

# DEAF AND ADOPTION

By Rune Anda, Norway

Reg. no. 191

Tuesday 11th July 2:30 pm

The World Congress for the deaf  
in Vienna, July 1995

Presentation .....	2
Letters and forms .....	4
Results from the questionnaire .....	5
Conclusion .....	13
Appendix .....	14
Enclosed .....	16

## **Deaf and adoption** (by Rune Anda, Norway)

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **We are here to talk about adoption. What is adoption?**

Most people know what it is. Adoption means that someone takes over the responsibility and care for a child that they have not given birth to. Child adoption is possible from your own or another country with adoption policies.

#### **Why do people want to adopt children?**

It might be a couple who want to have children but are unable of having any of their own.

It could also be a couple who allready have children, but still want to adopt. Other reasons also exists.

#### **Who can adopt?**

The rules vary in different countries.

- The most common rule states that the applicants must be economically secure.
- They must be over 25.
- Not older than 50.
- Have been married for two years prior to adoption.
- Be in good health.
- Have a police certificate showing that the persons concerned have no criminal record.
- Applicants who want to adopt a child from abroad must have a positive attitude towards poeple of different races and cultural backgrounds.

As I mentioned, the rules vary from country to country, but in general one can say that they are strict. The rules are mainly there to protect the children's future.

#### **Deaf and adoption**

What are the rules for deaf people who want to adopt? And what is the situation for the deaf children being adopted? Are there any problems?

It is likely to presume that deaf children are placed in a group for handicaped children and could be adopted by anyone. What are the consequenses of that?

- Are deaf childern protected by strict adoption rules?
- Does the country of origin want the deaf children to join families who know how to raise a deaf child?
- Does the country of origin want the deaf children to join families who know sign language?
- Do the countries of origin have any remonstrances towards deaf applicants?

Maybe deaf people who apply for child adoption are turned down because of their deafness? If handicapped people are to be refused adoption is this also to include deaf applicants?

### **Presentation**

Both me and my wife are deaf. We have adopted two deaf children, a boy of ten who was six when we collected him, and a girl of three whom we adopted last year. My wife and I travelled to China to get them, and our son came along with us when we picked up the girl. We wanted and applied to adopt deaf children from China and through adoption agencies they found for us deaf children within Chinese orphanages.

Our son Marius starts in the 4th grade at the deaf school 'Hunstad' in August, while Lena Mei attends a kindergarden at the same school. They both love it there.

### **Are there any problems for the deaf concerning adoption?**

Not that many deaf have adopted children, but it happens. In Norway It was twenty years ago when the first deaf couple adopted children. From 1990 to 1995 we know of five deaf families in Norway who has adopted deaf children. In Norway there are no problems for deaf being allowed adoption of deaf children. Deaf applicants could still be turned down, but then it will be on the same grounds as hearing people. Sometimes the refusal might come as a result of failure of communication between the deaf and the authorities handling the case, or maybe because the government don't know enough about the deaf. They may consider the deaf as «less intelligent» and therefor not capable of raising children.

Foreign governments might not know enough about deaf in western countries and because of this judge them on the same level as deaf in their own country considering them as «mute and uneducated». This could result in prejudging the deaf applicants and refusing child adoption.

# **DEAF AND ADOPTION**

**Letters and questionnaires  
sent approximately 100 lands**

**(in English, French, Spanish, Norwegian and Dutch)**

**Sent in March/April 1995**

# DEAF AND ADOPTION

## The conclusion of the questionnaire

### Introduction to results from the questionnaire

I would like to point out that the information in my material is based on the answers I have received on my questions – and the fact that there's always a possibility that some might have misinterpreted the questions.

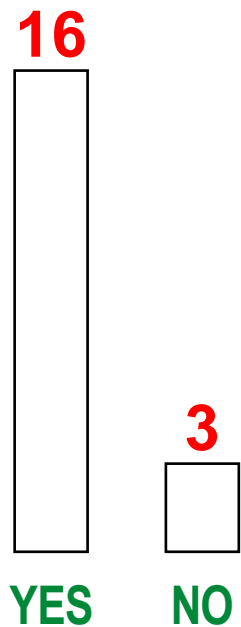
However, my intention has been to gather some general information on the situation in different countries regarding deaf and adoption.

---

Language:	Number of letters sent:	Number of letters replied:	Answering percentage:
English	50	20	40%
Spanish	20	1	5%
French	15	0	0%
Norwegian	5	2	40%
Dutch	1	0	0%

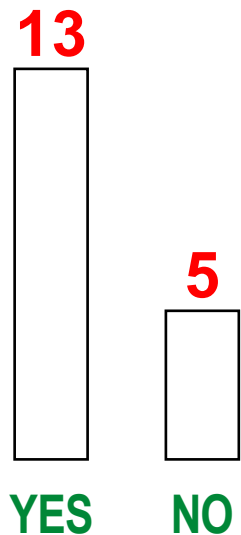
---

**1. Does your country have an authorized adoption agency?**



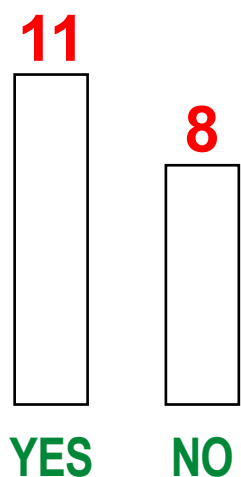
---

**1a. Does adoption of children from other than your own country take place?**



---

**1b. Does adoption of children from your country to other countries take place?**



## 2. Are deaf persons allowed adopting children?

15

2

Those who answered NO are two countries in Africa and both answered NO to question 1 A

YES

NO

## 2a. Are deaf couples (deaf/deaf) allowed adopting?

17

0

YES

NO

## 2b. Would couples wishing to adopt, have to be deaf/hearing couples?

3

11

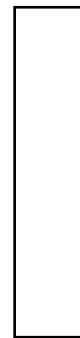
Those who answered YES to this question, did also answer YES to question 2A. I therefore believe that the correct numbers here should be 0 YES and 14 NO.

YES

NO

## 2c. Are deaf/deaf couples allowed adopting hearing children?

11



3



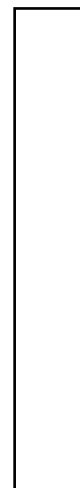
YES

NO

Those 3 who answered NO are  
lands in North Europe

## 2d. Are deaf/deaf couples allowed adopting deaf children?

16



0



YES

NO

## 2f. How many deaf couples in your country have adopted children?

USA : 40 couples (pr. 1985)

1 land : 6-10 couples

5 land : 1-5 couples

5 land : No deaf couples have adopted children

3 land : Unregistered



If you answered NO to question 2,  
(Are deaf persons allowed adopting  
children?) – please answer this question:

**2g. Do rules and  
regulation exist  
preventing deaf  
couples from  
adopting children?**

0  
YES

16  
  
NO

**3. Are applicants in other countries given the possibility to adopt deaf children from your country?**

<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>

---

**IF YES:**

**3a. Would it be required that applicants know sign language?**

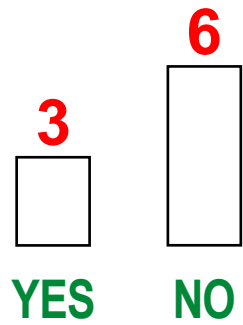
<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>

**3b. Would it be required that applicants must be deaf themselves?**

<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>

**IF NO:**

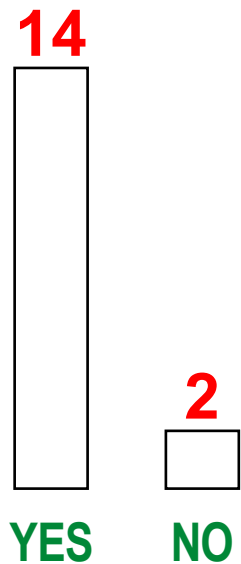
**3d. Would the Government in your country imply that deaf children are of no interest to applicants from other countries?**



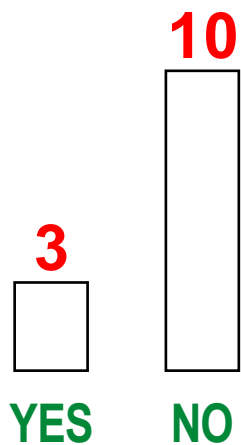
**4. What is the general opinion of The Organization for the Deaf in your country, regarding the below?**

---

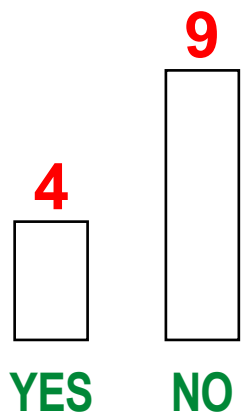
**4a. It is for the better that deaf couples adopt deaf children**



**4b. It is for the better that hearing couples adopt deaf children**



**4c. It is for the better that deaf couples adopt hearing children**



# Conclusion

**If the world congress and WFD find it necessary to work on this issue, I would like to make a few suggestions for a plan of action:**

1. Inform of the possibilities and procedures for adoption of deaf children through publishing information in all deaf magazines in the countries where adoption policies exists.  
The reasons for this being so important is than many might feel unsure about how to go about the issue of adoption. This could be the first step. If a positive responce is received for child adoption, where more deaf people want to adopt deaf children, others means in addition to publishing could be used.
2. It is important that correct information concerning the deaf applicants and their situation in their home country is received by the authorities decideing the fate of adopties. They would also need to know that it would be in the childs best interest to be received by a family who could communicate using sign language.
3. In addition to adoption agencies receiving information concerning deaf applicants, these agencies must pass on this information to other contacts in their own contry, for example orphanages and offices responsible for registering children for adoption. This is of great importance, especially since it might give deaf children a change to have their names put on an official adoption list.
4. All prejudgements of the deaf must be challanged. These prejudgements may cause a sceptical attitude towards deaf people. When this is done, peoples attitude towards deaf may change for the better.
5. Create a complete and centrally controlled list of deaf/hard of hearing children world over waiting for adoption.

***I think WFD is the right authority to work on these matters.***

# Appendix

Question	TOTAL		Western Europe		East Europe		North America		South America		Asia + NZ		Africa	
	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
1. Does your country have an authorized adoption agency?	16	3	7	1	2	1	1	0	1	0	2	0	3	1
<i>If YES:</i>														
a. Does adoption of children from other than your own country take place?	13	5	9	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	3
b. Does adoption of children from your country to other countries take place?	11	8	3	5	3	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	3	1
2. Are <u>deaf</u> persons allowed adopting children?	15	2	7	0	3	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	1	2
<i>If YES:</i>														
a. Are deaf couples (deaf/deaf) allowed adopting?	17	0	9	0	3	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	1	0
b. Would couples wishing to adopt, have to be <u>deaf/hearing</u> couples?	3	11	1	6	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	2	1	0
c. Are <u>deaf/deaf</u> couples allowed adopting <u>hearing</u> children?	11	3	5	2	1	1	1	0	1	0	2	0	1	0
d. Are <u>deaf/deaf</u> couples allowed adopting <u>deaf</u> children?	16	0	10	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	1	0
<i>If NO:</i>														
g. Do rules and regulation exist preventing deaf couples from adopting children?	0	16	0	8	0	2			0	2	0	4		
3. Are applicants in other countries given the possibility to adopt deaf children from your country?	7	8	3	4	1	1	0		1	0	2	3	1	
<i>If YES:</i>														
a. Would it be required that applicants know sign language?	0	7	0	3	0	2			0		2			
b. Would it be required that applicants must be deaf themselves?	0	7	0	3	0	2			0		2			
<i>If NO:</i>														
d. Would the Government in your country imply that deaf children are of no interest to applicants from other countries?	3	6	0	2	1	1	1		0	0	2	1	1	
4. What is the general opinion of The Organization for the Deaf in your country, regarding the below?														
a. It is for the better that deaf couples adopt deaf children	14	2	6	1	1	1	1		0	2	0	4	0	
b. It is for the better that hearing couples adopt deaf children	3	10	1	6	0	1	0		1	0	1	2	1	
c. It is for the better that deaf couples adopt hearing children	4	9	1	5	0	1	1		0	0	1	2	2	

**Answer received from:**

1. Austria
2. Uganda
3. New Zealand
4. Brazil
5. Denmark
6. Finland
7. Switzerland
8. Ireland
9. Estland
10. Zambia
11. USA
12. Tanzania
13. Malaysia
14. Hungary
15. Madagaskar
16. Great Britain
17. Poland
18. Malta
19. Germany
20. Bulgaria
21. Russia
22. Israel
23. Norway

**Enclosed**



Rune Anda  
Nordre Nattlandsfjellet 75  
N-5030 Landaas  
Norway  
Fax: +47 55 20 08 63

Sveriges Dövas Riksförbund  
Box 300  
S-793 27 LEKSAND  
S v e r i g e

## **Tema: DEAF AND ADOPTION**

### **Foredrag: Verdenskongress for døve i Wien, juli 1995.**

#### **Personalia**

Mitt navn er Rune Anda, 42 år. Jeg er døv og har gått på døveskole i 1961-1970. Jeg er gift med en døv dame og sammen har vi adoptert to døve barn fra Kina; en gutt på 10 år (adoptert i 1991) og en jente på 3 år (adoptert i 1994).

Jeg har søkt om å få ta opp temaet «Deaf and adoption» under verdenskongressen i Wien. Og jeg har fått svar om at dette er i orden.

#### **«Deaf and adoption»**

Mitt formål med temaet er, som jeg har sagt til arrangørene av verdenskongressen:

Blant flere tusen barn som blir adoptert hvert år, finner man også døve. Vi må prøve å arbeide for at de kommer til adoptivsøkere som behersker tegnspråk. Vi må også arbeide for at det skal bli lettere for døve søkere å få adoptere barn.

Adopsjonsorganisasjoner verden over må få kjennskap til muligheter og fordeler for foreldreløse døve barn å komme til et hjem der tegnspråk brukes. Alle eventuelle fordommer om døve må bekjempes med informasjoner fra WFD og de nasjonale døveorganisasjoner.

Det er i dag noen få land i verden som forstår viktigheten av at døve adopsjonsbarn aller helst bør komme til døve foreldre eller foreldre som kan tegnspråk. I Norge har adopsjonsorganisasjoner oppdaget at dette er det beste tilbudet for døve barn.

Vi ser det som viktig at foreldreløse døve barn i land som adopterer bort barn, kommer med på liste over barn det søkes nye foreldre til, og at døveorganisasjoner i søkerlandene kan etterlyse foreldre bl.a. gjennom sine medlemsblad. Verdensforbundet for døve kan delta aktivt i informasjonsarbeidet.

#### **Spørsmål til dere**

Når jeg nå forbereder meg til foredraget, vil jeg gjerne ha svar på noen spørsmål. De samme spørsmålene sender jeg til døveforbund i mange land.

Jeg føler at det vil være svært viktig og interessant når vi kan vise fram de faktiske forhold i de forskjellige land i dag. Resultatet av undersøkelsen kan kanskje være med på å bestemme hva som skal gjøres i framtiden.

Det vil være veldig fint om dere kan se spørsmålene på vedlagte skjema. Jeg vil være takknemlig om jeg kan få svar fra dere innen 10. april, enten pr. post eller over telefaks +47 55 20 08 63.

På forhånd; mange takk! Kanskje vi møtes i Wien?

*Bergen, Norway 10. mars 1995*

*Rune Anda*

**DEAF AND ADOPTION (1/2)**

Forberedelse til verdenskongressen for døve i Wien 1995

1. Er det organisert adopsjonsformidling i ditt land?  JA  NEI

Hvis JA:

a) Foregår det adopsjon av barn *fra andre land til ditt land*?  JA  NEI  
(Hvis JA, gå til spørsmål nr. 2)

b) Foregår det adopsjon av barn *fra ditt land til andre land*?  JA  NEI  
(Hvis JA, gå til spørsmål nr. 3)

2. Får døve lov til å adoptere barn?  JA  NEI

Hvis JA:

a) Får *døv/døve* par lov til å adoptere barn?  JA  NEI

b) Må adopsjonssøkere være *døv/hørende* par for å få lov til å adoptere barn?  JA  NEI

c) Får *døv/døve* par lov til å adoptere *hørende* barn?  JA  NEI

d) Får *døv/døve* par lov til å adoptere *døve* barn?  JA  NEI

e) Andre opplysninger:

.....

f) *Hvis det er mulig* for dere å svare på dette:

Hvor mange *døve* par i ditt land har adoptert barn? ..... (antall par, omtrent)

1) Antall *døve barn* som er *adoptert av døve*: ..... (antall par, omtrent)

2) Antall *hørende barn* som er *adoptert av døve*: ..... (antall par, omtrent)

Hvis NEI:

g) Er det *reglene* som sier at *døve ikke får lov* til å adoptere barn?  JA  NEI

h) Hvis JA, *hvorfor* er det ikke tillatt for *døve* å adoptere?

.....

.....

.....

i) Andre opplysninger:

.....

.....

## DEAF AND ADOPTION (2/2)

Forberedelse til verdenskongressen for døve i Wien 1995

3. Blir søkere i andre land tilbudt foreldreløse døve barn i ditt land?  JA  NEI

Hvis JA:

- a) Stilles det krav til søkerne om at de *må kunne tegnspråk*?  JA  NEI
- b) Stilles det krav til søkerne om at de *må være døve*?  JA  NEI
- c) Andre opplysninger:

Hvis NEI:

- d) Mener myndighetene i ditt land at døve barn ikke er av interesse for søkere i andre land?  JA  NEI

4. Hva mener ditt døveforbund?

- a) Det er best at døve par adopterer døve barn  JA  NEI
- b) Det er best at hørende par adopterer døve barn  JA  NEI
- c) Det er best at døve par adopterer hørende barn  JA  NEI
- d) Andre opplysninger:

.....  
.....  
.....

Jeg vil være glad om dere sender tilbake svar innen **5. april 1995**.

Mitt **FAX** nummer er **+47 55 20 08 63**; Rune Anda.

Adresse: Rune Anda, Nordre Nattlandsfjellet 75, N-5030 Landaas, Norge.

## **Deaf and adoption**

### **PURPOSE**

Among several thousand children adopted each year there are found deaf children. Our aim should be to try and incorporate them into families where sign language is mastered, and also work to make adoption easier for deaf adults.

### **METHODS**

All over the world, organisations for adoption must learn about the possibilities and advantages deaf orphans gain when coming to a home where sign language is used. All prejudice concerning the Deaf must be fought with the information from the WDF and national deaf organizations.

### **RESULTS**

Today only a few countries realise the importance the adoption of deaf children placed into families where the parents are also deaf, or know sign language. Organisations for adoption in Norway have discovered this to be the best offer for deaf children.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

We consider it important that countries who put children up for adoption should include deaf children on their lists. It is important that deaf organisations in the applicants country can advertise for parents through for example their deaf organizations membership magazine. The World Federation of the Deaf could actively participate in this line of work.