

Discovering Deaf Worlds: Statement of Strategic Intent

Approved April 21, 2012

Overview: The *World Health Organization and World Bank Report on Disability* (2005) states that there are 278 million people worldwide with moderate-to-profound hearing loss, of which 80%, or 222.4 million, live in low/middle-income countries. According to the *Deaf People and Human Rights Report* (2009), authored by the World Federation of the Deaf, at least 90% of Deaf people in developing countries receive no formal education, and of those who do, only 1-2% receive an education in sign language. By combining these statistics, there could be more than 200 million Deaf people in the world who do not have access to education.

As a result, the opportunity for these individuals to enter society and the workplace and compete on par with their peers who hear is extremely limited. Due to lack of knowledge and communication access, Deaf people worldwide are at a disadvantage to advocate for their human, cultural and linguistic rights.

Without skilled Deaf leaders, the Deaf population's destiny in each country is placed into the hands of people who are hearing: well-meaning people who are not cognizant of the needs and desires of people who are Deaf, this is, people who do not share the "Deaf experience." Deaf leaders whom are *effective* and *efficient* change agents are integral to the self-determination of Deaf communities, or they will be relegated forever to a position of dependency on others.

DDW's intrinsic philosophy is as follows: we will work in partnership with our colleagues in selected countries to realize their goals and objectives, and most importantly, we will impose no solutions. In effect, we will work collaboratively to find solutions that meet local/national needs identified by community leaders. In contrast to the "medical model" of d/Deafness, DDW's support of the cultural and linguistic identity of Deafness is most consistent with upholding the personal dignity of Deaf peoples.

Part I: Mission

To advance the **self-determination of signing Deaf communities** through local **capacity building** in developing countries.

Part II: Vision

Recognizing that people who are Deaf or hard of hearing have the same human rights as those who are not Deaf, DDW envisions a **global community of sign language users** who can acquire an education, pursue a career, and live a life that is comparable to that of their non-Deaf peers. DDW envisions itself as a **positive catalyst for change** in partnership with signing Deaf communities in developing countries.

Part III: Values

- Focusing DDW's resources and efforts on Deaf and hard of hearing communities where we can have the **greatest impact**;
- Utilizing a **collaborative, capacity-building approach** to support programs established within local Deaf and hard of hearing communities;
- Valuing sign language as a **natural right** for Deaf people, while respecting the right of an individual to **choose their preferred communication modality**;
- Preserving **indigenous sign languages**, which reflect the cultures in which they are rooted;
- Recognizing that all people, regardless of their social or economic background, possess the **capacity to succeed**, and deserve equal access to education, the workplace and the benefits that society has to offer;
- Promoting the **full range of human diversity** in language and culture;
- Adhering to the guiding principles delineated in Article 3 of the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** ([link](#)); and
- Following the guidelines listed in the **World Federation of the Deaf** policy statement, "Work Done by Member Organisations in Developing Countries" ([link](#)).

Part IV: Analyses Completed to Date

A. Environmental Assessment

The Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) conducted an environmental assessment on the countries in which DDW has its strongest connections, including: Cambodia, China, Costa Rica, India, Kenya, Nepal, the Philippines, Tanzania, and Thailand. Assessment was based upon current issues and opportunities in the Deaf community, DDW's past and present involvement in that country, organizations that would benefit from organizational / leadership development, potential challenges, and available resources.

From this assessment, the SPC determined that DDW would have the highest impact and likelihood for success of achieving our mission by conducting work in the Philippines and Costa Rica. For more information, on *DDW's Environmental Assessment*, please contact us at ddwteam@discoveringdeafworlds.org

B. Organizational Criteria

The SPC reviewed a number of Deaf advocacy organizations established within the three selected countries to determine potential partner organizations. Criteria were established to measure alignment with DDW's mission, vision and values; area safety; reliability, stability and passion of local Deaf leadership; reputation of leaders/organizations; availability of financial support and other resources; degree of projected impact and attainable goals; among other categories.

Based on these criteria, the SPC selected one organization from each country as a potential DDW partner. For more information on *DDW Partner Organization Criteria*, please contact us at ddwteam@discoveringdeafworlds.org

C. Program Levels

The SPC created three levels of DDW involvement and assigned each potential partner organization to one level. This is a guideline for determining the allocation of DDW's resources.

1. Level One: 75% of DDW's Programming Resources

DDW will provide in depth organizational development and leadership training, with the ultimate aim of expanding the local leadership pool and improving partner's resource management and internal operations.

2. Level Two: 15% of DDW's Programming Resources

DDW will provide basic organizational development and leadership training to organization(s) positioned to move to Level One programming.

3. Level Three: 10% of DDW's Programming Resources

DDW will maintain relationships within our network and continue promoting Deaf advocacy through our Journeys program, newsletters, presentations, video blogs, website, and social media. DDW will provide this level of programming for organizations and advocacy efforts within DDW's network whose values coincide with DDW's.

D. Competitor Analysis

The SPC has identified, analyzed, compared, and distinguished organizations that work with the same general target population of Deaf people in developing countries, and may be competing for the same funding sources as DDW. At this point in time, we can find no other entities that provide in-depth organizational development and specifically focus on deafness/Deaf people. For more information on *DDW's Competitor Analysis*, please contact us at ddwteam@discoveringdeafworlds.org

Part V: Professional Development and Preparation

A. Cultural Sensitivity Training

Before embarking on OD training, DDW members will undergo orientation on the language(s), culture, and business practices of the partner country.

B. Engaging Consultants

Talent Pool/Mentorship – The SPC has selected a talent pool of respected Deaf professionals with applicable skills in international and/or organizational development. Scot Atkins, Ed. D. will serve as DDW's lead Organizational Development consultant. Additional mentors include: Dr. James DeCaro, Dr. Khadijat Rashid, Dr. Madan Vasishta, and Dr. Michael Schwartz. Mentors will provide regular counsel to DDW staff through organizational development programming, and may be called upon to visit a partnering organization in-country to provide trainings (below.) *Note: Utilizing DDW Board members as mentors will be an interim measure until additional mentors are identified and DDW staff members have gained sufficient experience.*

Peer Consultants – DDW staff have identified additional Deaf peers with a background in international development to serve as unpaid consultants to DDW staff. In addition, DDW

staff members have been tasked with reading a number of books on International / Organizational Development and will hold regular professional development meetings with Dr. James DeCaro and Dr. Scot Atkins.

Part VI: Plan of Work for Level One and Two Programming

We will be selecting 3-5 recognized leaders from each Level One and Level Two organization identified above, and we will work collaboratively with them to develop their skill sets so that they can be efficient and effective within their home countries. To achieve this end we will implement the following collaboration process:

A. Determine in-country needs, and leadership skill sets required to meet those needs:

A DDW Team comprised of one staff member and one mentor will visit a partner country for at least 7-10 days to conduct the following:

Collaborative Plan of Work #1: Baseline Analysis– DDW will develop a plan of work in collaboration with the partner organization, which will outline the data collection and issue analysis process.

Data Collection and Issue Analysis– DDW will work with partners to define their current aims and challenges, then collect data through individual and group interviews, questionnaires, document analysis, direct observation, and how the partner organization treats its relationship with DDW and others. DDW will then analyze this baseline data and produce a report that outlines the fundamental issues and what leadership skill sets are required, as well as recommendations for how to proceed.

Our contacts in the Philippines have identified a lack of leadership succession and limited fundraising knowledge as two areas for improvement. Our contacts in Costa Rica have identified inefficient program management and limited knowledge of the data collection process as two areas of improvement.

B. Adapt, adopt and/or develop training to address leadership needs, and apply training using a continuous formative evaluation process:

Collaborative Plan of Work #2: Program Implementation– DDW will develop a second plan of work in collaboration with the partner, which will outline the implementation and evaluation process. This plan of work will encourage an equal 50/50 investment from both the partner organization and DDW, and will clearly state each organization's role, short and long term goals of the implementation, time schedule, means for evaluation, and how the implementation is to be conducted and funded.

Organizational Development Workshops/Training– A DDW Team comprised of one staff member and one mentor will visit a partner country for at least 7-10 days per session to provide OD training to a partner organization. Topics may include: organizational effectiveness, governance, fund development, public relations and networking, leadership and human resource development, legal and human rights, program evaluation, etc. Between visits, dialogue with partners in other countries will be maintained on a regular basis via videoconferencing.

Community Events- In addition to OD training, DDW and partner organizations will host a community event before the DDW staff member(s) return to the USA. The purpose of this event is to network and maintain positive rapport with members of the local Deaf community, as well as collect any additional data needed.

C. Evaluate the outcomes of the training via pre/post testing

DDW will be responsible for how training is conducted: our own behavior, way of working, and strategies of involving partners. While we cannot be held accountable for how partners manage their organization(s) after training, we will evaluate our efforts by answering the following questions. Have we:

- Increased the probability that the partner organization will follow our advice and make the effort to improve their organization?
- Made sound recommendations?
- Performed well in: establishing a collaborative plan of work, conducting discovery, collecting data, giving feedback, dealing with resistance, engaging in implementation?
- Completed each aspect of the consulting phase?
- Acted to build local capacity for the partner to solve the next challenge on its own?
- Met the partner organization's criteria for success?

D. Apply skills to a reasonably sized project in each country & expand local leadership pool

Skill Implementation- Working in collaboration with trained Deaf leaders, we will select projects to address. DDW will serve as a consultant, providing additional training and feedback when requested.

Leadership Succession- As collaboration progresses, partners will be encouraged to take on greater responsibility of training their constituents. Specific trainings may be designed for sub-groups such as Deaf women, youth, business owners, minorities, et al. This responsibility will be outlined in the second plan of work.

In addition, DDW will collaborate with partners to select a succession of emerging leaders for partners to continue training. This will ensure local autonomy and increase local capacity, as the knowledge and skills provided will be carried on within the partner organization and community. Ultimately, DDW's goal is to establish a system in which leadership training and skills are provided to the local Deaf community, by the local Deaf community.

E. Measure success in achieving the outcomes/goals of the project

DDW's initial intervention in partner countries will result in 3-5 local Deaf leaders with newly developed skills. We will evaluate our success by measuring the pre and post leadership skill sets of the participants in the program. These leaders and their successors will reinforce programs impacting the lives of Deaf people in their country. We will measure our impact by comparing baseline data collected about partner organizations, their constituents, and local/national issues to the success of selected pilot projects in each country.

The goal is for 90% of trained leaders to report improvements in their knowledge of how to organize their local Deaf community, and for at least 50% to report success in achieving their pilot project objectives within 3 years, 75% within 5 years. DDW will look at country and Deaf community trends holistically. As a result of leaders who are more efficient and effective, has:

- The partner organization successfully lobbied for a specific issue?
- The number of Deaf people enrolled in school, hired as teachers, gainfully employed, etc., increased?
- Is there greater local/national recognition of sign language, Deaf culture, and/or the civil/human rights of Deaf people?

Partner organizations will be expected to survey and report results annually. Long term, DDW aims to increase accessible educational opportunities for Deaf people in developing countries from 10% to 15%, and employment by 5% within 20 years. This will allow Deaf people more mainstream viability, thus improving their civil and human rights.

We anticipate implementation of these projects over a three-year timeframe since we already have developed a working relationship with leaders in each country.

Part VII: Plan of Work for Level Three Programming

The two primary purposes of level three programming are to promote the work of Deaf advocacy organizations in developing countries and maintain the interest of DDW's audience and supporters. Such programming will be self-supporting and provide a potential revenue stream for DDW.

A. Journeys – DDW staff, in partnership with GoPhilanthropic, will arrange tours for public or private groups of up to 15 participants to connect with local Deaf schools and organizations in a developing country. DDW is currently prepared to lead tours in Costa Rica and Cambodia. Tour fees paid by participants will cover all costs for this program, with potential to generate additional income for DDW. *Note: Any expansion of DDW Journeys will be tied to Level One organizations, based on SPC's criteria, and subject to Board approval.*

B. Global Deaf Awareness – DDW researches and identifies common struggles and success stories to maintain an up-to-date understanding of Deaf advocacy work being conducted around the globe. DDW promotes this work freely through its newsletter, website, video blogs and social media, as well as through presentations for negotiable fees of pro-bono to \$2,500 depending on the request and budget of host.

DDW's network currently consists of over 250 Deaf schools/organizations from 50 countries, 13 countries of which DDW staff have visited in person. Any in-country expansion of this network will be conducted as add-ons to Level One and Two programming in order to minimize costs.