

# Deaf Role Models and Leadership

Deaf Activism and Advocacy



# Welcome

- Introduction
- Ice Breaker



# Content - Overview

Introduction

Beginnings

Civil rights movement

Technological progress

Significance today

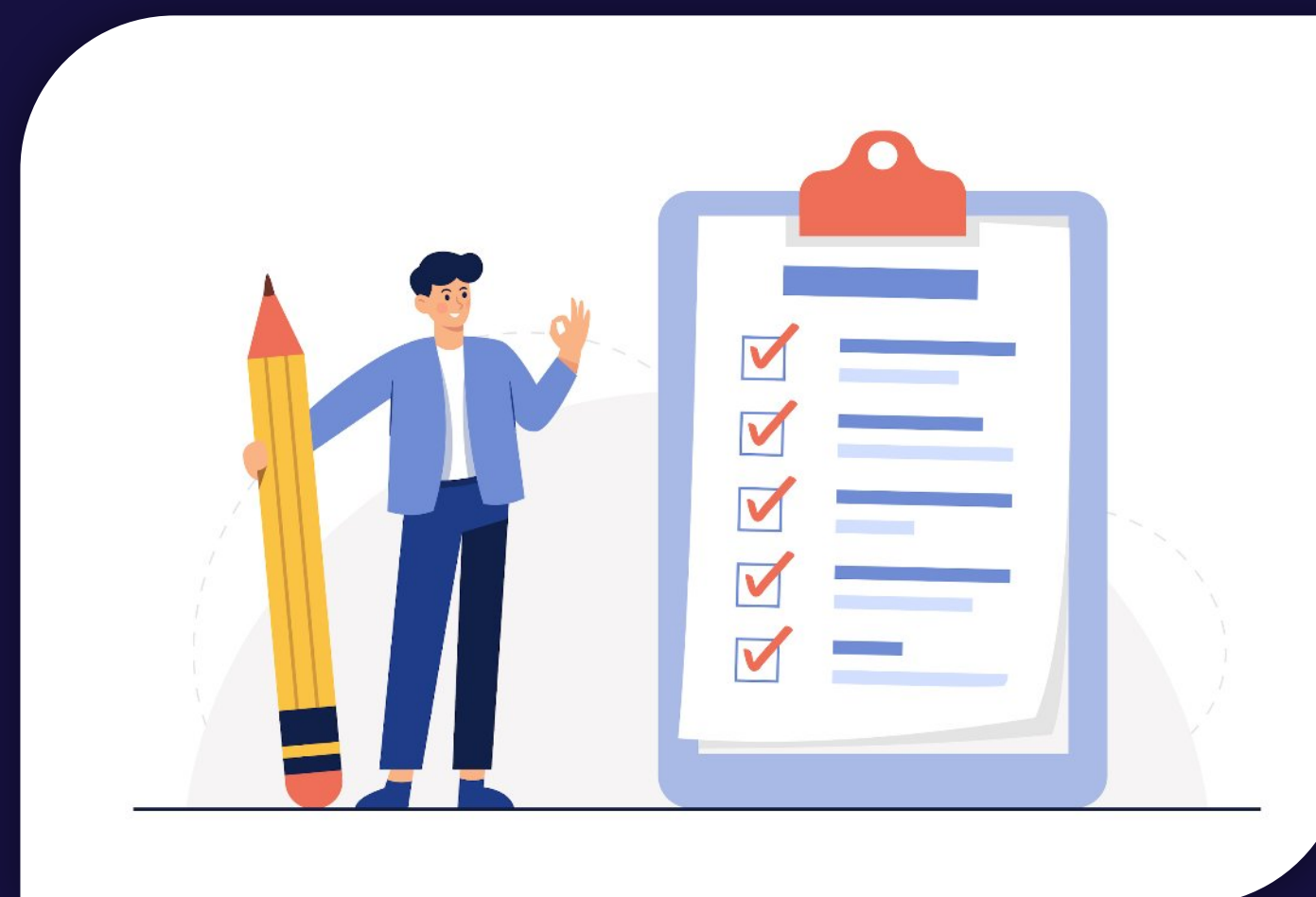
Role Models

Action days

Summary and outlook

Conclusion and discussion

Feedback



# Learning Goals

- Understanding the history of Deaf representatives
- Knowing important milestones in Deaf activism
- Role Models Gallery – activists
- Understanding and respect for one's own culture, values, and needs
- Knowledge of important organizations (local, regional, international)
- Strengthening one's own commitment.



# Info: Activism and Deaf Community

Throughout history, Deaf people have fought for their

- rights
- culture
- self-determination

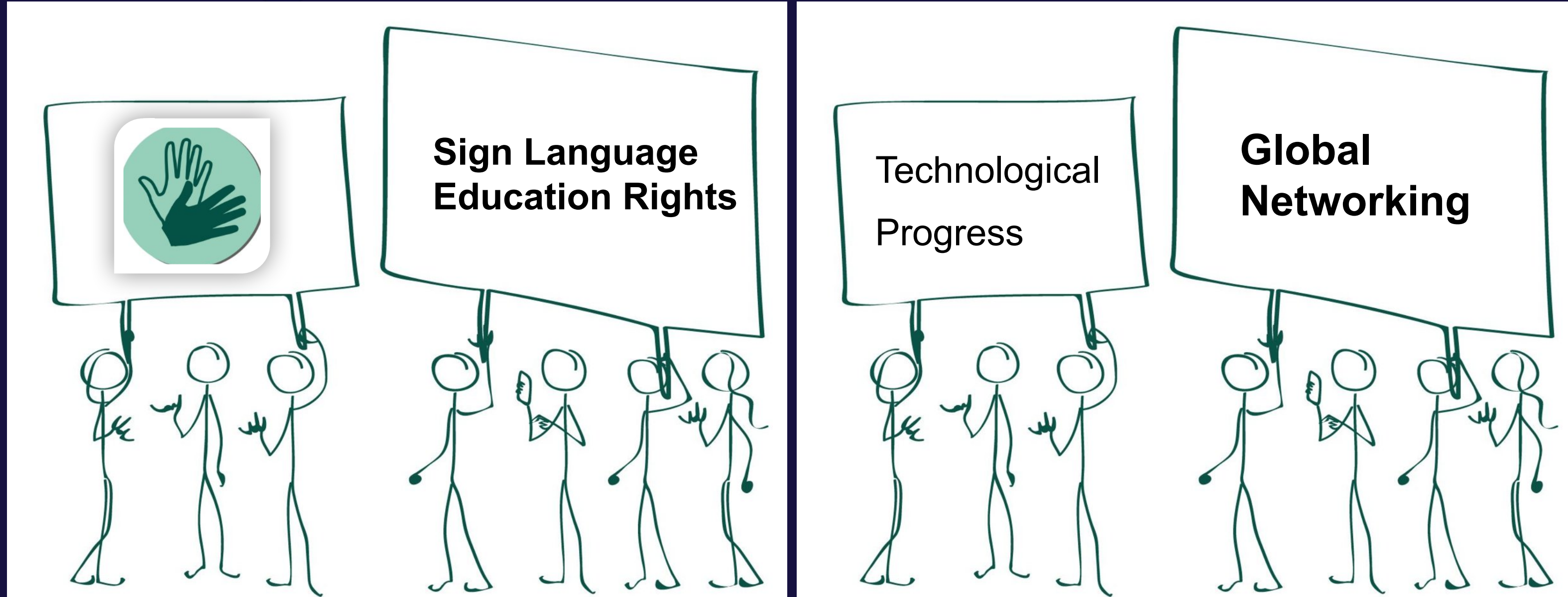


The **activism** is characterized by

- desire for equality
- recognition of sign language
- cultural autonomy

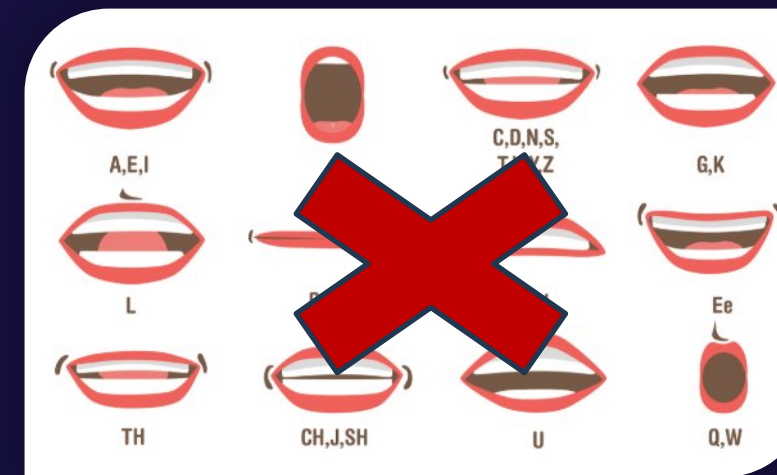
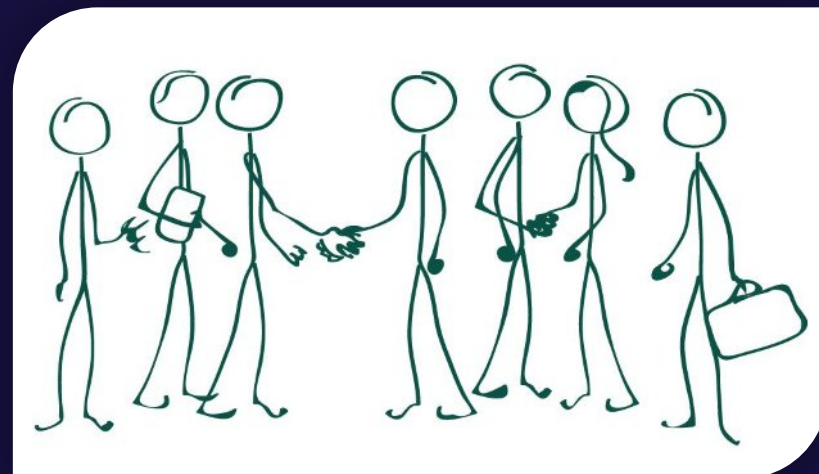


# Important Milestones



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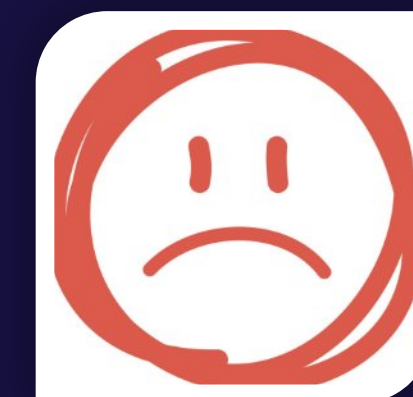
# Beginnings - 19. and early 20. Century



Foundation of associations and federations, especially in Europe and the USA  
Example: National Association of the Deaf (NAD), USA, 1880

## Contents / Situation:

- Sign language instead of lip reading
- Many Deaf people were **excluded** from the education system or **isolated** in specialized institutions..



# Cultural Movement Sign Language Activism (1920-1960)

## Turning point:

Sign Language = independent language

1960: **William Stokoe**

publishes the groundbreaking work **Sign Language Structure**

- = Linguistic recognition of sign language
- = Promotion of the protection of sign languages
- = Foundation of sign language movements

**Movement: Sign language as part of cultural identity**

**Activism: Demand for recognition and self-determination**



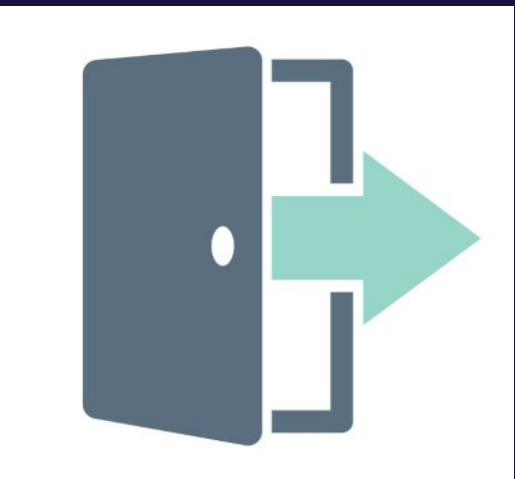
# Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and 1970s

## Fight for equality:



- US ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act)  
= Legal regulations for people with disabilities

- Demand for access to education, employment, politics, and culture.



## “Deaf President Now” (DPN) 1988:

- Protest movement at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C.
- Students demand the election of a Deaf president — a significant success!



**Self-advocacy — Respect — Sign Language —  
Founding organizations — “Nothing about us without us!”**

# Digitalization: Technological Progress

## Technology:

- Subtitles
- Video apps
- Internet – worldwide connection
- KI

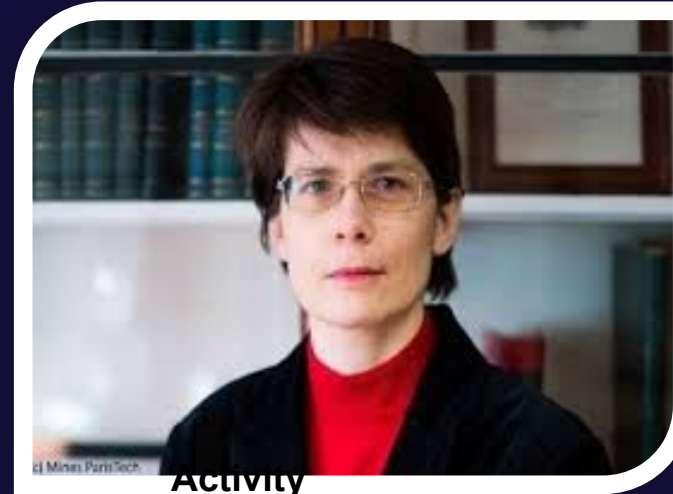


Sign language interpreters on site and online

# Role Models Gallery

## Politics, Economy, Technology

Activity



# Info: Significance of Deaf Activism today



The movement has contributed significantly to sign language now being **recognised as a language in its own right**.



**Raising awareness of the cultural identity of the Deaf community.**



Deaf people today are working in the worlds of politics, science, art and media — as **role models and ambassadors** for their culture.

**Commitment to inclusive societies, accessibility and self-advocacy**



# Global Networking

Activity

## World Federation of the Deaf



[World Federation of the Deaf | Inclusion & Equal Rights](#)

Welcome to



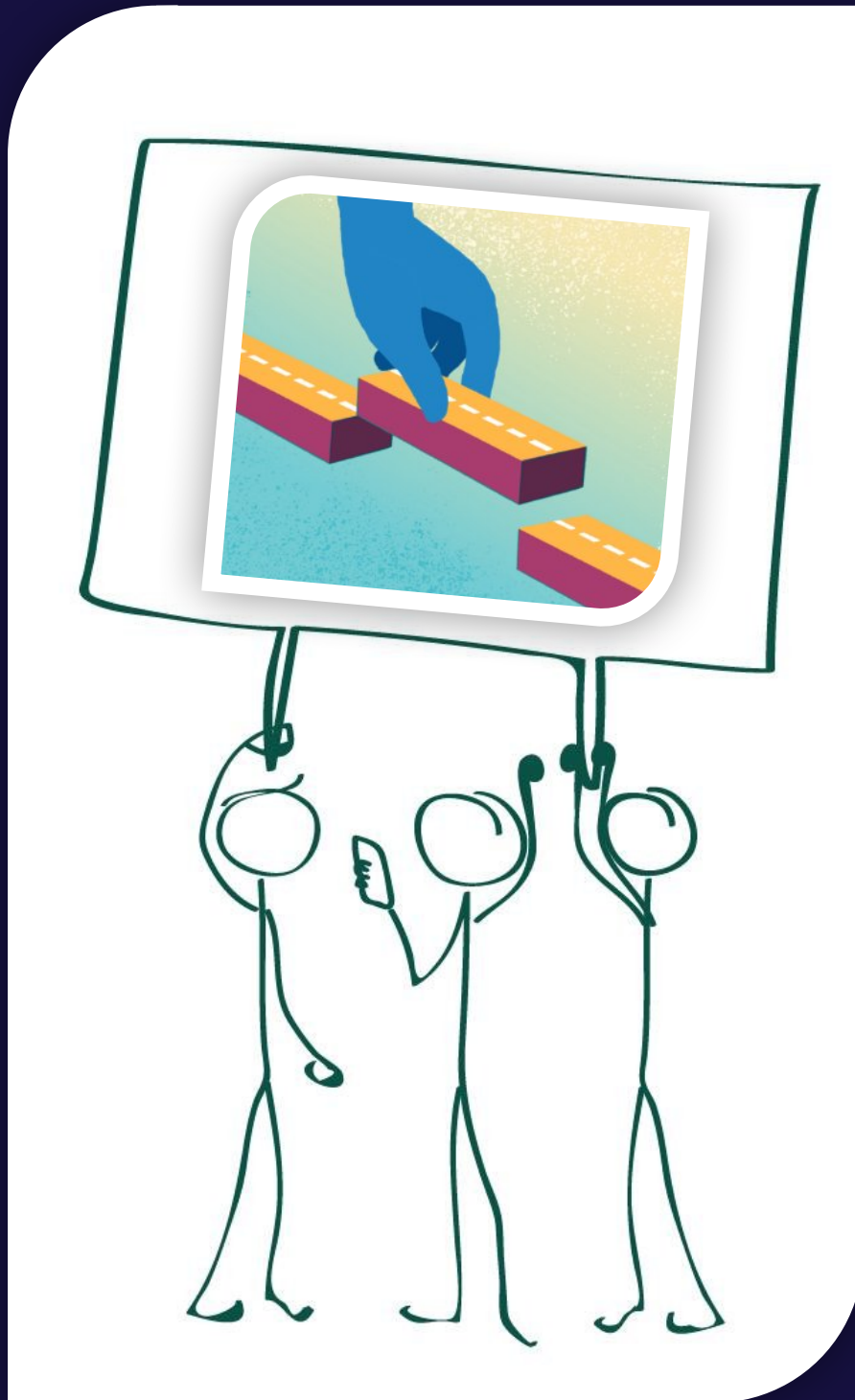
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# Present and current challenges



## Progress

- legal recognition of sign language in many countries.
- greater visibility in the media, politics and culture.

## Challenges

- unequal power relations
- lack of accessibility
- social prejudices

## Continue fighting for full access

- in public spaces,
- in education,
- work and the media.

# Action-Days

## International Week of Deaf People

2025

Celebrating Identity, Culture, and Rights!



**United Nations**

International Day of Sign Languages  
23 September



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# Create your own Action Day!



What's  
your  
message &  
vision?

**Activity**

# Conclusion & Future

History of Deaf Activism

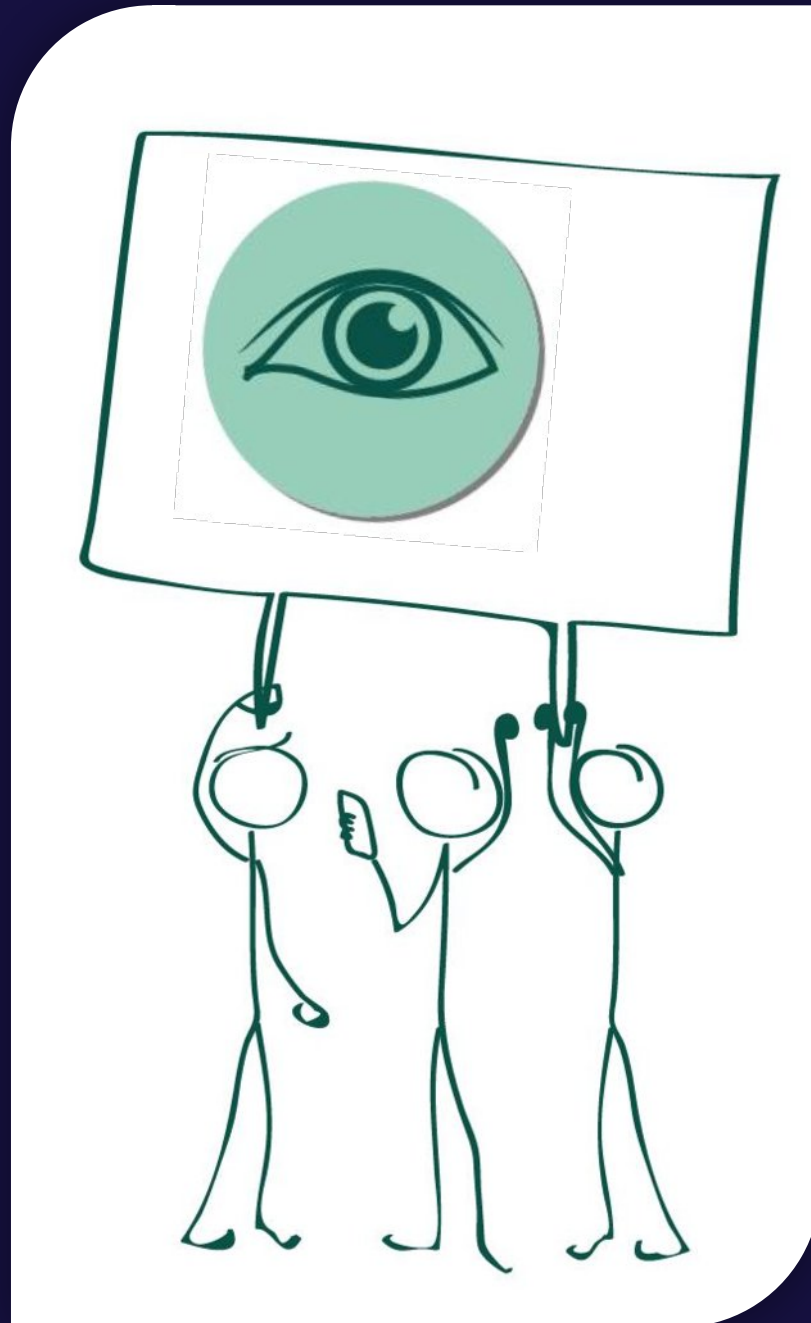
= **Courage - Creativity - Commitment to Equality**

Success stories such as the Gallaudet protest show how self-confident activism brings about change.

**The fight for full recognition, visibility, and accessibility continues!**

**Future:**

- greater empowerment
- technological innovations
- global networking
- greater social acceptance.



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# Feedback



Thank you for your attention!

# Kontakt



<https://deafstudies.eu/>



Deaf Culture, Heritage and Diversity



@deafstudies.eu

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**Innosign**

**Witaf**  
Seit 1865 im Dienste der Gehörlosen



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