

Punti Ewlenin mill-Istorja tal-Qasam tal-Persuni Deaf f' Malta

miġbura minn Fred Bezzina

Għaqda tifisser L-Għaqda Persuni Neqsin mis-Smigħ Malta

Kummissjoni tfisser Kummissjoni Nazzjonali Persuni b'Diżabilità Illum il-Kummissjoni għad-Drittijiet tal-Persuni b'Diżabilità

Istitut tfisser l-Istitut tal-Lingwistika tal-Università ta' Malta, illum l-Istitut tal-Lingwistika u t-Teknoloġija tal-Lingwa

Sena	Miżura
1956	Tinfetaħ mid-Dipartiment tal-Edukazzjoni l-ewwel skola speċjali għall-studenti neqsin mis-smiġħ mal-iskola primarja tal-bniet ta' Raħal Ġdid.
	Sir Alexander Ewing u Lady Ewing mill-Università ta' Manchester ġew Malta biex jittestjaw it-tfal b'nuqqas ta' smiġħ, iħarrġu l-għalliema tagħhom u jagħtu pariri dwar it-twaqqif ta' servizz edukattiv għalihom.
	Inġabet mill-Ingilterra għalliema speċjalizzata u adjoloġista, is-Sinjorina Hazel Buggs, biex tgħin f'din il-ħidma.
	Żewġ għalliema, is-Sinjorini Mary Pace u Maria Micallef jmorru għal kors ta' sena biex jikkwalifikaw bħala għalliema tat-tfal neqsin mis-smiġħ fl-Università ta' Manchester. Wara ntbagħtu ħames għalliema oħra: is-Sinjuri Evelyn Camilleri, Phyllis Tanti, Antionette Galea, Joe Vassallo u Salvino Scirha.
1957	Id-Deaf Unit timxi minn Raħal Ġdid għal post akbar fl-iskola primarja tal-Gżira. Infetħet ukoll Nursery Group fl-iskola primarja Tal-Pietà.
1959	Id-Deaf Unit u n-Nursary Group jingħaqdu flimkien fl-iskola primarja tal-Pietà.
1972	Titwaqqaf l-Għaqda Tfal u Żgħażaġħ Neqsin mis-Smigħ (illum l-Għaqda Persuni Neqsin mis-Smigħ Malta) bil-għan li toħloq kuxjenza dwar dan il-qasam u toffri għajnuna finanzjarja biex persuni neqsin mis-smiġħ jkunu jistgħu jixtru hearing aids, speech trainers u jingħataw sussidju fuq il-batteriji tal-hearing aids.
1973	L-Għaqda ssir membru tal-World Federation of the Deaf u l-Commonweath Society for the Deaf.
1974	Studenti neqsin mis-smiġħ bdew jattendu l-Iskejjel tan-Snajja'.
1975	Bdew laqgħat tal-ommijiet ta' tfal neqsin mis-smiġħ mill-Għaqda l-ewwel immexxija mis-Sinjura Andrea McEwen, hi stess omm ta' persuna nieqsa mis-smiġħ, u aktar tard minn Profs Marie Alexander nēe Azzopardi.
1976	Wara kampanja ta' ġbir ta' fondi, l-Għaqda ppreżentat 31 hearing aids ta' wara l-widna lil numru ta' żgħażaġħ neqsin mis-smiġħ minħabba li l-Gvern kien jagħti biss hearing aid body worn.
1978	L-Għaqda tippublikata l-ewwel edizzjoni tal-magazin tagħha Isma! Dan kompla jiġi ppublikat sal-1988 bi 22-il edizzjoni. Magazines simili kienu Ma

	Nismax , sitt edizzjonijiet mill-1985 sal-1987, Pont , tal-anqas 4 edizzjonijiet mill-1990 sa tal-anqas 1993 u Kuntatt , erba' edizzjonijiet mill-1998 sal-1999.
1982	L-Għaqda tiftaħ uffiċjalment id-Deaf Club tagħha fil-Furjana.
	L-Għaqda torganizza l-ewwel Deaf Week bit-tema Neqsin mis-Smigh, Neqsin mill-Fbieb?
1983	Il-Mobility International permezz tar-rappreżentati tagħha, il-Malta Physically Handicapped Rehabilitation Fund, bis-sapport tal-Għaqda, organizzat l-Europa Week f' Malta għal żgħażaġħ neqsin mis-smigh minn Malta, l-Irlanda u l-Ingliterra.
1984	Jitwaqqaf id-Deafenders Scouts Group li dam jopera sal-1987.
1985	Fred Bezzina fil-magazin Ma Nismax jipproponi l-ewwel sinjali tal-alfabett manwali għall-ittri Maltin ħ, ġ, għ, ż li wara li ġew kemxejn immodifikati u addotati.
1986	Il-Laqqgħat tal-Ommijiet żvilluppaw fiċ-Ċentru Edukattiv għall-Persuni Torox li beda jorganizza diversi attivitajiet li jinkludu laqqgħat għall-ġenituri, ħarġiet edukattivi għat-tfal neqsin mis-smigh, weekend breaks u kampijiet tas-sajf lill-familji li għandhom tifel jew tifla nieqsa mis-smigh.
1987	L-istazzjon nazzjonali tat-televizjoni beda jxandar, għall-perjodu qasir, bulletin tal-aħbarijiet bil-Lingwa tas-Sinjali Maltija darba fil-ġimgħa fil-programm Arzella u wara fil-programm Simpatiċi.
	Iċ-Ċentru Edukattiv għall-Persuni Torox jippubblika fuljetti bil-Malti dwar Tfal Torox fl-Isptar b'taġħrif lill-ġenituri u lill-istaff tal-isptar.
1988	Titwaqqaf il-Gozo Association for the Deaf
	Id-Dipartiment tal-Edukazzjoni jibda lezzjonijiet ta' filgħaxija tal-Qari tax-Xofftejn mogħtija minn Salvinu Spiteri wara li għamel kors speċjalizzat fuq is-suġġett fl-Ingliterra.
1989	Tfal b'nuqqas ta' smigh ta' aktar minn 60dB jibdew jingħataw l-allowance speċjali tat-tfal b'diżabilità mid-Dipartiment tas-Sigurtà Soċjali.
1990	Dr David Bond, espert fl-edukazzjoni tal-istudenti neqsin mis-smigh, jagħmel rapport dwar l-edukazzjoni tal-istudenti neqsin mis-smigh Maltin bl-isem: Working together with and for People who are Deaf.
1991	Tiġi organizzata f' Malta l-konferenza Partnership between Deaf People and Professionals mill-Initiatives for Deaf Education in the Third World bil-kollaborazzjoni tal-Kummissjoni. Id-diskorsi u r-rapporti kollha ta' din il-konferenza ġew ippublikati mill-Kummissjoni fi ktieb bl-istess titlu tal-konferenza.
1992	Id-Deaf Unit u d-Deaf Blind Unit jimxu minn Tal-Pietà għal Qrendi. L-iskola speċjali l-ġdida tissemma Helen Keller u llum teduka l-aktar studenti b'aktar minn diżabilità waħda.
	Il-Gozo Association for the Deaf tippubblika l-ewwel ġabra ta' sinjali mil-Lingwa tas-Sinjali Maltija bl-isem Nifteħmu bis-Sinjali.
1994	L-Art and Design Centre u l-Kummissjoni jippubblikaw Il-Ktieb tas-Sinjali mibni fuq is-sistema tal-MAKATON.

Highlights In the History of Deaf People in Malta

	Introdott is-servizz tat-textelefon mit-Telemalta waqt li l-Kummissjoni introduċiet is-servizz kumplimentarju tar-Relay għal dan is-servizz. Iż-żewġ servizzi ma baqgħux joperaw minnhabba żviluppi fit-teknoloġija bħalma huma t-telefonati bil-video, l-sms u l-emails.
1996	L-Istitut beda l-proġett Riċerka tal-Lingwa tas-Sinjali Maltija taħt it-tmexxija tal-Professur Marie Alexander. Wieħed mill-għanijiet primarji tiegħu kien u għadu l-iżvilupp tad-dizzjunarju online tal-Lingwa tas-Sinjali Maltija. Dan jinsab fuq: https://mlrs.research.um.edu.mt/resources/lsm
1996	Bdew l-ewwel korsijiet tal-Lingwa tas-Sinjali Maltija mill-Istitut u korsijiet ta' filgħaxija mid-Dipartiment tal-Edukazzjoni. L-ewwel għalliema Deaf kienu Karl Borg u Dorianne Callus (nèe Bezzina).
1996	Il-Ministeru tal-Edukazzjoni jwaqqaf Kummissjoni dwar l-Edukazzjoni ta' Studenti Neqsin mis-Smigh immexxija minn Professur Marie Alexander. Sentejn wara hi ppreżentant ir-rapport tagħha lill-Ministeru.
1998	Kors ta' diploma mill-Università ta' Malta flimkien mal-Università ta' Birmingham għall-għalliema tal-persuni neqsin mis-smigh. Il-ko-ordinatriċi ta' dan il-kors kienet Professur Marie Alexander.
	L-Għaqda temenda l-istatut tagħha biex tassigura li l-maġġoranza tal-membri tal-kumitat eżekuttiv tagħha jkunu persuni neqsin mis-smigh.
	Titwaqqaf il-Fondazzjoni Żvilupp tal-Lingwa tas-Sinjali mill-Għaqda, il-Gozo Association for the Deaf, l-Istitut u l-iskola Speċjali tal-Persuni Neqsin mis-Smigh.
1999	Fred Bezzina u Pierre Demanule jipubblikaw il-ktieb Support to Mainstream Deaf Children li fih taqsima b'numru ta' ritratti ta' sinjali mil-Lingwa tas-Sinjali Maltija.
2000	Jibda s-servizz tal-interpretazzjoni bil-Lingwa tas-Sinjali permezz ta' ftehim bejn l-Għaqda u l-Ministeru tal-Edukazzjoni. L-ewwel interpretu impjegata mill-Għaqda kienet is-Sinj Maria Galea.
	L-istazzjon nazzjonali tat-televiżjoni beda jxandar kuljum bulletin tal-aħbarijiet bil-Lingwa tas-Sinjali Maltija.
2001	Il-Fondazzjoni Żvilupp tal-Lingwa tas-Sinjali flimkien mal-Istitut u l-Programm PEKTUR tal-KNPD jorganizza kors bażiku lill-għalliema Deaf tal-Lingwa tas-Sinjali Maltija mmexxi minn Dr Linda Day, mill-Università ta' Bristol
	Tintemm ir-rabta bejn l-edukazzjoni tal-persuni neqsin mis-smigh u l-iskola speċjali Helen Keller meta l-amministrazzjoni tas-servizz peripatetiku ta' dawn l-istudenti timxi għat-Taqsima tal-Edukazzjoni Speċjali fil-Ħamrun.
	Titwaqqaf il-Malta Deaf Sports Association bħala sotto-kumitat tal-Għaqda.
2003	Tiġi ppubblikata l-ewwel taqsima tad-dizzjunarju lingwistiku tal-Lingwa tas-Sinjali Maltija kompilat minn Professur Marie Alexander. It-tieni taqsima ġiet ippubblikat fl-2004.
	Jiltaqa' l-Bureau tal-World Federation of Deaf f' Malta u tiġi organizzata konferenza nazzjonali dwar il-Lingwa tas-Sinjali Maltija bid-diskors prinċipali jsir minn Dr Liisa Kauppinen, President tal-Federazzjoni.
	Il-Gozo Deaf Association tiftaħ il-premises tagħha fir-Rabat, Għawdex.

2005	Issiru għall-ewwel darba f' Malta l-operazzjonijiet tal-Cochlear Implant.
2006	Il-KNPD tiipubblika Il-Ktieb tas-Sinjali - The Book of Signs . Tliet snin wara, l-istess KNPD tippubblika It-Tieni Ktieb tas-Sinjali – The Second Book of Signs . Dawn is-sinjali ġew ippreżentati wkoll viżwalment fuq żewġ DVDs.
2008	Ippubblikat mill-KNPD fuq 7 DVDs il-Kodiċi tat-Traffiku bil-Lingwa tas-Sinjali Maltija.
2016	Il-Parlament Malti jgħaddi unanimament il-Liġi li tagħraf uffiċjalment il-Lingwa tas-Sinjali Maltija u jitwaqqaf il-Kunsill tal-Lingwa tas-Sinjali Maltija.
	L-Aġenzija Sapport tiegħu r-responsabilità amministrattiva tas-Servizz tal-Interpreti tal-Lingwa tas-Sinjali Maltija mingħand l-Għaqda.
2020	Tnax-il persuna jtemmu b'suċċess kors post graduate għall-interpreti tal-lingwa tas-sinjali organizzat mill-Università ta' Malta u kkordinat minn Profs Dr Marie Alexander.
	Il-kriterji biex tikkwalifka għall-Assistenza tad-Diżabilità mid-Dipartiment tas-Sigurtà Soċjali twessgħu biex jinkludu persuni li huma "permanentement torox jew permanentement muti".
	Titwaqqaf l-Għaqda Żgħażaġħ Neqsin mis-Smigh bħala sotto-kumitat tal-Għaqda.
2021	L-Għadqa u d-Deaf Club jimxu għal The Meeting Place, il-Marsa

Neqsin mis-Smigh

Highlights In the History of Deaf People in Malta

compiled by Fred Bezzina

Association means Deaf People Association Malta

Commission means National Commission Persons with Disability to-day Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability

Institute means Institute of Linguistics of the University of Malta, to-day Institute of Linguistics and Language Technology

Year	Activity
1956	The Department of Education established the first special school for students with a hearing impairment within the premises of the Girls Primary School, Paola.
	Sir Alexander Ewing and Lady Ewing from Manchester University visited Malta to test children with a hearing impairment, train teachers and advice on the setting up of an educational service to hearing impaired students in Malta.
	Ms Hazel Buggs, a specialised teacher and audiologist, was brought over from England to help in this development.
	Two teachers, Miss Mary Pace and Miss Maria Micallef read a one-year course to qualify as teachers of the deaf at the University of Manchester. Later five more teachers read the same course. These were Evelyn Camilleri, Phyllis Tanti, Antionette Galea, Joe Vassallo and Salvino Sciriha.
1957	The Deaf Unit was transferred from Paola to a larger premises at the Gżira Primary School. A Nursery Group was also established at the Pietà Primary School.
1959	The Deaf Unit and the Nursery Group were amalgamated in one building at Pietà Primary School.
1972	The Association for Young Hearing Impaired (today the Deaf People Association Malta) was set up with the aims of raising awareness on this sector and offers financial assistance to hearing impaired persons to acquire hearing aids, speech trainers and offer subsidy on the purchase of hearing aids batteries.
1973	The Association became a member of the World Federation of the Deaf and the Commonwealth Society for the Deaf.
1974	Hearing impaired students start attending mainstreamed Trade Schools.
1975	The Association started organising meetings for mothers of hearing-impaired children, first under the direction of Mrs Andrea McEwen, herself a mother of a hearing impaired child and later under Profs Marie Alexander nève Azzopardi.
1976	Following a fundraising campaign, the Association presented 31 behind the ear hearing aids to youths with hearing impairment as Government only provided body worn ones.
1978	The Association Malta published the first edition of its magazine Isma' ! This continued up to 1988 with 22 editions. Other similar magazines were Ma Nismax , six editions from 1985 to 1987, Pont , at least 4 editions from 1990 to at least 1993 and Kuntatt , four editions from 1998 to 1999

Highlights In the History of Deaf People in Malta

1982	The Association officially opened its Deaf Club in Furjana.
	The Association organised the first Deaf Week with the theme Neqsin mis-Smigħ, Neqsin mill-Fbieb? (Lack of Hearing, Lack of Friends?).
1983	Mobility International through its Maltese representative, the Malta Physically Handicapped Rehabilitation Fund with the full support of the Association organised Europa Week in Malta for hearing impaired youths from Malta, Ireland and England.
1984	The Deafenders Scout Group was established and continued to function up to 1987.
1985	Fred Bezzina, in an article in the magazine Ma Nismax , proposed new signs for the one-handed manual alphabet for the Maltese letters ħ, ġ, għ, ż. Following slight modification, these were adopted.
1986	The Mothers' Meetings evolved into the Centru Edukattiv għall-Persuni Torox (Centre for the Education of Deaf Persons), organizing various activities including parents' meetings, cultural visits to children with hearing impairment, weekend breaks and summer camps for all the family of a hearing-impaired child.
1987	The national TV station introduced a news bulletin in Maltese Sign Language for a number of months once a week during the program Arzella and later the program Simpatiċi.
	The Centru Edukattiv għall-Persuni Torox published a leaflet in Maltese regarding deaf children in hospital, with information for both parents and hospital staff.
1988	The Gozo Association for the Deaf was established.
	The Department of Education introduced an evening course in Lipreading. Its tutor was Salvino Sciriha, after undertaking a course in England on this subject.
1989	Children with a hearing loss of more than 60dB started to benefit from an allowance granted to children with disability from the Department of Social Security.
1990	Dr David Bond, an expert on the education of the deaf, submitted a report on the education of children with a hearing impairment, entitled: Working together with and for People who are Deaf.
1991	The conference Partnership between Deaf People and Professionals was organised in Malta by the Initiatives for Deaf Education in the Third World in collaboration with the Commission. Proceedings of this conference were published by the same Commission in a book with the same title as the conference.
1992	The Deaf Unit and the Deaf Blind Unit moved from Tal-Pietà to Qrendi. The new special school was named after Helen Keller and to-day caters mostly for students with multiple impairments.
	The Gozo Association for the Deaf published the first collection of signs from the Maltese Sign Language under the title Niftehmu bis-Sinjali.
1994	The Art and Design Centre and the Commission published Il-Ktieb tas-Sinjali based on the MAKATON System.

Highlights In the History of Deaf People in Malta

	Telemalta introduced the text telephone service whilst the Commission introduced a complimentary Relay Service. Both services became obsolete due to advanced technology such as video calls, sms's and emails.
1996	The Institute set up the Maltese Sign Language Research Project led by Profs Marie Alexander. One of its primary aims was and still is to compile an online dictionary of Maltese Sign Language. This can be found on: https://mlrs.research.um.edu.mt/resources/lsm
1996	The Institute and the Department of Education (Evening Classes) introduced the first sign language courses. The first Deaf tutors of these courses were Karl Borg and Dorianne Callus (nèe Bezzina).
1996	The Minister of Education appointed a Commission on the Education of Students with a Hearing Impairment under the chairpersonship of Dr Marie Alexander. Two years later it presented its report to the Ministry.
1998	The University of Malta in conjunction with the University of Birmingham organised a diploma course for teachers of the deaf. Its co-ordinator was Dr Marie Alexander.
	The Association changes its statute to ensure that the majority of the members of its executive committee are hearing impaired persons.
	The Association, the Gozo Association for the Deaf, the Institute and the Special School for Hearing Impaired Persons joined forces to establish the Fondazzjoni għall-Iżvilupp tal-Lingwa tas-Sinjali (Foundation for the Development of Maltese Sign Language).
1999	Fred Bezzina and Pierre Demanule published the book Support to Mainstream Deaf Children with a section containing photos of signs from the Maltese Sign Language.
2000	The Association introduced a Sign Language Interpreting Service following a financial agreement between the Association and the Ministry of Education. The first employed interpreter was Ms Maria Galea.
	The national TV station started to transmit a daily news bulletin in Maltese Sign Language.
2001	The Fondazzjoni Żvilupp tal-Lingwa tas-Sinjali together with the Institute and the PEKTUR program of the Commission organised a basic course to Deaf tutors of Maltese Sign Language led by Dr Linda Day from the University of Bristol.
	The link between the education of hearing-impaired students and the Helen Keller special school was terminated and the administration of the peripatetic services to these students moved to the Special Education Unit in Ħamrun.
	The Deaf Sports Association was established as a sub-committee of the Deaf People Association Malta.
2003	The first chapter of the linguistic dictionary of Maltese Sign Language, compiled by Dr Marie Alexander, was published. The second chapter was published a year later.
	The Bureau of the World Federation of Deaf met in Malta and a national conference on Sign Language was organised with the keynote speaker being Dr Liisa Kauppinen, President of the Federation.
	The Gozo Deaf Association opens its premises in Rabat, Gozo
2005	Cochlear Implant operations started to be undertaken in Malta.

Highlights In the History of Deaf People in Malta

2006	The Commission published Il-Ktieb tas-Sinjali - The Book of Signs . Three years later it also published It-Tieni Ktieb tas-Sinjali – The Second Book of Signs . These two publications were also published on two DVDs showing visually the same signs as the books.
2008	The Commission published the Kodiċi tat-Traffiku (Traffic Code) in Maltese Sign Language on 7 DVDs.
2016	The Maltese Parliament unanimously approved a legislation that recognises Maltese Language as an official language and established a Council on Maltese Sign Language.
	Aġenzija Support assumed the administrative responsibility of the Sign Language Interpreting Services from the Association.
2020	Twelve persons successfully concluded a post-graduate course for interpreters of Maltese Sign Language organised by the University of Malta and co-ordinated by Dr Marie Alexander.
	The eligibility criteria to qualify for Disability Assistance were broadened by the Department of Social Security to include persons who are “permanently deaf or permanently mute”.
	The Deaf Youth Association Malta was established as a sub-committee of the Association.
2021	The Association and the Deaf Club’s meeting place moved to the Meeting Place in Marsa.

Neqsin mis-Smigh