

Who is this handbook for?

This handbook can be used by deaf people and their allies, especially in countries where no research on sign language has been conducted before (for example, Bulgaria has very little research on Bulgarian Sign Language, BGS�), who are interested in participating in the research on their own sign language. This manual aims to cover the basic principles and rules of operation when it comes to Bulgarian Sign Language research and how BGS� has the same linguistic value as any other sign or spoken language in the world.

It should be noted that we do not suggest that BGS� is better or worse than any other sign language in another country. Our sign language has its cultural and linguistic, reflecting the Bulgarian Deaf community and the culture of Deaf people. Also, the manual states precisely and clearly what roles are of local and international advisors, consultants, and partners in the research of BGS� and its applications in the education of deaf Bulgarian children and youth.

The role of our local and international team members is to assist in research activities in support of BGS�, culture, and values and, accordingly, in how these will be their implemented in social life and in the educational system, showing the necessary respect for deaf people.

This handbook is a useful source of information for current partners, supporters, professionals and other members involved in projects related to research and methodological activities in Bulgarian Sign Language. In addition, the handbook is useful for the whole Deaf community, professional sign language interpreters, schools and centers for deaf children, including mainstream deaf-friendly schools. Interested organizations, such as NGOs of people with disabilities, and others who want to cooperate with Deaf people can also use this guide for better communication and cooperation on projects related to deaf people and BGS� or other sign languages.

Last but not least, institutions can use this handbook as a source of information on how to work with Deaf people and how to involve them in a direct dialogue related to their human and language rights in order to fully integrate them into Bulgarian society.

Also, it is extremely important for partners, institutions and potential donors to be aware that research and methodological activities through BGSL is a long-term and important commitment to achieve success and sustainability in research of Deaf people in Bulgaria. This, in turn, will lead to quality inclusion and the creation of opportunities for full learning of Deaf people through their human right to do so in sign language.