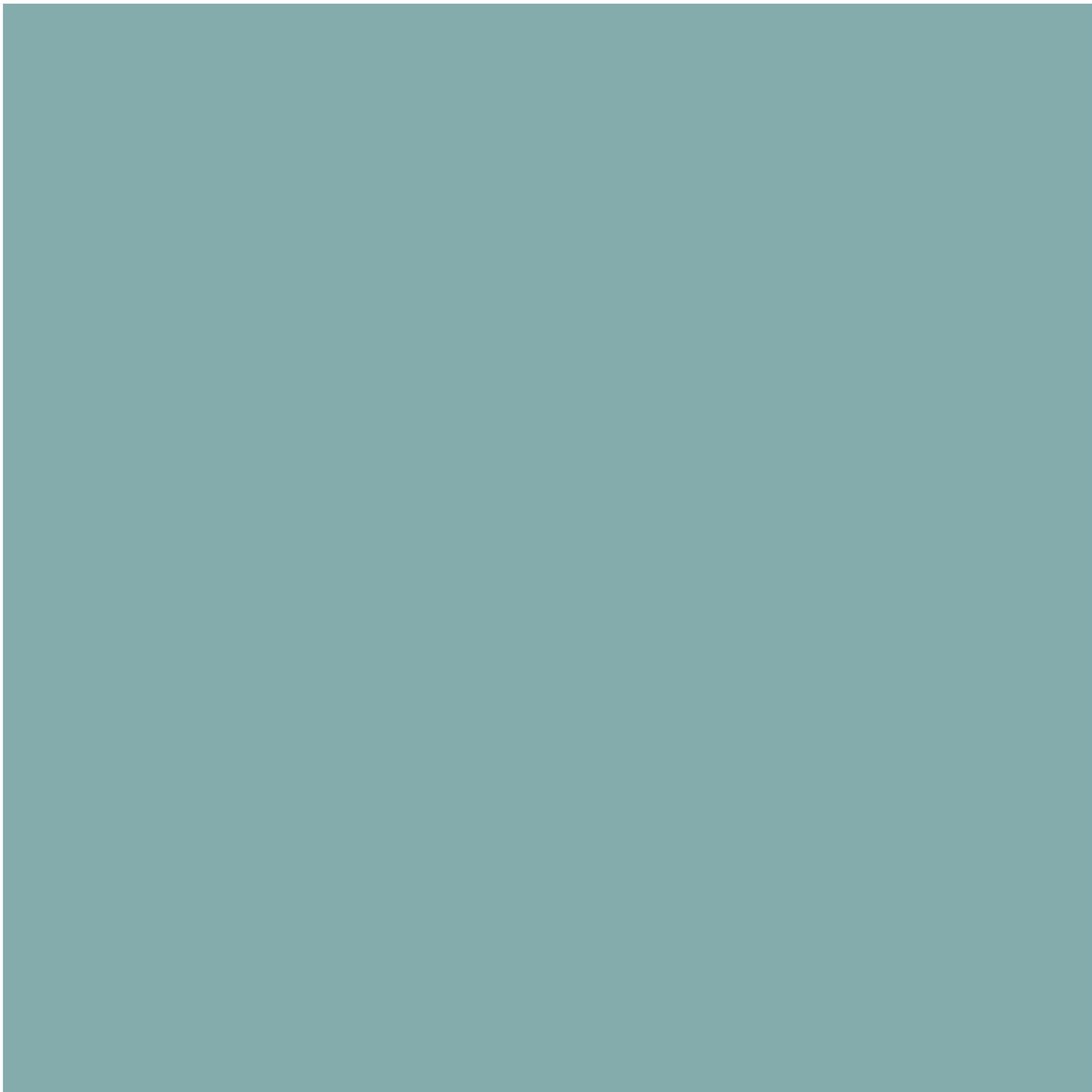


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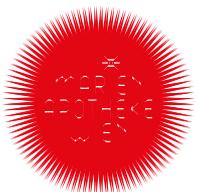
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# Marien *Pharmacy*

Public pharmacy



**Contact:**  
[www.marienapo.eu](http://www.marienapo.eu)  
[silence@marienapo.at](mailto:silence@marienapo.at)



Vienna,  
Austria

## ABOUT US



The Marien Pharmacy, in the 6th district of Vienna, is striking, colourful and unique, like a chamber of marvels, full of new ideas and healthy delicacies. Above all, this pharmacy – fondly called “Mariechen” by its employees – is an important contact point for Deaf people. That’s what its owner, Mag.a pharm. Karin Simonitsch, is most proud of. Deafness shouldn’t be a handicap, especially when it concerns the healthcare sector. In the Marien Pharmacy there are four Deaf employees, one of them is the very first Deaf pharmacist in Europe, Mag. pharm. Sreco Dolanc.

There are also hearing employees who can sign themselves and understand sign language. This expertise has led the Marien Pharmacy to be involved in many, and varied projects. The pharmacy is in regular contact with Deaf-Organisations in Austria.

The Marien Pharmacy produces a number of communications to support Deaf people, videos on various health topics in sign language, it sends barrier free newsletters and organises evenings for Deaf seniors to give them information about relevant areas of interest. Much has already been achieved – but the Marien Pharmacy will do much more!



“ We don't want Deafness to be a handicap, when it concerns health.

Mag<sup>a</sup>. Karin Simonitsch  
Management

  
MARIEN  
APOTHEKE  
WIEN

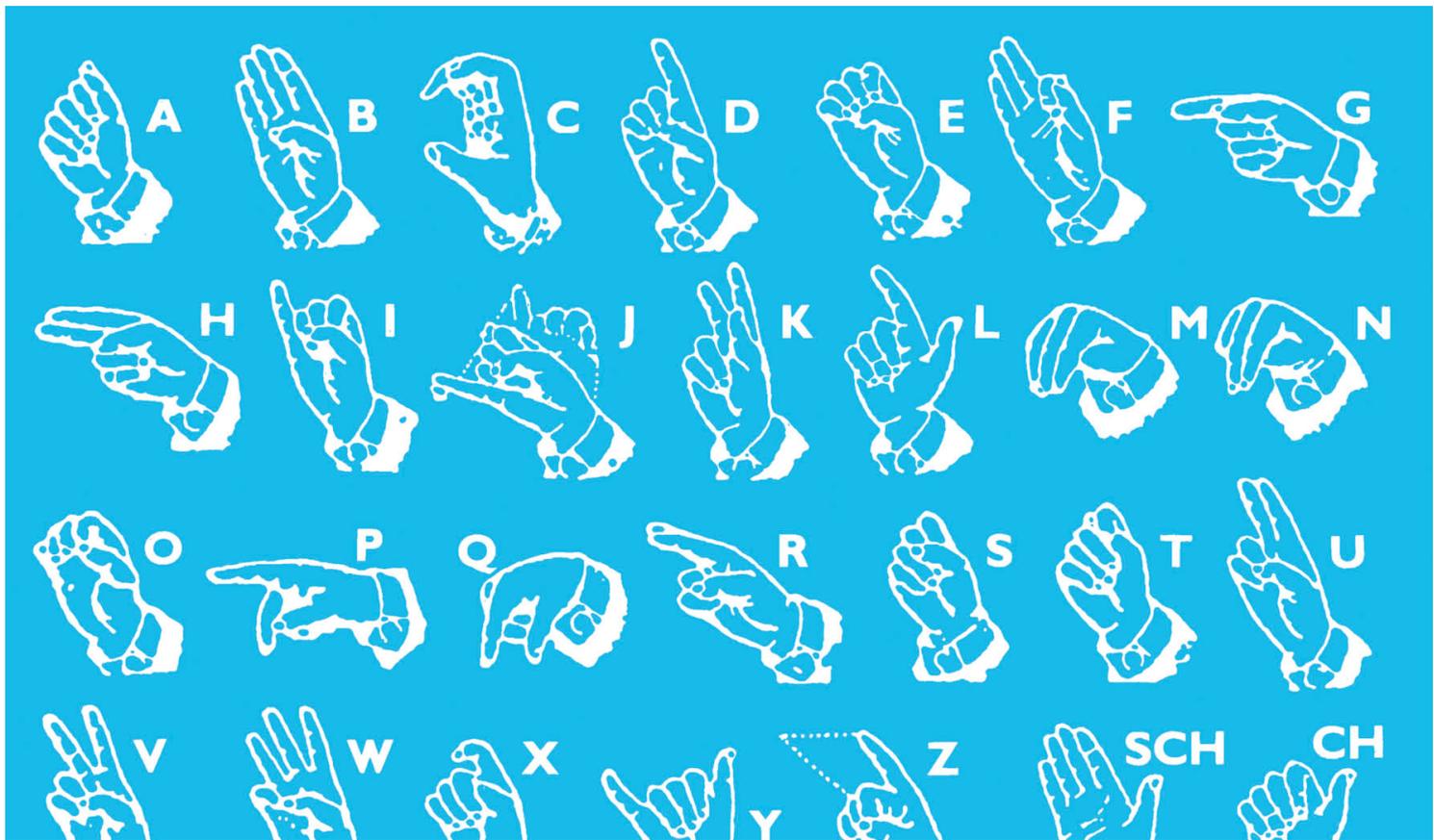


“ Using sign language means to open up to people. This already breaks down barriers.

Cornelia Zacek  
Marketing and Public Relations







# Sreco Dolanc

Pharmacist



**Workplace:**  
Marien Pharmacy  
[www.marienapo.eu](http://www.marienapo.eu)



## ABOUT SRECO DOLANC

Mag. Pharm. Sreco Dolanc was born and raised in Ljubljana, the capital city of Slovenia. Straight after successfully completing his training in pharmaceutical technology, he enrolled at the university in Ljubljana for pharmaceutical studies. Right before he received his diploma, he learned about Marien Pharmacy on the internet and applied for a job.

He learned German, had his diploma and qualifications recognised by the Austrian Chamber of Pharmacists and started working as the first and only Deaf Pharmacist in Europe at Marien Pharmacy. As the leader of the laboratory team, not only is he mixing ointments and teas, but also coordinates his team and is responsible for scheduling the staff.

He is also advising customers. Together with his hearing colleagues and an interpreter, who assists him twice a week, he also advises hearing customers in the pharmacy. Guidance and providing

information for Deaf customers in their native language – sign language – is very close to his heart.

To reach as many Deaf people as possible, he has already published over 30 videos in sign language on different health related topics, for example strengthening the immune system, tick protection and allergies. Furthermore he is regularly giving lectures for Deaf Seniors.

Sreco Dolanc is fluent in six languages: Slovenian, German, English, Slovenian Sign Language, Austrian Sign Language and International Sign Language. In his spare time he is learning Italian and loves to develop new signs for his area of expertise.

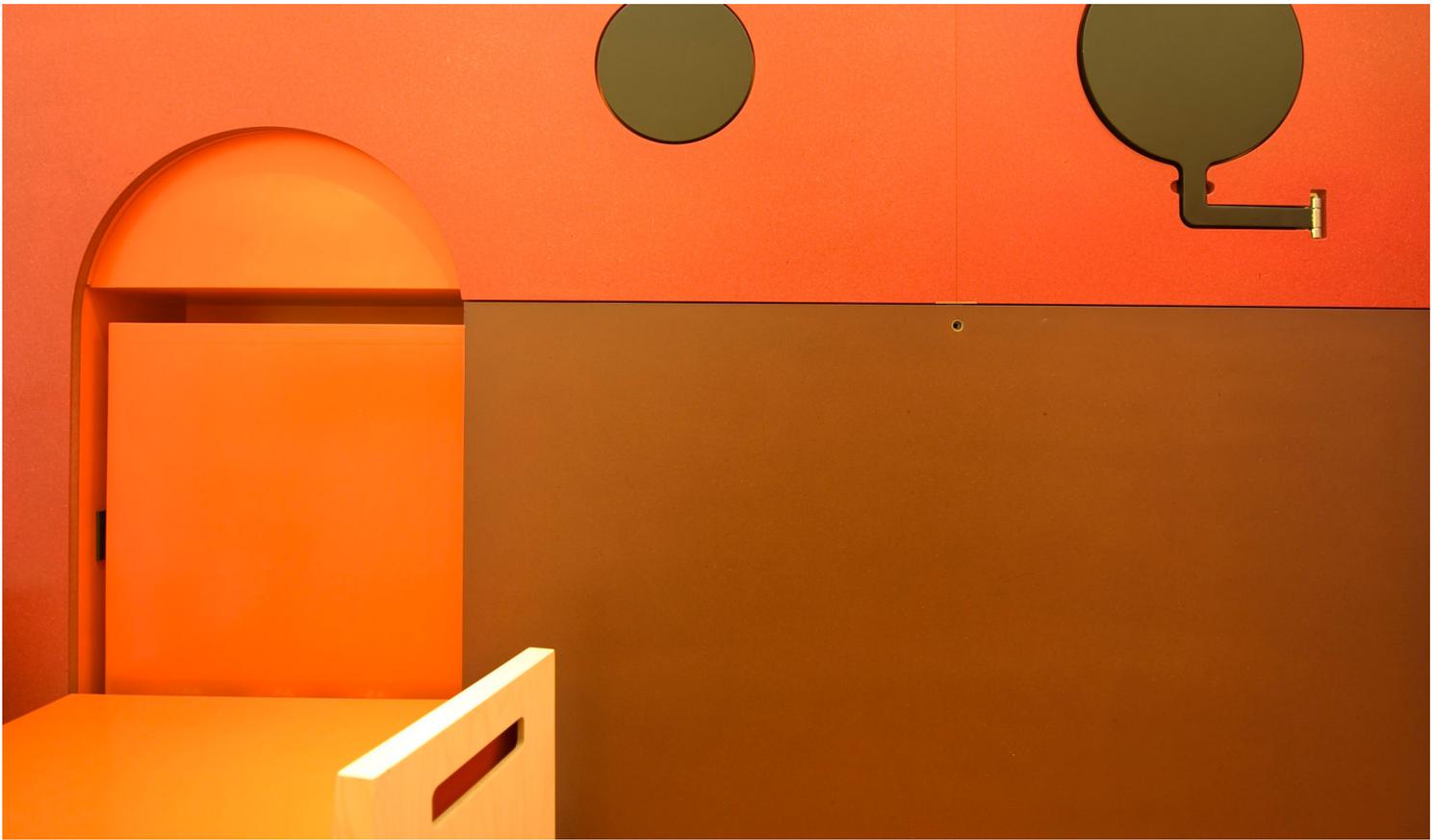
“ We are a successful company with Deaf and hearing colleagues.  
My recommendation to other employers: just try it!



“ My daily routine does not differ from the routine of other pharmacists.







# Tolga Korkmaz

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Pharmaceutical commercial assistant



**Workplace:**  
Marien Pharmacy  
[www.marienapo.eu](http://www.marienapo.eu)



## ABOUT TOLGA KORKMAZ

Tolga Korkmaz was born in Turkey and raised in Vienna – his native language is Austrian Sign Language, but he is also fluent in International Sign Language. After graduating from school he successfully passed his pharmaceutical-commercial apprenticeship at Marien Pharmacy and has since been working at goods acceptance and in the laboratory. He also enjoys being in direct touch with the costumers and wishes to focus on that even more in the future.

He is regularly in front of the camera for newsletters and translates health care topics for Deaf costumers in Austrian Sign Language. Furthermore he provides support and guidance for young, Deaf students conducting practical trainings at Marien Pharmacy.

Tolga Korkmaz is a father of two – he and his Deaf wife have a daughter and a son. Both of them are hearing and are raised bilingually. In addition to his family life, he loves to spend time playing football.







# David Iberer

Pharmaceutical commercial assistant



**Workplace:**  
Marien Pharmacy  
[www.marienapo.eu](http://www.marienapo.eu)



## ABOUT DAVID IBERER

In 2008, David Iberer was the first Deaf apprentice at Marien Pharmacy. He completed his apprenticeship as a pharmaceutical-commercial assistant with honours – as one of the best apprentices in Vienna. David has worked in the field of blister packaging at Marien Pharmacy since then. There medication for seniors is divided depending on day and time and then packaged by machines. It is a highly responsible field of work and complete concentration as well as precision is needed and mistakes must be avoided. Exactly the right job for David. He loves to dedicate himself completely and concentrate on his work.

In his spare time he can often be found at the football stadium. He is a huge supporter of FK Austria Vienna. Additionally he is a very active part of the Deaf Sports Association and also a member of the Sports Club Vienna.

A great passion of his is long-distance running: He has already completed several half marathons in different countries.







# Gaber Rupnik

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Chemist



**Workplace:**  
Alterno AD d.o.o.



## ABOUT GABER RUPNIK

Gaber Rupnik is a chemist. He obtained his degree at the famous Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. (USA) – the first and only University in the world for the Deaf and hard of hearing, where every class and seminar is held bilingually (American Sign Language and written English). The Ad-Futura-Foundation in Slovenia supported his studies because of his excellent grades.

After his graduation Gaber Rubnik returned to Slovenia and started to work in the field of chemical and physical analysis at Alterno AD D.O.O. in Ljubljana.

Communication is of utmost importance in his line of work, because, according to Gaber Rubnik: He uses Emails, direct communication (talking/lip-reading) or written notes on the staff board to communicate with his boss and colleagues.

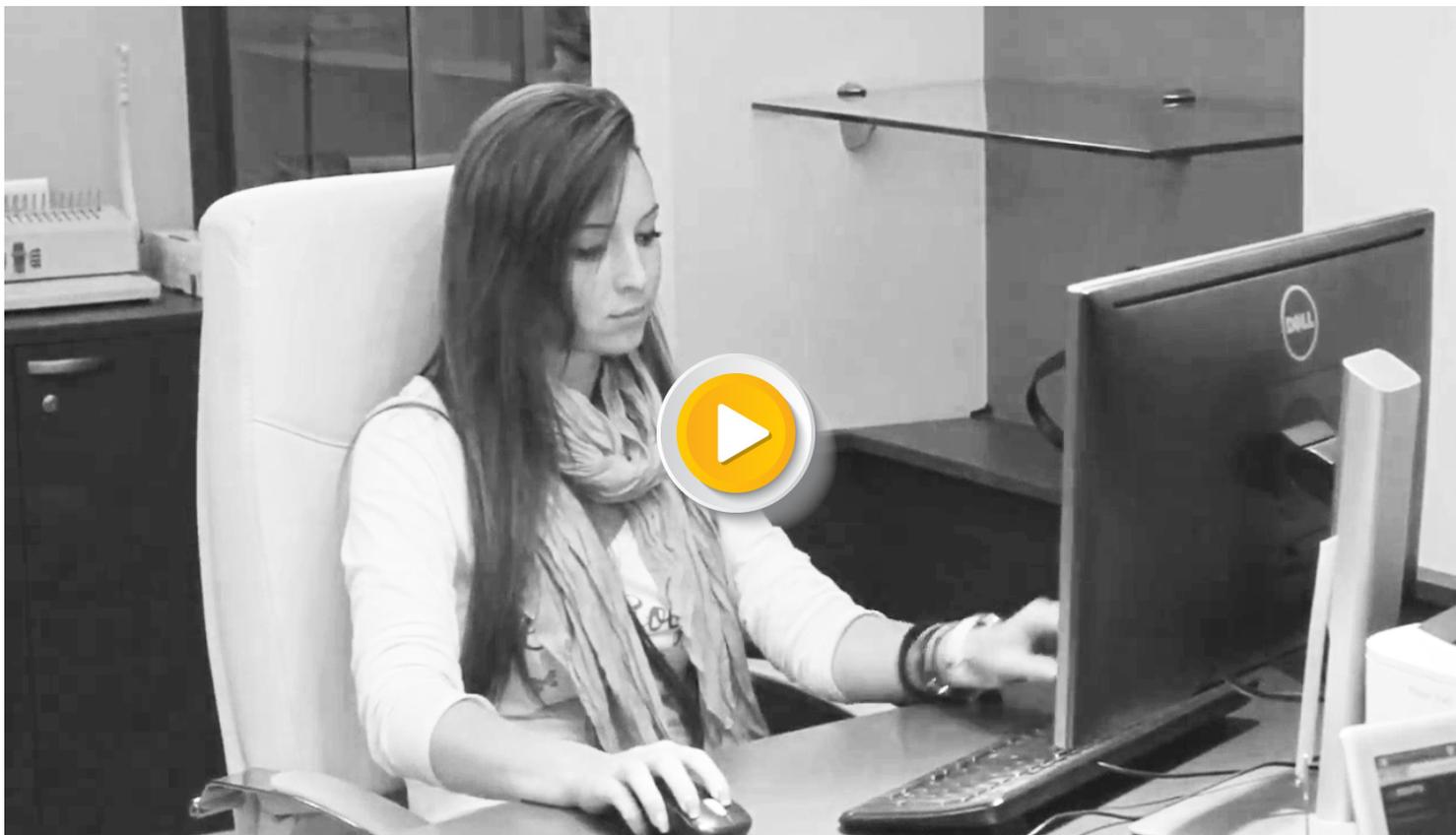


“ My work requires computer skills and a knowledge of the English language. You need to be detail oriented, have good analytical and mathematical skills and be able to think things through.



“ I prove myself to the company because of my knowledge and skills.





# Snezhanka *Asenova*

Graphic-designer



**Workplace:**  
CIC Company for int. Congresses  
[www.cic.bg](http://www.cic.bg)



Sofia,  
Bulgaria

## ABOUT SNEZHANKA ASENOVA

Snezhanka Asenova has been working as a graphic designer at CIC - Company for International Congresses Ltd. in Sofia for more than 3 years. CIC is one of the largest providers for event management in Bulgaria. CIC organizes events for companies, government departments, medical facilities and more.

Snezhanka Asenova is responsible for the graphical development of the overall concept of these events. Starting with the logo, all the way to the design of notebooks or buttons.

In addition to her job, she studies graphic design and acting at University. She brings a lot of creativity and expressiveness to the table, thanks to more than 10 years of experience as an actress. She also works with Deaf and hard of hearing people in the field of synchronous singing and dancing.



“ Our office runs the major events in Bulgaria. Therefore we need many different specialists, for example, graphic designers. This job comes with a lot of responsibilities, because the graphics are responsible for the vision and the presentation of an event. We decided to assign this job to Snezhanka. She is very creative, very active and energetic, and very quick in understanding what is needed for an event, in order to put everything into effect.

Didi Zafirova  
deputy CEO CIC

“ Everything about my work is very interesting. I am very happy and I like my job a lot. Communication is not a problem.







# Sign Time GmbH

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Translation service provider (sign language)



**Contact:**  
[www.signtime.eu](http://www.signtime.eu)  
[info@signtime.tv](mailto:info@signtime.tv)



## ABOUT US



SignTime is a company that combines technical innovations and accessibility: we here at SignTime translate into Austrian Sign Language. Our Team consists of three Deaf and three hearing colleagues. Together we work on translating the web pages of public authorities and various companies into Austrian Sign Language.

We also translate guided tours for museums that Deaf visitors can access via a video guide. The cooperative work of Deaf and hearing colleagues is a prerequisite for us. Together we form a well attuned team where everybody is contributing their own expertise. Multimedia know-how and language competence are equally important parts of our job. As such it was only natural for our hearing personnel to study Sign Language. The ability to learn from each other and our mutual exchange of ideas also enrich our everyday work and life.

An important technical innovation is our translation software „SiMax“. SiMax is a tool that we utilize to translate text and verbal contents into Sign Language using animated virtual characters called „Avatars“. One hearing and two Deaf employees animate this Avatar by „teaching“ the character how to move properly when using Sign Language.

The collaboration of Deaf and hearing colleagues isn't our only benchmark. We regularly gather feedback and expertise from our Deaf users to further improve the quality of SiMax.



“ Our company is an excellent example of Deaf and hearing employees working together. With this set-up we are able to maximize our performance and the quality of our services. This wouldn't be possible in any other configuration.

*Dr. Georg Tschare, General Manager*

“ Integration and inclusion are caused by taking actions.

*Dr. Georg Tschare, General Manager*

“ Our recommendation for young people:

chase your dream job, be brave and self-confident.

*Sign Time Team*







# Vinh *Nguyen*

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Master hairdresser



Contact:  
[facebook.com/vinschiii](https://www.facebook.com/vinschiii)



## ABOUT ME

I was able to realise my dream: I became a master hairdresser in September 2016, after successfully taking the final apprenticeship examination for hairdressing and wig making (stylist) back in 2013. A translator accompanied me through the theoretical part. That wasn't necessary for the practical part of my apprenticeship.

Neither my hearing colleagues or I had any issues communicating in the work place. I am hard of hearing to a high degree; as such I have to rely on lip-reading when other people speak. Of course I am perfectly fluid in Sign Language, but I spoke to my hearing colleagues. I worked at a hair salon for a year after finishing my apprenticeship. Same thing happened: I had no issues communicating with the hearing customers. Of course the clientele grew bigger while I was there. Several Deaf and hard of hearing customers started frequenting the salon

because I was working there. I took the master craftsman's examination because opening my own hair salon has always been my biggest dream. I continue to aim for that goal and am certain that I'll reach it soon. At my salon everybody is welcome, Deaf and hearing people.

## “ My recommendation to Deaf young people:

If you know what you want to do, take the direct route. I myself started education in several fields that really didn't suit me. The apprenticeship as a hairdresser and wig maker, as well as the master craftsman's examination, were very challenging. But I absolutely wanted to make it and that determination helped me succeed.



## “ My recommendation to companies:

Don't reject Deaf people because you think that communicating with us is too difficult. There are many different forms of communication - it's all highly individual. Practical experience will show what works best in any given situation.

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AT





# Hospital

*of St. John of God Vienna*



BARMHERZIGE BRÜDER  
KRANKENHAUS WIEN

Contact:  
[www.bbwiien.at](http://www.bbwiien.at)



## ABOUT US



BARMHERZIGE BRÜDER  
KRANKENHAUS WIEN

The hospital of St. John of God, founded in 1614, is the biggest and oldest hospital in Vienna. It is equipped with over 400 beds, 9 departments and clinics. It has a clinic for the Deaf and another for the multiple or severely handicapped. The clinic for the Deaf opened in 1999 and is the only institution of its kind in Eastern Austria. 10 staff members, 3 of them Deaf, make up the interdisciplinary team. These Deaf staff members work in the fields of nursing, social work and psychological consultation and care.

There are no issues with teamwork, because all staff members, including the hearing ones, are fluid in Sign Language. Of utmost importance is the fact, that this makes the communication between patients, doctors and the Deaf staff members working in nursing, social work and psychological consulting possible in a confidential and direct manner. No need for translators. The staff members

accompany the patients to other clinics or during an in-patient stay. Patients can therefore feel certain that a trusted person, who understands them both on terms of language and culture, is always close to them.



“ I hope that a lot more Deaf people will start to work as qualified medical employees in the future. For example as lab assistants, nutritionists, physical therapists and many other vocations.

Patrick Martinetz  
qualified and licensed  
practical nurse



“ There’s a lot of catching up to do when it comes to psychological care services for the Deaf. I am able to combine and use my education and my first language (Austrian Sign Language) to help overcome such disparities.

Mag<sup>a</sup> Barbara Hager  
clinical health-  
psychologist



“ My motto is: Make the impossible possible. I wish for Deaf people to be more confident in themselves, because we can achieve anything if we just believe in ourselves.

Romeo Seifert  
qualified social worker



“ A team works best when everyone knows about the needs and wants of the others. That way the team members can be responsive to each other, act with consideration and everyone can contribute optimally.

Our recommendation for good teamwork...

“ ...to stop dwelling on possible differences and instead to use differences in language or culture for the benefit of our patients and hospital.

To us successful inclusion means...



“ The staff members of our clinic for the Deaf communicate with each other using Sign Language, eliminating any language barriers. Other interested hospital staff members also have the option to participate in Sign Language courses that our hospital organises.

Our recommendation for communication...

“ Don't let anything sway you from your own path and fight for your dreams and their realisation.

Our recommendation for Deaf youth...





# Wolfgang Gruber

Watchmaker (master degree)



**Workplace:**  
Firma Hans Mikl  
[www.uhren-mikl.com](http://www.uhren-mikl.com)



## ABOUT ME

After engineering school I graduated from a technical college for precision and watch technology. I'm a master watchmaker since 2014. In addition to my master craftman examination I also successfully completed the Omega certification (Omega Watch Evaluation).

I applied to various companies by sending Emails. The businessman and master watchmaker Hans Mikl invited me to his workshop and offered me two weeks of trial work. After successfully completing this trial period I was hired and have been working here as a master watchmaker for the past 2 years.

The profession of a watchmaker requires not only technical knowhow and a steady hand, but also the ability for very precise work. The clockwork mechanics have to be maintained, in a similar way to cars. In my position as master watchmaker I am responsible for repairing and servicing watches, as well as the restoration of antique watches.

Our company has a very modern workshop. As such, all of us have our own computer and can communicate via Email without any problems.

“ My recommendation for communication at work:

Talk clearly, distinctly and a bit more slowly to me, to make it easier for me to lip-read. Of course I use Sign Language occasionally.

“ I wish that Deaf and hard of hearing people accept and utilise new challenges.



“ My recommendation for good teamwork between Deaf and hearing colleagues:

Having information in advance is essential. For example, what kind of alternative forms of communication are available. And of course: mutual patience and understanding is important.

“ I define successful inclusion in the workplace as: accessible, unhindered communication, respect and support from colleagues.

## MY WORKPLACE





“ My recommendation for Deaf young people:

Follow your own path and be self-confident. Use your strengths and don't be intimidated by the current situation in the job market. It's important for you to know what you want to do and what you are interested in.





# Marko *Salutzki*

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Event manager



**Contact:**

[www.events-for-all-de](http://www.events-for-all-de)  
[www.ulkie.jimdo.com](http://www.ulkie.jimdo.com)



## ABOUT ME

I have two jobs. Starting 1996 I have worked for Reprotechnik, this is my main job. I handle orders and take care of order collection and preparation before going to press. I am the only Deaf employee in the company. Sometimes we communicate in writing but for team meetings we have an interpreter.

I also organise parties for associations and individuals. I wanted to increase my know-how in this field, so I studied event marketing in a correspondence course which I successfully completed in 2011. Now I am a freelance event-planner for weddings and different kinds of parties such as class reunions or incentive events. Most of the time I organise class reunions. I don't organise these reunions as evening events but more as weekend trips with various and interesting activities. My biggest job so far has been to project lead the Ulkie Comedy Festival. This was the first Comedy Festival in German Sign

Language. It was in 2014, in Berlin. The idea was mine, I created the concept and did the cost calculations. I also organised the festival with my team. The Festival was a great success.

In the future I would really like to do a course as a wedding planner. Unfortunately there are no correspondence courses and I can not attend a fulltime course because of my job. If there was one I would have finished it already.



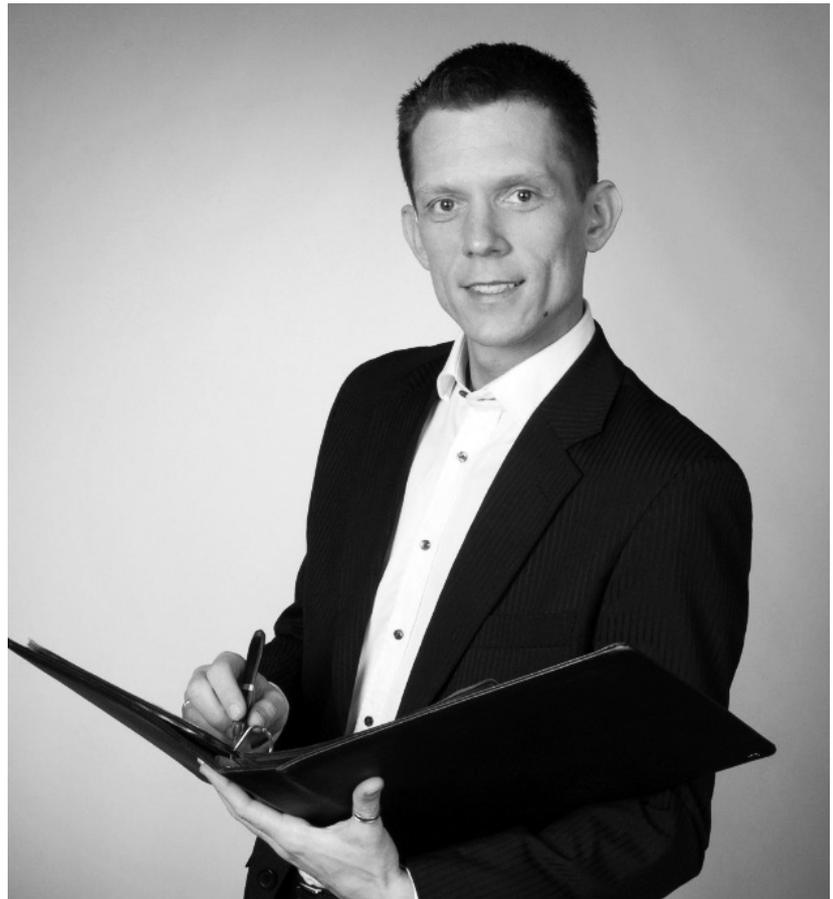
## My recommendation to youths:

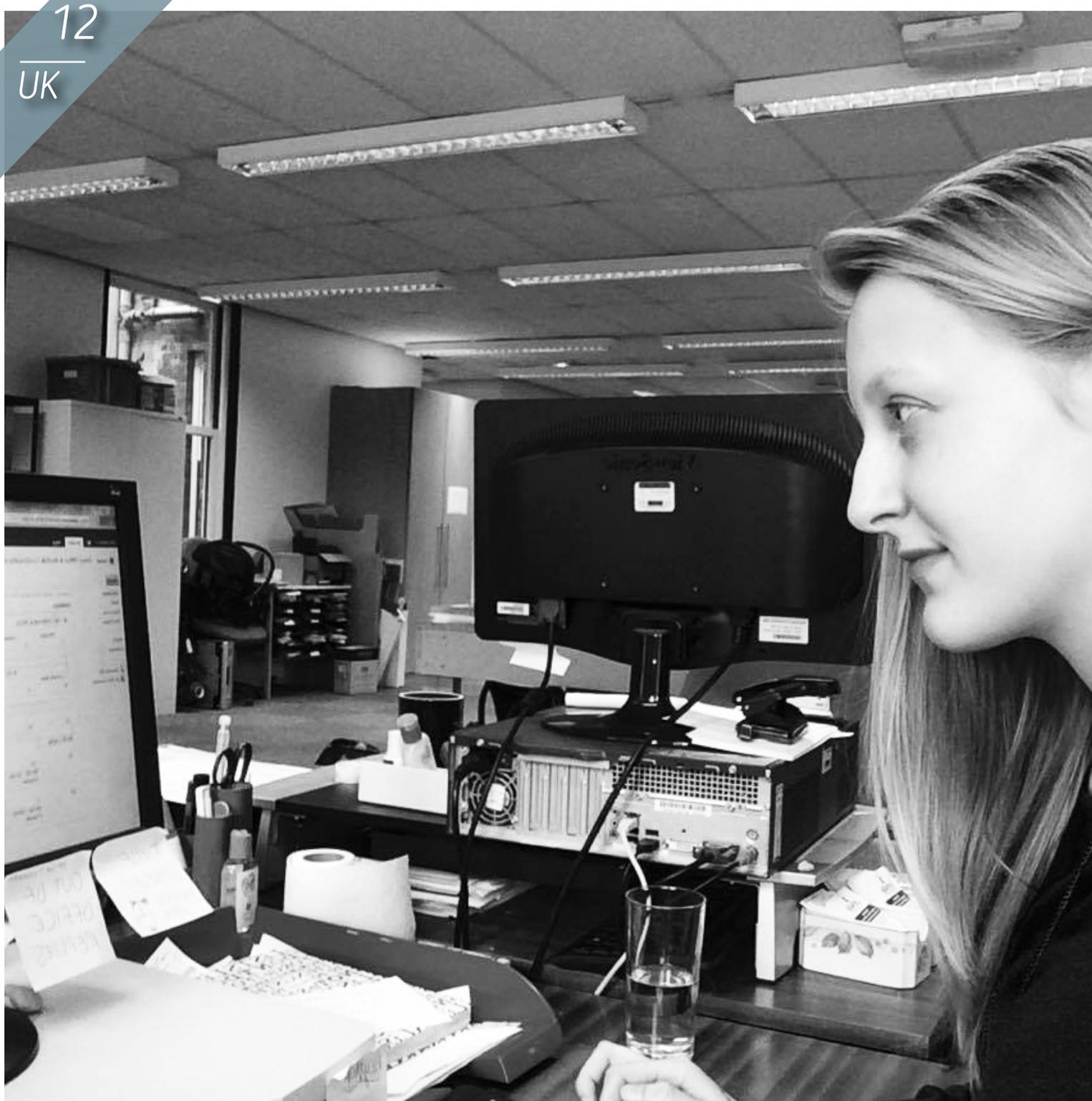
If you want to make your dreams come true, just take the first step. Today a lot of things are already possible. Choose a career with opportunities for the future. You'll see: after the first step, the second will follow. Don't lose heart, if something doesn't work out in the beginning. The road ahead isn't always easy.



## My recommendation to employers:

Please don't stereotype Deaf people like me! It's exactly the same as with hearing people: all of us are individuals. Just give us a chance.







# Ellie Parfitt

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Deafie blogger



Contact:  
[facebook/@deafieblogger](https://www.facebook.com/deafieblogger)



## ABOUT ME

I finished mainstream school last summer with focus on German, Textiles and Media Studies. I am currently doing an apprenticeship in Business and Marketing at a local domestic abuse charity organization.

As part of this job, I mostly promote the charity through social media, I assist with various tasks like designing posters, ordering promotional items, fundraising and managing donations. I cannot use the phone, but I use the Next Generation Text Relay Service instead. My apprenticeship tasks are done online and whenever there is a webinar, I receive transcripts so I can follow the webinar. My second current job is being a qualified lifeguard. I guard at three different swimming pools three times a week. I am also a Girl Guide Adult Leader, in training, for my local Guide group. Another job is as a part-time Event and Promotions staff member for a newspaper publishing company.

But the job I love the most is being a Deafie Blogger and a Freelance Writer for Phonak. This blogging has given me some fantastic opportunities so far, such as going to the UK Parliament for a Deaf campaign launch and I was also lucky to receive a special commendation award at a prestigious national Deaf awards ceremony. My career goal is to become an ambassador for Deaf people. I would love to work with a Deaf company or charity, either within the Marketing or Campaigns department. I'd love a job where I am making a positive difference to Deaf/hard of hearing people's lives.

” Successful inclusion in the workplace is shown when people make an effort to talk to me, by including me in their conversations. It’s mostly seen when they show a conscious effort to help me. For Example making sure I am positioned in the right place during a group conversation so I can lip-read everyone.



” Deaf people can achieve anything they dream of, given the right support - so never give up!







# Rob *Davis*

Former contact manager & financial advisor



**Contact:**  
[www.rob-davis.de](http://www.rob-davis.de)



## ABOUT ME

I'm 57 years old and Deaf since my 40th birthday as a result of an infection. At the beginning it was really, really hard for me. I was born in Cosford, England. My father was in the military and when I was 13, my parents decided that I should attend a military school in Wales. With 15, I started my education at the Royal Navy. For a mischievous boy like me, it was tough and had nothing to do with my own plans. I just wanted to work with animals back then.

I was trained as a radio operator. Someone, that has to hear perfectly and forward it to the right department. That was my daily business. After leaving the navy, I was employed by a large broker, did trainings and further education and worked on various stock markets. Sometimes I had four telephones on the go! My profession was focused on perfect hearing. It is ironic that today, I can't hear at all. After going Deaf, I proposed to my then boss, a bank, to set up an information centre for

people who are Deaf or hard of hearing. My offer was accepted and suddenly I faced new challenges. On the one hand, I needed to learn for my new occupation. On the other hand, I needed to learn a lot about Deaf culture, which was completely new to me.

A lot of good friends, who are Deaf or hard of hearing, helped me back then and I am very grateful for that. I don't think I would've made it on my own. I worked for many years as a consultant.

So what am I doing today: Together with my dog "Bailee" I visit Deaf and hard of hearing people with Alzheimer's disease or Dementia. We are now being schooled to work together as a team. It is a special training programme for service and assistance dogs. Of course in Sign Language!

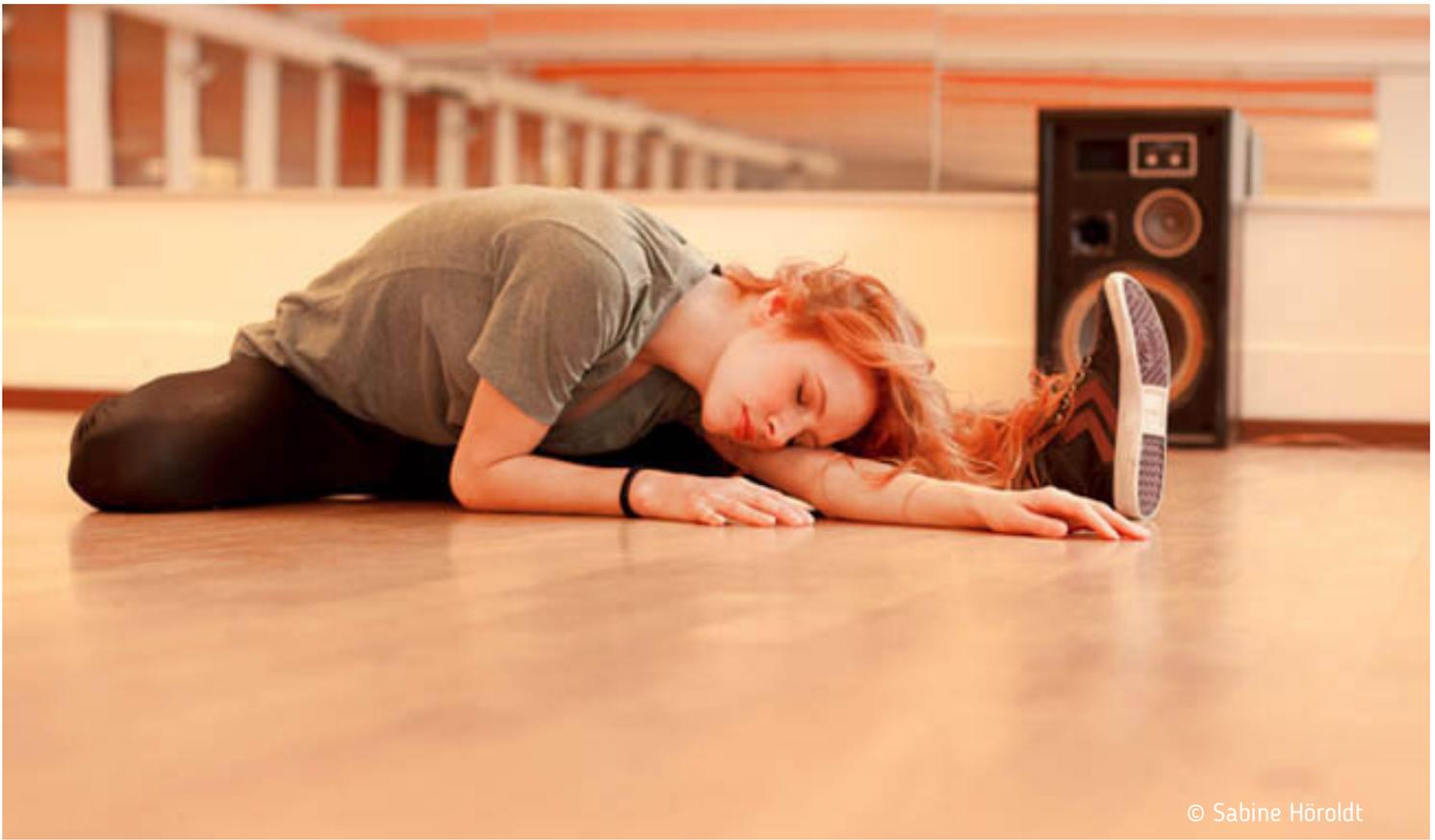


“ Successful inclusion in the workplace:

The most important thing is mutual respect.

“ Don't be afraid of communication – it is the key to your future career. No matter if in spoken language, sign language, by writing or with an interpreter. Be proud of your language and culture. Be honest to yourself. Be open for the working world and cooperation with hearing colleagues.





© Sabine Höroldt

# Kassandra *Wedel*

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Dancer - coach - actress



**Contact:**

[www.vimeo.com/kasscalldance](http://www.vimeo.com/kasscalldance)

[kasscalldance@gmail.com](mailto:kasscalldance@gmail.com)



## ABOUT ME

I have always danced, played and painted. When I was 3 years old, I started to dance and quickly realized: I can't stop! At almost four years of age I had a car accident and am deaf since the accident. Even after the accident, dancing remained my passion.

At 19, I had already given my own dance classes and I have been acting since first grade. I spent four years studying theatre sciences and art education in Munich.

Today I am a freelance artist, dancer, actress and coach. I teach hip-hop for deaf, hard of hearing and hearing people at a dance school in Munich. I have been a German European champion several times, both with my hip hop group and as a solo dancer.



“ I think it’s quite wonderful to master many languages. I feel the same about different forms of communication. I sign, use lip reading, talk and write – all that’s possible for me. It is important to like communicating and that the communication works out.

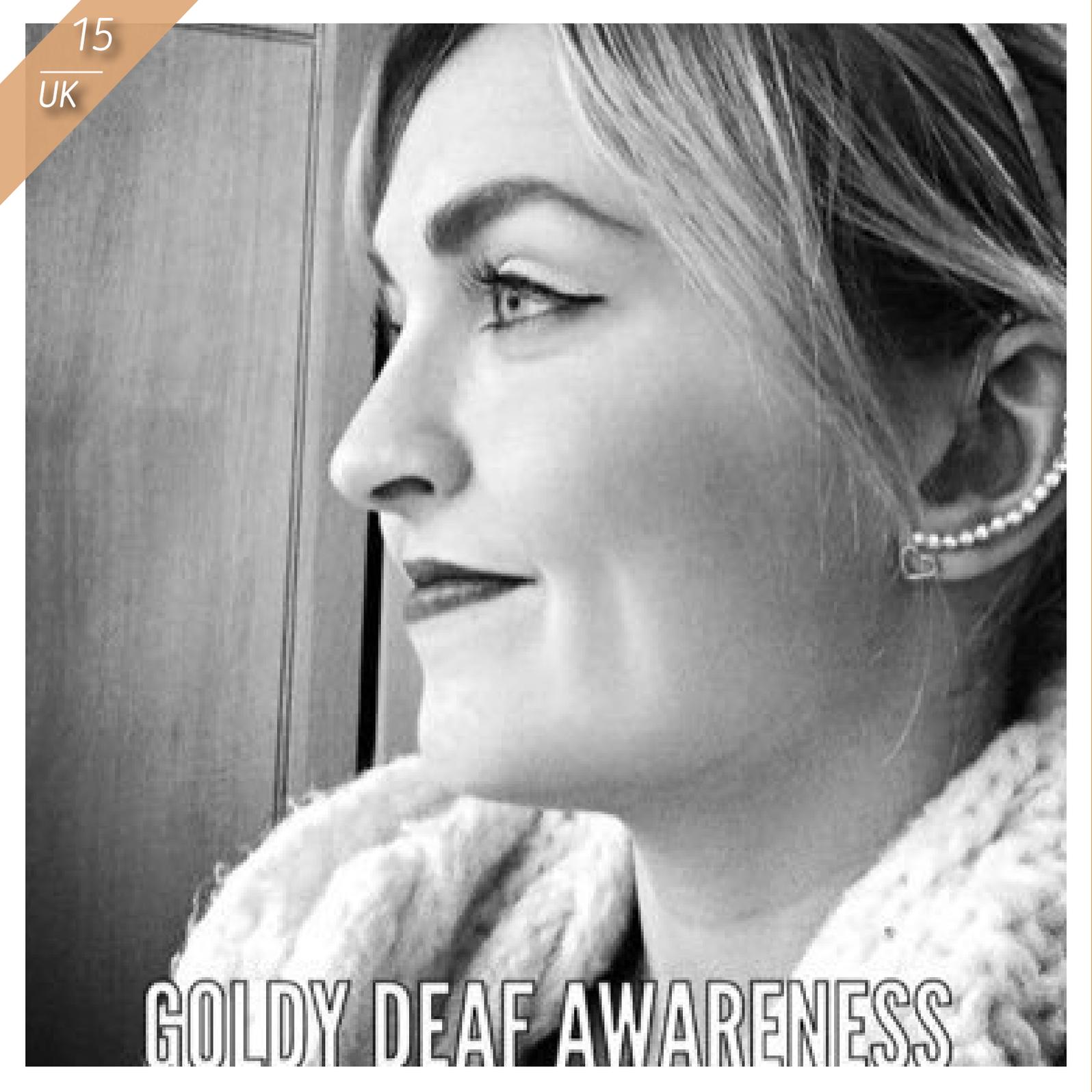


“ To me successful inclusion means to be involved and to be able to do the same jobs, that hearing people do.



15

UK



# GOLDY DEAF AWARENESS



# Louise Goldsmith

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Blogger, shop assistant



**Contact:**  
[deafnessfrommyeyes.blogspot.co.at](http://deafnessfrommyeyes.blogspot.co.at)



## ABOUT ME

Nobody knows if I was born deaf. I was diagnosed at age 7. I remember that it was my second grade teacher in elementary school, who noticed me frequently asking for instructions after they had just been given. I always went to mainstream schools, faced the difficulties despite lacking support and graduated High School with excellent marks.

My next step was University. There I finally received support: note taking support, off course support (going over the notes) and transcripts for videos. I studied Children and Childhood studies and graduated with good marks.

Currently I'm working retail in a clothes shop. Dealing with the hearing customers can be difficult at times. There are good days and bad days. I mainly communicate using lip-reading and verbal communication, but I am studying British Sign Language as well. Using sign

language I would like to realize my dream job. I would like to work with deaf children. The topic „inclusion“ is very important to me and I write about it in my blog „Goldy's Deaf Girl Blog“. I would like to create and strengthen more awareness of deafness.

In 2015, I received a regional volunteer award for my voluntary work with a charity organization.



“ The desire for more sensitisation for deafness and hearing loss is always in the foreground of my work.





# Anja Burghardt

Hearing aid audiologist (apprenticeship)



**Workplace:**  
Firma Bagus  
[www.bagus.at](http://www.bagus.at)



## ABOUT ME

I was born hard of hearing to a high degree. Everybody in my family is hearing and their native language is German. My own native language is Austrian Sign Language. A language I mastered at age 18. I graduated from HLMW (college for higher vocational education, with a focus on fashion and economy), receiving my High School Certificate. After I graduated I began to study at University, but realized pretty soon that it wasn't a good fit for me. That meant I had to find a new direction and think about what I wanted to achieve. I decided on a career as hearing aid audiologist.

I mainly work directly with our customers. Cleaning the hearing aids, replacing defective components, for example the microphone or the casing, as well as exchanging the tube are all part of my work as an apprentice. I also work in sales and make phone calls myself. A lot of our customers use Sign Language themselves.

To create a positive atmosphere for them is one of my specific tasks, since Sign Language is my native language as well. Therefore I am able to converse with the customers using Austrian Sign Language and to better cater to their hearing aid needs. I inform my colleagues about those needs as well, because they also benefit from this knowledge. It raises the quality of our service.

One great aspect of my company is the fact, that my colleagues all know some Sign Language. Of course we usually talk to each other, but they know what's important when conversing with a Deaf person. For example: eye contact is necessary when you are communicating directly. My colleagues are very understanding and I think that's amazing.



## My recommendation for successful teamwork:

It's important for the hearing colleagues to be informed about the best ways to communicate with Deaf colleagues, to circumvent any problems.



## My tip for Youths:

Never give up! There will be rejections, but don't let them deter you. Give your best and learn from your mistakes.



## My tip for companies:

Dare to hire someone who is impaired. Even if you had a bad experience in the past. The next person isn't necessarily the same. Let go of your prejudices and open yourself up for new experiences. Both sides will benefit from it.



## MY WORKPLACE









# Andreas Hofko

Goldsmith, silversmith and jeweller

  
*Gerry Eder*

**Workplace:**

Firma Eder GmbH

[www.gerryeder.at](http://www.gerryeder.at)



Wels,  
Austria

## ABOUT ME

I am 43 years of age and was born Deaf. In 1994 I successfully completed my education at Drobny, a company in Linz (Upper Austria), to become a goldsmith, silversmith and jeweller. I was accompanied by Sign Language interpreters over the course of my apprenticeship. But my family supported me as well.

I have been working at Eder, a company in Wels, for over 20 years. At work I repair jewellery, neaten and refine gold and

silver jewellery, set stones and perform various other tasks.

How do I communicate with my colleagues? We talk, or they write down notes for me. Like I said, I have been with this company for 20 years by now. We are a great team.





## MY WORKPLACE









# Christian *Fischer*

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Assistant pedagoge in training



Vienna,  
Austria

## ABOUT CHRISTIAN FISCHER

In September 2016, Christian Fischer and 4 other deaf colleagues began their training as assistant pedagogues at the school for assistance education at Bafep (educational institute for early childhood education) in Vienna. In doing so, he laid the foundations for his dream-job: working with children.

Christian Fischer thinks that there is still a lot to be done, especially in the field of

early childhood support for deaf children. His desire is that deaf and hearing children can grow up together and enrich each other's lives - both regarding linguistic exchange (sign language and spoken language), as well as cultural and social coexistence.

Therefore, according to Christian Fischer, inclusion becomes daily common practice from an early age.



“ My recommendation for companies:

If a deaf person is applying, please do not dismiss the application right away. Stay open-minded, arrange an interview and get to know each other. That way many things will become much clearer!

“ My wish for the future is for deaf and hearing people to have the same occupational chances and future opportunities.

“ When hearing and deaf people meet on the same level, there are no communication issues.







# Judith Hartmann

Lawyer, vocational assistant



**Contact:**

[www.judithhartmann.de](http://www.judithhartmann.de)

[kanzlei@judithhartmann.de](mailto:kanzlei@judithhartmann.de)

## ABOUT ME

I completed my legal education including a law degree and internship when I passed the second state examination in 2006 and have been licensed as a lawyer since 2008. In 2012 I finally started working independently.

My main focus is social law and social insurance law, but I also work in labour law and in civil law. I acquired the additional qualification as specialist attorney for social law in 2011. I am mostly working on behalf of hearing-impaired clients, but I also represent hearing clients.

Additionally I am working as a vocational assistant for deaf people only. This activity is not purely juridical. It consists of a great deal of administrative work, clarification of bureaucratic matters and the finances of the clients amongst other things. I work as an individual lawyer in an office community with three hearing colleagues. I organise the professional communication individually.

In two-person conversations with familiar people for example I use lip-reading or notes, in other situations sign language interpreters are present. In my work life I rely a lot on e-mail correspondence.



"

A lot more is possible for deaf people than what's often believed. You should have an eye on alternatives and remain flexible. Some luck always plays a part as well anyway!

"

Good teamwork consists of a give and take of the colleagues various abilities. These can be of very different nature.

"

To me successful inclusion means acceptance on an equal footing.

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AT





# Magdalena Tomczyk

Molecular biologist



**Workplace:**  
Federal Ministry of Interior  
Vienna, Austria



Vienna,  
Austria

## ABOUT ME

I grew up in Poland and attended school together with hearing students. People there had little to no regard for my deafness. The classes were exclusively oral, so the teachers only spoke to the students. Obviously I didn't understand a whole lot of what was spoken and had to study on my own. Reading everything at home repeatedly, again and again. My time in school certainly wasn't easy. I spent most of my free time studying.

I moved to Austria after I graduated and started to study biology at the University of Vienna. This is also when I started to sign and study Austrian Sign Language alongside German. So by now I am proficient in written Polish, Austrian Sign Language and written German. Language skills open up the world, in every occupation. I started working at the Federal Criminal Police Office one year ago. I work in the department "biology and microscopy". The scope of the unit covers

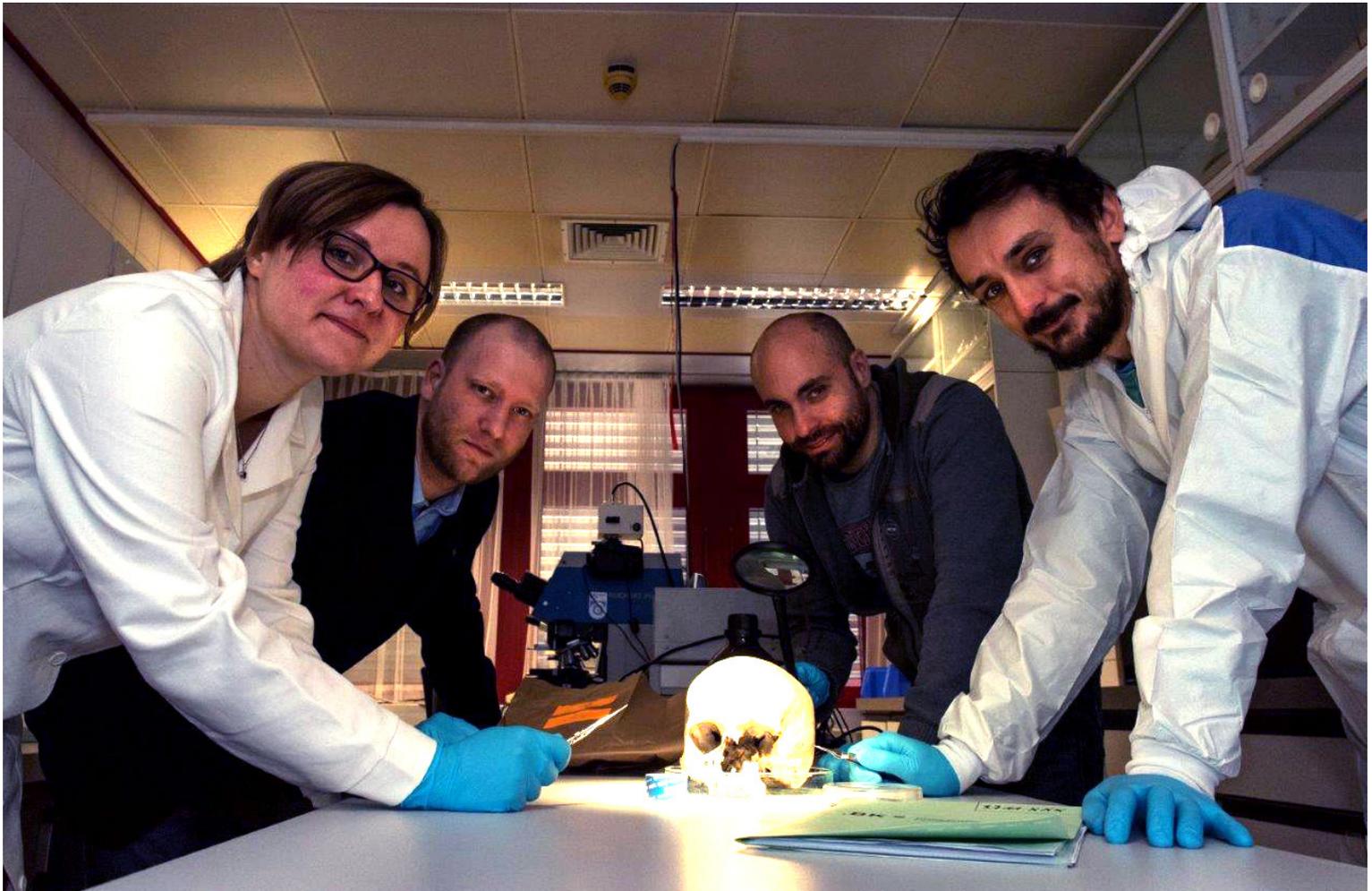
biological and microscopic procedures such as fibre and textile examination, examination of biological and geological traces, investigation of trace evidence with special biological methods.

Because of my congenital deafness I communicate using Austrian Sign Language ÖGS. I can also communicate in the German spoken language.

## My recommendation for successful communication:

The colleagues make an effort to communicate with me. They take care to speak slowly and clearly, to write notes or e-mails, to create visual attention, e.g. by waving. I am very happy that my colleagues are also interested in learning Sign Language in order to be able to communicate with me better.

For important matters like meetings, events, etc., we have Sign Language interpreters at our disposal.



## MY WORKPLACE

Forensic work has been very appealing to me, as I had already discovered my interest in this subject during my studies through a one-year ERASMUS stay in Switzerland and had already gotten to know the basics on this topic.

My new workplace motivates me very much and my job is an interesting and challenging one. I am very happy to work here in the Federal Criminal Police Office

and to be able to deepen my knowledge in the area of forensic science. I have found my challenge in forensic science and because of that I want to expand my professional future in this area and deepen my work with my colleagues.

My goal for the future is to achieve something for the Deaf and to open up new perspectives in cooperation with the hearing world.



### My recommendation for youths:

Deaf people can do anything and what they can not do, they can learn. Life is a journey. And everyone can decide for themselves if they want to travel or not. Find a purpose for yourself! For example, I also volunteer as a youth leader in the ÖGLB (Austrian Federation of the Deaf) youth committee. I am particularly interested in the of Deaf Youth.



### My recommendation for employers:

Social commitment and openness are essential prerequisites for a successful cooperation between hearing and Deaf colleagues. Deaf people can do everything - except hearing.



## “ My recommendation for successful „team work“:

There are many opportunities for good teamwork, especially important for a team of hearing and Deaf colleagues are:

- social commitment
- – personal, written communication (such as: notes, e-mail) and visual communication (e.g. pictures, video, facial expressions, waving, etc.)
- – readiness and courage
- – patience
- – constructive feedback to enable





# Arttu Liikamaa

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Pedagogic adviser



## Workplace:

Finnish Federation for the Deaf  
Department for Development cooperation  
Projects in Albania and Kosovo



## ABOUT ME

I'm part-time employee of Finnish Association of the Deaf (FAD) in the Department of Development Cooperation Projects since 2009. FAD has a few development cooperation projects around the world. My area of responsibility is working with two countries - Albania and Kosovo. My work title is an adviser. The adviser can have different job descriptions, but in short I'm pedagogic and linguistic adviser.

My workdays are varied, but briefly I teach new skills to local partners with different issues. For example, sign language research, organisational work and lobbying.

I ended up in this work partly by chance. I had an internship in the Sign Language Department of the FAD when I studied at the University of Jyväskylä. Through the internship I met people from the Development Cooperation Department

and I got the chance to do voluntary work in Albania and Kosovo for 3 months. A little later, after I completed my Bachelors degree, FAD hired me for the Development cooperation projects in Albania and Kosovo.

In my Job I mostly communicate in sign language and if necessary, I will use sign language interpreter. Otherwise gestures, paper and pen are good tools, too.



## Successful Inclusion:

Equality and accessibility.



## Teamwork:

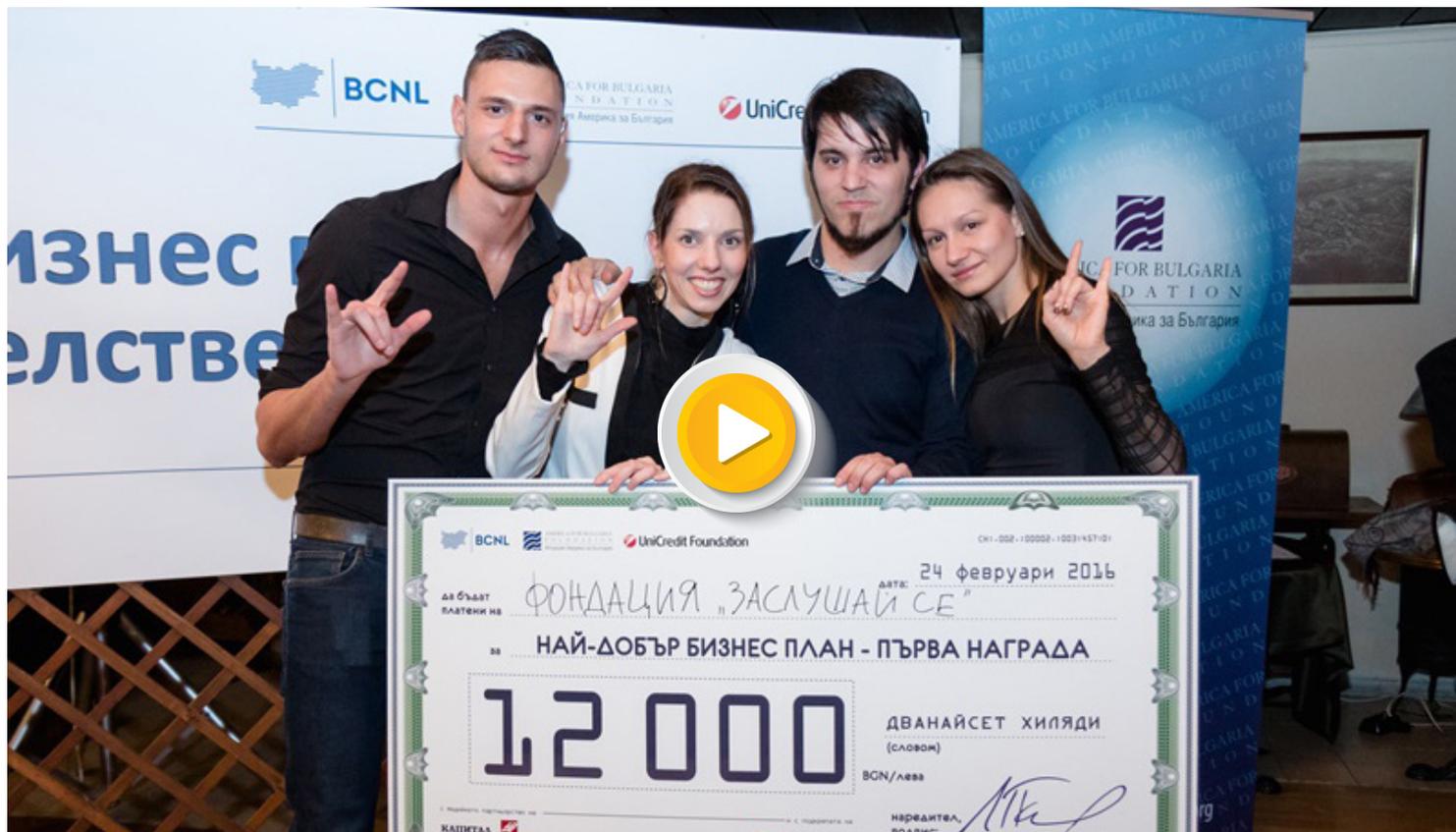
Together we can.



## Tip for Youngsters:

Study, broaden your network and see the world - increase your experiences. Live your dreams, you can do it!





# Alexander Ivanov

Creative specialist



**Workplace:**

Listen Up

[www.zaslushaise.bg](http://www.zaslushaise.bg)



## ABOUT ME

I have an university degree in Cinema Animation and Graphic Design, and I am a co-founder of the Listen Up Foundation. Nominated and elected for the '30 under 30' in Forbes Magazine Bulgaria. Deputy chairperson of the Regional Organization of the Deaf Youth, Sofia. Secretary of the Youth Organization within the Union of the Deaf in Bulgaria.

### **About Alexander Ivanov:**

Alexander Ivanov works as a creative designer, graphic designer and creates different materials and videos for the promotion of the idea for equal access to information for all deaf and hard-of-

hearing people in Bulgaria. Some of the videos are in sign language, and also subtitled, in order to be understood by hearing people. He travels around the country where he makes presentations of the platform for video sign services for the deaf, and collects feedback from hearing users in order to improve the quality of service.

Alexander uses Bulgarian sign language with his deaf and hard of hearing colleagues and spoken language with the hearing ones.



“ I found it very hard at the beginning. We really did not understand each other, as the articulation of Alex was difficult and voiceless, and I really struggled to understand him, but gradually, with more practice, I managed to do better. I also attended a sign language course. I saw that this is a super-interesting language and form of communication, and I started to understand him and communicate more easily with him, which really helps a lot.

*Iva, hearing colleague*



“ I act as a bridge between the hearing and deaf users of the platform. If a deaf person has a problem with our service, then I analyse the situation and communicate the information to the hearing counterpart.

*Alexander Ivanov*





Богдан



# Kiril Savov

Bartender



**Workplace:**  
D.I.T. Evrika Hotel,  
Sunny Beach, Bulgaria



Sofia,  
Bulgaria

## ABOUT KIRIL SAVOV

He studies Special Education and is a professional volleyball player. Kiril Savov works as a bartender in one of the 5 bars at the Evrika Hotel on the Black Sea. All members of his family are deaf and he is third-generation deaf.

Kiril finished the Special School for Deaf Children in Sofia, and then continued his education in a university, where he studies Special Education and is integrated with hearing students .



“ When I communicate with hearing people in the bar I use the drinks list. I offer it to the customers, so that they can make their choice by pointing. If we have difficulties in understanding, my colleagues help me with the translation and then I prepare the cocktails without any problem. The work here is excellent.

“ I am very happy with my work here. I have convinced myself that we, the deaf people, can do any work, even as bartenders. We do not hear, but we can do anything.

“ I was a bit worried how we were going to work together and communicate with each other, but right from the start he came to me with the drinks list and asked me to show each drink to him, it took me almost two days to remember them all. Step by step he showed me all the signs we could use to communicate when not at work.

Colleague







# Dian *Demirov*

Entrepreneur



**Workplace:**  
Pastry shop “Margarita”,  
Varna, Bulgaria



## ABOUT DIAN DEMIROV

Dian Demirov graduated from the polytechnic school with an emphasis on the arts. He later studied and graduated in dental technology, but he has never practised these specialties.

He admits that his education has helped him in life to get along with people, and to freely communicate with confidence despite his deafness. Dian and his family established the pastry shop 23 years ago, and now he is responsible for 11 hearing employees in the firm.

The business was established in a premise 23 square meters large and enlarged throughout the years until today it is 150 square meters, included a commercial area and a confectionery workshop.

Dian has never had any problems communicating with his hearing colleagues. According to him deafness cannot be an obstacle in communication; it is rather an excuse if someone lacks the will to communicate.



” Be more tolerant to people who cannot hear. People who cannot hear are no different from you. When we want we can work, when we don't – we don't work, but this refers not only to us – this refers to you as well. I want you to understand one thing – deafness is not contiguous. Deafness – this is a state. It is simple – we cannot hear what you say, but with some training, with some small attempts, with a little will, the contact is easy





# University of *Chester*

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University



**Contact:**  
[www.chester.ac.uk](http://www.chester.ac.uk)  
[equality@chester.ac.uk](mailto:equality@chester.ac.uk)



## ABOUT US



At the University we have a small number of employees with hearing impairments, To support staff we have hearing loops (both fixed and portable - and have provided specialist training to staff on their use), and provide adjustments and equipment as required, such as recording devices for minuting meetings and amplifiers for phones. The University has a proactive disabled staff group and each member of the group has developed a guidance leaflet for staff and managers on each disability represented in the group. We have signed up to the Government's Disability Confident Scheme to actively recruit and retain disabled staff. We provide mandatory equality

and diversity training to all staff via an online programme; provide mandatory training on all aspects of equality and diversity, including disability, to all new line managers and, with the disabled staff group, developed a training programme for managers on supporting disabled staff.

## ” About communication:

It depends on the job role, the team, and the preferences of the individual. Technology such as email and text messaging helps in many situations. Our hearing impaired colleagues use recording devices in meetings and have amplification on their phones.

” The University embraces inclusion and continually works towards removing barriers to employment for disabled people. Look for organisations with the Disability Confident badge.

” It is important to not make assumptions about others and to remember that some disabilities are hidden.

## ” About inclusion:

The University aims to create an intellectual community and workplace that welcomes and promotes diversity and equality in and through relationships involving all staff and students; learning and teaching; research and scholarship; outreach and other University activities and practices.





# Deaf Power Ltd.

Manufacturer & seller of fresh juices



**Contact:**  
Sofia, Bulgaria



## ABOUT DEAF POWER

Deaf Power Ltd is a franchisee of one of the leading manufacturers and sellers of freshly squeezed juices - Fresh Bar. The company hires people who are hearing impaired as bartenders because this is not a job that requires constant communication with customers. Deaf people have proven their skills and professionalism, over the last few years, while working in the chain.

The owner of one of the outlets is Radoslav Borisov, he is deaf by birth and uses sign language as basic means of communication. He is also the manager of Deaf Power Ltd. Prior to setting up his own business, he learned about the business himself while employed in the chain.

In order to communicate successfully with the team he works with, Radoslav uses written communication, sign language translation - live or through a

sign language translation video platform. Radoslav improves communication with clients and suppliers by using a speech-to-text conversion platform. His dream is to open up a more places in his chain and build a successful model, even though he can not hear.

## ” About teamwork:

Our team consists of people who, for one reason or another, are discriminated against by the public but yet have proven to be able work effectively and with quality.

## ” About inclusion:

By a deaf person leading the company and taking on the responsibility to of running the company and still be competitive.

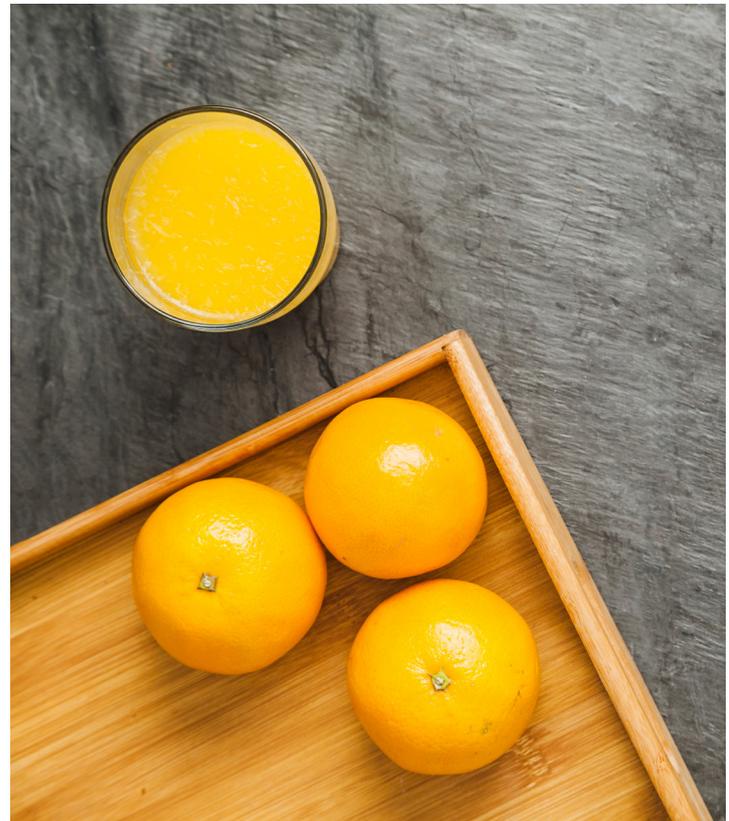
## ” Our tip for youngsters:

Young people have to take responsibility for their own lives and not blame someone else for their failures.

## ” About communication:

Young people have to take responsibility for their own lives and not blame someone else for their failures.

Radoslav Borisov  
Manager of Deaf Power Ltd.





# Jamba

## Карьера за всички

атор

Графичен  
дизайнер



В



IT-специалист



# JAMBA - *Career for all*

Online information platform



**Contact:**

[www.jamba.bg](http://www.jamba.bg)

[joana@jamba.bg](mailto:joana@jamba.bg)



Sofia,  
Bulgaria

## ABOUT US

JAMBA is a non-governmental organization that focuses on providing access to quality education, the accumulation of key competences and the inclusion in the labour market of people with different abilities (this is how we, from JAMBA, call the people who fall into the social group „People with Disabilities“).

JAMBA's goal is to unleash more opportunities for all young people with disabilities, thanks to an innovative concept that offers online and offline training to build key competencies, job interview support, internship programmes and supported employment. In this way young people get a better chance for professional realization and inclusion in the labour market. The trainings are carried out with the help and support of academic organizations, universities, training centres, mentoring companies and others. They are followed by a 3-month internship that gives real experience to the candidates that use the platform and thus they have a much

better chance of finding the job they dream of. The final phase, which results in long-term economic outcomes, is supporting the recruitment and the permanent employment retention of disabled candidates. So far we have helped about 40 (mostly young) people with various disabilities, including deaf people, to find a job.



## About teamwork:

We have 2 deaf colleagues in our team who we work with in the office. We never divide and underestimate them, but on the contrary, we engage them with responsible tasks related to organizational activity. They often have to make decisions without us. We encourage them to do it, better to be wrong and to take responsibility than to be simply performers.

We at JAMBA think this is the right way to get fully involved.



## About communication:

The process of working with our deaf colleagues and candidates, does not raise any difficulties. The hearing members of the JAMBA team have a basic knowledge of sign language, accumulated in practice in everyday communication. When we talk to our deaf colleagues, we strive to have good articulation, to talk slowly, and to look at colleagues face-to-face. Over time, we have also begun to help ourselves with the use of sign language.



## Tip for youngsters:

Do not be available to them at every turn. Support them from a distance. We will build a healthy society of struggling and motivated young people with disabilities. Our experience, so far, shows that the most cared for disabled young people are more easily involved in the mass environment, but to our surprise, they have been totally unsuccessful in the corporate/ professional environment.





# Tishina Association

Project management: Education, culture & social welfare



**Contact:**  
[facebook/Tishina2007](https://www.facebook.com/Tishina2007)  
[facebook/MimArtTheatre](https://www.facebook.com/MimArtTheatre)



## ABOUT TISHINA ASSOCIATION

Tishina (Silence) Association is a non-governmental organisation, a public-benefit, non-profit NGO, established in 2007. The Association manages and implements projects in the spheres of education, culture and social welfare.

The Association has established a Theatrical group for synchronous singing and dancing „Zhestim“ and „Mim-art“, it's the first of its kind that uses professional deaf actors. The Mim-Art Theatre has been in existence since 2008 and has staged over 20 theatrical performances, so far. It has received awards from many festivals and institutions, including an award from the Ministry of Culture, the Diploma for Contributions to Bulgarian Culture.

The Association employs 5 people with hearing impairment who work in performing arts. They perform theatre and music concerts in sign language. In

their day-to-day work, they rely on sign language interpreters, as hearing young people are very often involved. As the work progresses there is a gradual decrease in the use of sign language interpreters as deaf and hearing begin to communicate directly and almost spontaneously.

## About teamwork:

Theatrical activity is teamwork and is carried out by all the employees working on a project. Hearing guest performers and actors are involved. The work of deaf actors together with the hearing, creative teams of directors, choreographers, music leaders, etc., contributes to the integration of people with disabilities. This, with the positive response of the audience - builds their professional self-esteem.

## Tips for youngsters:

To follow their desires and dreams, not to be afraid to express themselves, to fight for affirmation as personalities and for prosperity in life.

## About communication:



Communication takes place at different levels: between the actors themselves, between actors and the creative team, between guest actors and deaf performers, and last but not least between performers and the audience. Both sign language interpreting and direct communication are used.

## Successful inclusion:

Both „Mim-art“ Theatre and the“Zhestim“ group for synchronous singing and dancing, have their place in the culture of society. They perform numerous concerts and theatrical performances, participate in TV shows, various celebrations, charity initiatives, etc. „Zhestim“, the group for synchronous singing and dancing, has numerous videos and performances with famous Bulgarian artists like Vassil Naydenov, Bogdana Karadocheva, Yordanka Hristova, Etienne Levi, Margita Hranova, Mimi Ivanova, Razvigor Popov and many others.





# DaDaFest

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Disability Arts Charity

DaDaFest



Contact:

[www.dadafest.co.uk](http://www.dadafest.co.uk)

[info@dadafest.co.uk](mailto:info@dadafest.co.uk)



## ABOUT DADAFEST

DaDaFest



DaDaFest is a pioneering disability and Deaf arts organisation, unique in our focus and in the scope and scale of our work and ambitions. Based in the heart of Liverpool, we have built a national and international reputation for delivering high quality and accessible training, arts events and projects, including a critically acclaimed biennial festival.

Through our work and through supporting excellent disability and Deaf arts from a wide variety of cultural perspectives we aim to promote and improve the social understanding of disability.

At DaDaFest, 80% of the Board and 50% of the staff team self-declare as disabled/deaf, ensuring disability leadership in all we do. DaDaFest is a champion and, as a disability-led arts charity, an exemplar of how equality

and diversity can be embedded in organisational structures and operations.

We believe that disability is a social issue – it is systemic barriers, negative attitudes and exclusion by society (purposely or inadvertently) that are the main contributory factors in “disabling” people. We work to ensure everyone can participate in or access our services and events by providing technical and personal support as standard, with specialist support when requested. This approach supports all our day-to-day operations as well as our recruitment, commissioning, publicity and marketing activity.

Our work with young people – Young DaDaFest – leads by example. We annually work with 250-300 young disabled people who lead, shape and deliver their own programmes of

work. Working with non-disabled peers, the young people deliver a programme that includes events in 2 of the major Liverpool cultural venues. The programme provides clear progression routes allowing participants to consider professional roles in the sector. We have also designed the

programme to develop the skills (e.g. teamwork, initiative/self-motivation) that strengthen the bridge between formal education and employment for young disabled people.

### “ Tips for deaf youngsters:

Include them, listen and support young people.

### “ About teamwork:

Make people feel welcome and included.

### “ About communication:

Communication is based on the needs of the people involved – whatever is necessary to engage.  
Good communication: Make eye contact, speak clearly, stick to the point and keep it brief.

### “ Successful inclusion:

Disability leadership. Don't make assumptions of who a person is, ask and be guided by responses.





# Zentrum für Kultur und visuelle Kommunikation der Gehörlosen

Berlin/Brandenburg e.V.



Contact:  
[www.zfk-bb.de](http://www.zfk-bb.de)  
[info@zfk-bb.de](mailto:info@zfk-bb.de)



## ABOUT US



### **Social and educational division:**

- Family aid
- Promotion of language and communication
- further education for adults
- Personal budget

The whole team is capable of communicating via sign language and our company work functions like in any other company. An overall base of communication, respect and socio-cultural understanding is the base for good teamwork. Everyone should be able to participate and bring their abilities and knowledge in to solve problems together and organize events. Words like equality, settlement, integration, disability have

### **Media:**

- subtitle and sign language for TV, museum and internet

become foreign words. Whenever hearing people are communicating and a deaf person is present we use sign language. Communication by the public is enabled by sign language translators as well as assistants.

» Our tip for youngsters:

Confidence and strong representation. In case there is a lack of translators you should use all other sources of communication. The promotion of a professional co-work with the translators and assistants must be learned. Show society that success can be achieved by anyone without pointing out any disability. All in all, live inclusion.



**INKLUSION**  
**VIELFALT**  
**GEBÄRDENSPRACHE**

by [gebardensprachvideos.de](http://gebardensprachvideos.de)





# Sign Video

Video Relay & Remote Interpreting Service



**Contact:**

[www.signvideo.co.uk](http://www.signvideo.co.uk)

[info@signvideo.co.uk](mailto:info@signvideo.co.uk)



## ABOUT SIGNVIDEO



Hearing staff are a minority at SignVideo which allows them an opportunity to experience the communication challenges that the majority of deaf BSL users face every day at work.

We encourage communication in all forms, whether we are in the office or working from our remote locations. We talk to each other face-to-face using gestures and simple signs, use the text chat feature on Google Hangouts, and send text messages when we are out and about. Hearing and deaf staff members call each other every day using the SignVideo VRS service. Deaf staff members make video calls via the SignVideo app but they don't obviously need an interpreter in the middle!

Sometimes when there is no face-to-face BSL interpreter available in the office, we connect to a video interpreter and use VRI to talk to each other. There is always a way to communicate - you just need to

be creative, confident and assertive. The world of sign language is a whole new experience for hearing colleagues. Don't be afraid - embrace the opportunity!

### **About SignVideo:**

In 2004, Jeff McWhinney set up SignVideo, the UK's first Video Relay Service (VRS). His vision was, and still is, to empower deaf citizens and to use the latest developments in technology to tackle barriers to social inclusion. The SignVideo tagline 'Communicating equality' means a world where deaf BSL users and hearing non-signers have instant access to a BSL interpreter whenever they need it. This enables effortless interaction and opens up new possibilities for both.

## ” About teamwork:

The key to successful teamwork between hearing and deaf collaborators is to keep communicating. Keep each other informed about the project that you are working on. Make sure deaf colleagues have access to communication at all times, and include them at every stage of the project starting from the early preparations right to the end. Touch base regularly and inform each other of any changes. Communicate!

## ” Our tip for youngsters:

Know your communication rights and be assertive. Have confidence in yourself. Don't let communication challenges stop you - get interpreting support, and use it in confident, creative ways. Make yourself included, not isolated. Speak up about your barriers and find solutions to them. Educate your hearing colleagues. Have patience.

## ” About communication:

The deaf and hearing ways of communicating and interacting with each other are very different - we learn from each other every day! We use a mixture of signs and gestures when we chat to each other and when we need to have a meeting, either on the phone or face-to-face, we connect to a SignVideo interpreter who will relay our conversation in real time. At first this is a new experience for the hearing colleague, but they get used to it very quickly!

NEVIDÍME NESLYŠÍM  
ALE CÍTÍME, JAK  
TO TU PÁCHNE.





# Klub přátel červenobílé hole

The social club of friends of the red-white cane



Contact:  
[www.klubpratel.wz.cz](http://www.klubpratel.wz.cz)



## ABOUT US



We are a social club for people with deaf-blindness with a smaller team of employees and a base of volunteer-workers. We haven't got an office and we meet irregularly. We usually work on our tasks individually, or in pairs. The cooperation between hearing and the Deaf co-workers is smooth. We also often use Skype - as well as other forms of online communication.

Since there are people with multi-sensoric disabilities in our organization, it is that much harder for them to become a part of the work process and to find a regular job. It would help immensely, if the society could see through their prejudice and accept the idea that a person with disability can be a regular workforce. They can work when they get the right conditions and when their co-workers know how to communicate with them.

## ” About teamwork:

It would be ideal if all the team members could sign. Due to the nature of the disability itself, with two senses affected (sight and hearing) it is a difficult task. However, the employees who can both see and hear should be able to learn sign language. To make the communication seamless it is crucial that the co-workers who can see and hear have empathy and understanding for those who don't. Also, it is important that they realize what the proper conditions for communication (light, noise, etc.)

## ” About communication:

We use sign language on a regular basis and when there are bigger meet-ups, we use the services of an interpreter.

## ” About successful inclusion:

Since the number of employees and volunteers, who can see and hear, is generally smaller than the number of members who are deafblind, I believe the “inclusion” task has been successfully fulfilled.







# Cheshire West and Chester council

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Local Government



Cheshire West  
and Chester

**Contact:**

[www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)



## ABOUT US



We employ a number of d/Deaf colleagues in a range of roles at the Council. We have a wide variety of methods to support those employees as well as our residents, service users and visitors to our borough with hearing loss. These include: a contract with a local deafness support charity to provide all our British Sign Language requirements, a welcome to assistance dogs (one colleague brings his hearing dog to work), visual as well as audio fire alarms, hearing loops (both fixed and portable - and have provided specialist training to staff on their use), a textphone service, subtitles on Council videos etc. We have set up a Disability Friends initiative to support staff with disabilities. We have signed up to the Government's Disability Confident Scheme to actively recruit and retain disabled staff. In conjunction with a local disability rights organisation we have developed a 'Communicating with Disabled People' leaflet which includes

a section on hearing impairment. We provide equality and diversity training to all staff, and have a bespoke course on helping disabled customers - which also helps disabled staff. We are members of Disabled Go which provides online accessibility information on almost 1000 venues across the borough.



## Teamwork:

One size does not fit all – just as people are different, so are solutions to enable good teamwork. Understanding and patience – on both sides – are important.



## Communication:

It depends on the job role, the team, and the preferences of the individual. Technology such as email and text messaging helps in many situations, some colleagues successfully lip read, and sometimes sign language interpreters are the best option.



## Successful inclusion:

Our Equality and Diversity Policy sets out our formal commitment to removing the barriers that limit what people can do and can be. At our organisation, every member of staff is a champion for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. We use the slogan „Everybody In“ (logo, posters, banners) as a clear commitment to including, involving and getting everyone interested in equality and diversity.



## Tips for youngsters:

Our organisation embraces inclusion and continually works towards removing barriers to employment for disabled people. All organisations should have a similar approach and make provision for an enabling world. There is a lot of support available for Deaf people, both towards getting a job and also during their employment. Our best advice is: make the most of what is available to you, continually develop your skills and don't ever feel you can't do it!





# KINEZIKA *d.o.o.*

Cosmetics

**Kinezika**  
Negovalna kozmetika  
in prehranska dopolnila

**Contact:**  
facebook/Kinezika



## ABOUT US

**Kinezika**  
Negovalna kozmetika  
in prehranska dopolnila

We are a production company, specializing in the field of cosmetic products and food supplements. With continuous innovations and our own development team we have been meeting our customers' needs since 1989. We have acquired the ISO 22716 certificate – Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), a guarantee that our cosmetic products are manufactured consistently and under supervision. This way the products are high quality and safe for consumers.

Currently our company employs 29 people, 6 of which have the status of a disabled person, among which four are deaf. In 2009 our first deaf co-worker, Gregor Anderlič, took the position of a packaging machinery operator. He has never had any major communication problems and his lip reading skills have been excellent. In the beginning he asked his hearing colleagues to speak more slowly and to use shorter sentences.

We successfully established communication and also exchanged an occasional joke. Later we took on other deaf employees. Gregor became their mentor in terms of communication and helped to introduce them to the working environment. If problems occurred in production, he turned to the director and together we solved everything. At first the deaf employees turned to him for help and he was truly very supportive. We can say that in general, deaf and hard-of-hearing employees are diligent and industrious workers.

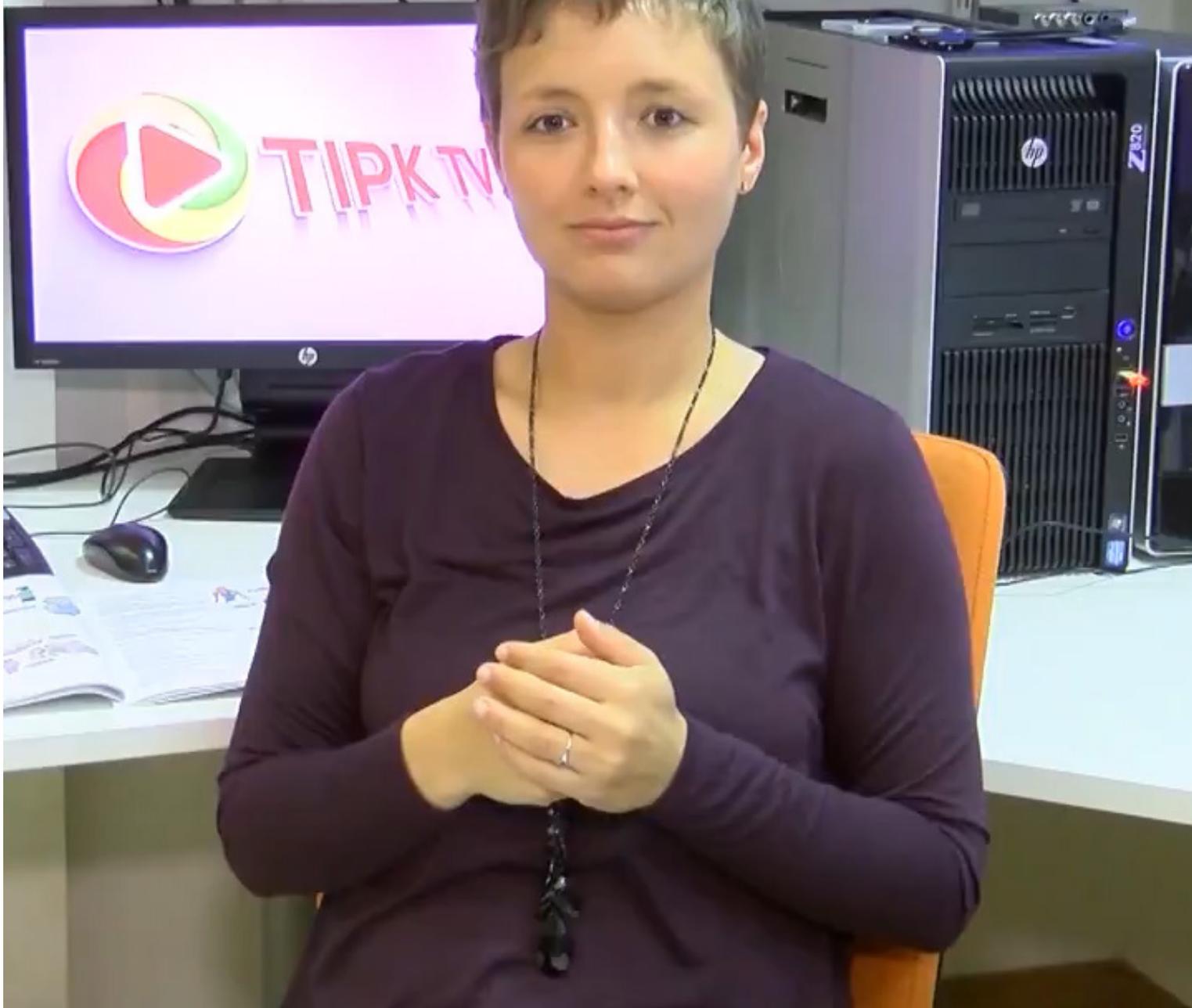
We have tremendously positive experience with deaf and hard-of-hearing employees. Communication between the deaf and hearing employees takes place without major issues. We solve communication problems by using a sign language interpreter or, even more simply, by written instructions.

“ Thanks to our company’s success and development, we will continue to employ new co-workers; we are especially striving to cooperate with deaf and hard-of-hearing persons. We are intent on finding more professionally qualified staff, because we also want their help in more advanced workplaces, such as development, preparation etc.

“ We think it is very positive that companies employ several deaf persons, because they help each other, communicate and socialise with each other. This way they don’t feel isolated and have an easier time becoming a part of the work team.

“ Communication between the deaf and hearing employees takes place without major issues.







# Maja Kuzma

Entrepreneur, consultant, journalist



Contact:  
[www.modersij.si](http://www.modersij.si)



## ABOUT ME

I studied chemical technology. During my study years my activities included writing articles, projects for young deaf persons, cooperation in events for the deaf. I still continue to do this nowadays. Being a communicative and sociable person, I left chemistry behind and started working for a TV station.

My job at the company Tipk d.o.o. offered a creative working environment in the field of media and journalism. This is an area where I was, with some guidance, able to develop and show my talents and capabilities.

After working at Tipk d.o.o., a TV station for deaf and hard-of-hearing persons, where I had excellent colleagues and a number of challenges, I decided to start my own company, Moder sij, Maja Kuzma s.p. As an independent entrepreneur I consult and offer support in the acquisition of reading skills, work with deaf persons at their workplace, I manage and participate in international

sign language courses, I interpret TV shows, and cooperate or participate in international events. My main interest is research in the field of deafness. I am also a blogger. I write about real and educational situations. Every day I deal with challenges of underprivileged deaf persons and try to support them and find new opportunities to improve their life. I like to hang out both with deaf and hearing people.

For me, the hearing are a world of information that I want to pass on to the deaf. And the deaf are my specificity due to the language, which everyone understands in a slightly different way.

” Let us create opportunities for people with fewer opportunities. Because people with fewer opportunities are also very capable. All they need is your trust.



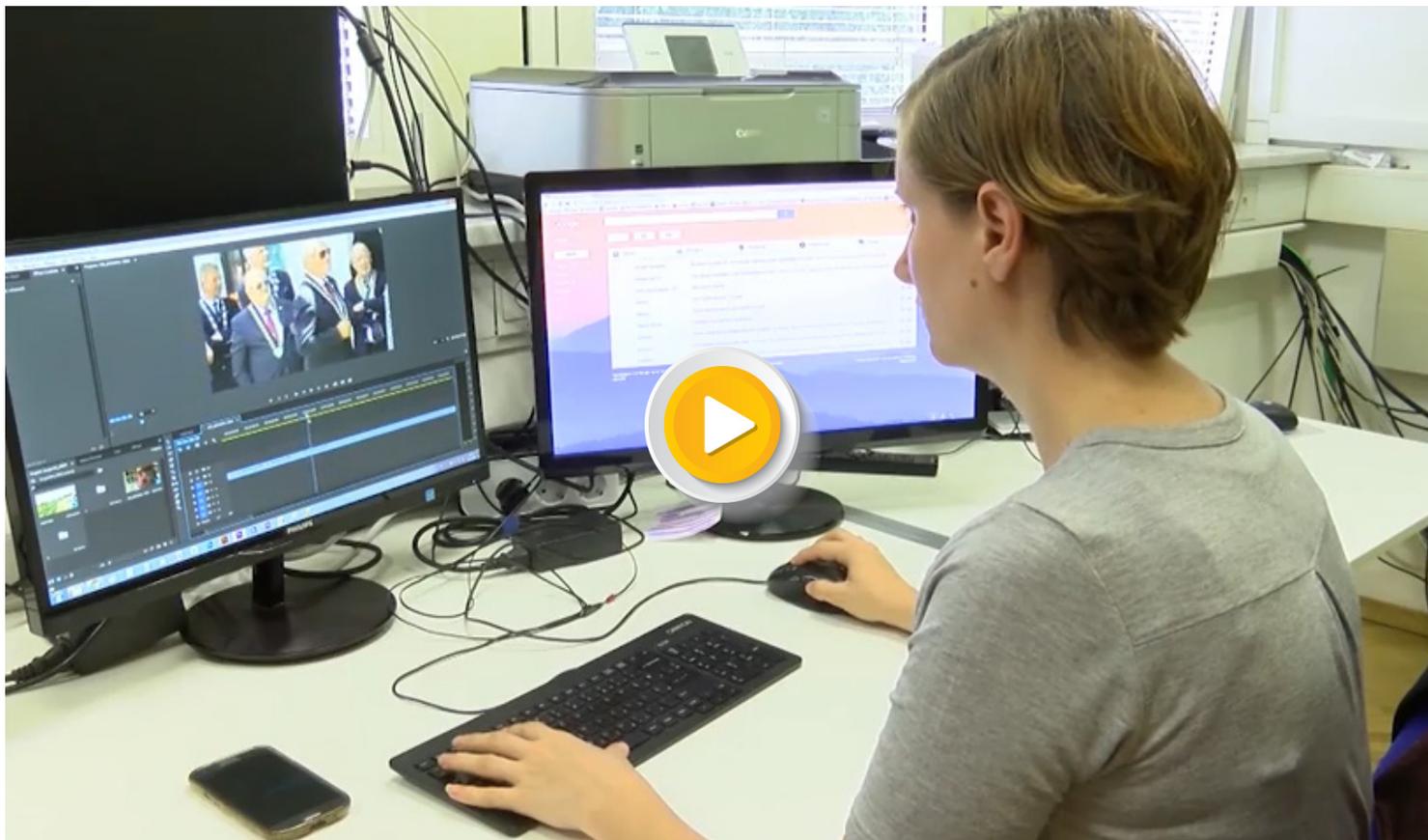
♥  
ČARI GLUHOTE.  
MOČ ZNAKOVNEGA JEZIKA.  
KULTURA IN SOCIALIZACIJA GLUHIH.  
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SPREMLJATE 24UR

TIPK TV





# TIPK Ltd.

TV station for Deaf and hard-of-hearing-persons



Contact:  
[facebook.com/Tipk TV](https://www.facebook.com/Tipk-TV)



## ABOUT US



Our activities include the testing of equipment intended for the deaf and hard-of-hearing, especially students. We try our best to make their lives easier, especially in terms of their access to information.

The field of multimedia is governed by deaf and hard-of-hearing journalists. Due to proofreading and poorer knowledge of grammar, we also cooperate with hearing co-workers. Our most viewed shows that we are most proud of are: live broadcast of the Olympics, Halo Sofija, Miss and Mister Deaf World, Eurobasket, National Assembly and elections.

Our latest activities include the introduction of a video format for the deaf, i.e. subtitling, designing a mobile application for beginners and advanced learners of International Sign Language, and designing the Sign Language mobile application. We have also seen a video

of a TV commercial, adapted to the deaf and hard-of-hearing with a sign language interpreter and subtitles.

Currently our company employs three deaf persons and cooperates with four external contractors. For a deaf person, journalism is an extremely difficult and demanding task. Moreover, deaf journalists often lack the appropriate qualifications. In journalism the method of providing information and cooperation are of utmost importance. Through time we have proven that deaf persons are far from being incapable. With proper guidance, direction and support, we are just as capable as anyone else.

“ Each deaf person needs the opportunity to develop. In order to be successful, a deaf journalist needs equal treatment and the chance for discussion.

” Through time we have proven that deaf persons are far from being incapable. With proper guidance, direction and support, we are just as capable as anyone else.







# Damjan Šebjan

Actor



**Contact:**  
facebook/Damjan-Sebjan



Ljubljana,  
Slovenia

## ABOUT ME

I've been deaf since birth and I love to communicate in sign language. I'm a graphic artist by profession, but for the last 12 years I have been an independent actor. In 2004 the Ministry of Culture has awarded me the status of an independent cultural worker and I became one of the first deaf and disabled persons in the history that acquired this status. I like to act in humorous plays. I enjoy sharing positive energy with adults and children through my facial expressions. That's who I am. Sometimes I also perform in dramas, where I use more dramatic facial expressions. I love children. I like to give them my warmth and kind-heartedness. Most often, I perform in Slovenia, and sometimes I also perform in other European countries. I communicate through sign language, while with hearing people I tend to use pantomime. I also cooperate with a sign language interpreter who makes sure that I am understood. If I perform in other European countries, I don't use the Slovenian Sign Language,

as sign languages differ from country to country. One day before my performance I usually meet up with a local who shows me their signs for the expressions that I use in my performance. I learn the signs and the audience is very impressed by my knowledge.

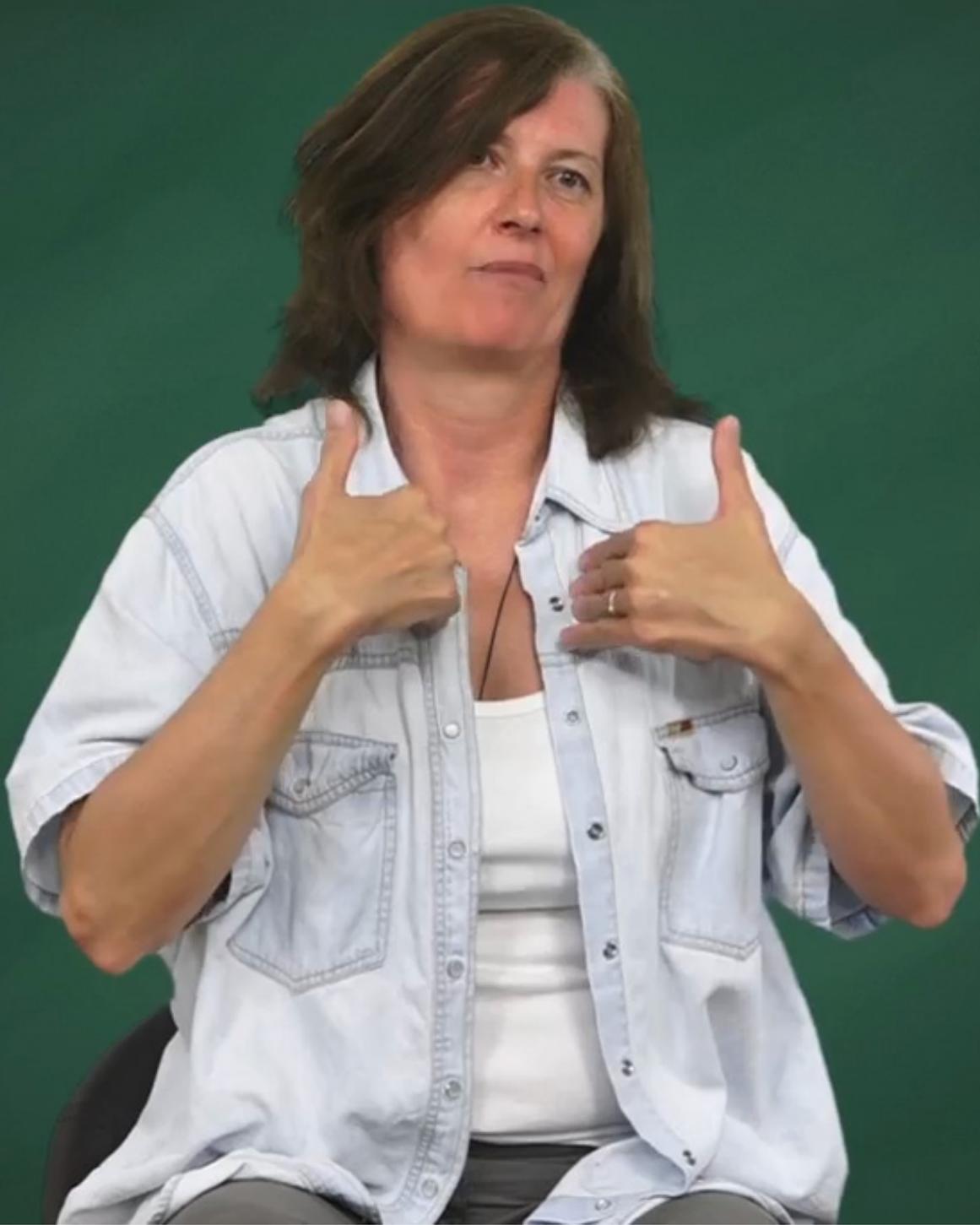
I look for work opportunities by sending out offers. Sometimes the pay is low, and sometimes high. It depends. We all know that it is not easy to sustain yourself by being an artist. I try to overcome the difficulties arising from poor payments or the lack of them by enjoying the wealth that I feel in my heart when performing. I travel a lot and experience and see many things. I do not receive any payments from the Ministry. However, I am exempt from paying the contributions for pension and disability insurance and health insurance, I am credited for years of pensionable service etc.

“ My goal for the future is to perform with a hearing actor – a star. This is one of my challenges. I think it would also be interesting for the audience.



“ In 2004 the Ministry of Culture has awarded me the status of an independent cultural worker and I became one of the first deaf and disabled persons in the history that acquired this status.







# Marjetka *Kulovec*

Special educator



## ABOUT ME

As a deaf child I attended the Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Ljubljana, where I first finished elementary school, and then continued at the High school of graphic technology in Ljubljana, becoming a graphic artist. Then I went to the Secondary School of Economics and became a sales representative. After that, I decided to study defectology at the Faculty of Education. I graduated in 1994 and now I work as a defectology teacher for the hearing impaired.

I am employed at the Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Ljubljana and teach the Slovene Sign Language at a high school. The Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in Ljubljana is a specialised educational institution for children with special needs, mostly for the deaf and hard of hearing, children with speech disorders and children with autism.

When teaching I always have a Slovenian Sign Language interpreter at my side, who is financed through supported employment. He translates signs to words and vice versa, increasing the scope of feedback for the students and helping them stay focused on the activities in the classroom. At our high school we have three deaf teachers. Communication among the employees is excellent, owing to the fact that the majority of teachers know sign language.

As a researcher I participated in the project “Signor”, which is a collection of the basic authentic signs in the Slovenian Sign Language from different regions of Slovenia. I upgraded my research work with a PhD where I focussed on researching how much information can an interpreter transfer from a speaker to a deaf person, and how much of this information can a deaf person receive, grasp and understand.



“ Education means a lot to me. It gives me general and specific knowledge. In practice, life itself is the best university.

# CONTACT US WE'RE LOOKING FORWARD TO IT!



*CORINA MALICEK*  
*corina.malicek@equalizent.com*



*JOANNA KINBERGER*  
*joanna.kinberger@equalizent.com*

PARTICIPATE  
YOURSELF !

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## SIGNSFORHANDSHAKES

### #BestPractice

The cooperation of Deaf and hearing colleagues is part of your company's / your organisation's everyday work? Tell us about it and become a part of the network.

### #DeafRoleModel

You are Deaf and want to introduce yourself, your job or your workplace? Signs for Handshakes continuously produces profiles, both in text and video, in various parts of the workplace.

PROJECT  
PARTNERS

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PUBLISHER

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Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

Projekt: 2015-1-AT01-KA202-005037

The project „Signs for Handshakes“ has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication [communication] reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



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equalizent - Schulungs- und Beratungs GmbH  
Obere Augartenstrasse 20, 1020 Wien  
[www.equalizent.com](http://www.equalizent.com)  
CEO: Monika Haider  
Project coordination: Joanna Kinberger



**Signs for Handshakes**