

Interview with Hilde Haualand

Frontrunn3rs – <http://fr3.frontrunners.dk>

Frontrunn3rs: I have 4 questions to ask you, the first one is, What is „Deaf awareness“ and your opinions on this.

Hilde Haualand: Well, I think that Deaf Awareness might have changed from the first time in 1978, a Swedish man named Lars Åke Wikstrom, who told us many things about Deaf Awareness. In the past many Deaf people didn't know that signing is a language and how good it was also many were oppressed and lacking in communication technologies such as emails and SMS. So Deaf people didn't have complete access to the world in that time.

Now this has changed as Deaf people have more opportunities and have more access to communications such as emails and SMS to be in contact with hearing people easier.

The Deaf Awareness now is the same as before or has it changed now? Personally I think it has changed because now Deaf people are more prouder of their Deaf identity, the Deaf life and good Deaf network. With the technology nowadays, we the Deaf people can easily communicate with each other as Deaf people like to be together and rarely isolated. If they are separated, they can become weak. So maybe the Deaf Awareness is how we stay together as a bonded group.

Frontrunn3rs: The 2nd question, As you know that in the past, the Deaf Community gathered together regularly, they didn't have email nor mobiles, but they still attend. Nowadays the number of attendance in Deaf clubs have reduced, whereas we have much easier access to technologies including emails and mobiles.

So the question is what future does the Deaf Culture have, will it be the same as now or changed? What is your opinion on this?

Hilde Haualand: Well the Deaf Culture have always been changing just the same as the hearing culture. The rise of new technology and new ideas is the same for within the Deaf culture. Now it is the time where there are two slight of conflicts, the increased numbers of Deaf people with Cochlear Implants, this is where the „Deaf people“ have decreased and becoming worried as feeling „weaker“. But at the same time another side of the conflict are that the Deaf people have more opportunities in life, have access to interpreters and can study at universities and better technology and more information available for them. These two separate factors runs in parrallel lines at the same time. In the future it depends on which of the parrallel groups becomes stronger and supporting the other weaker group by introducing sign language at later age.

Its hard to say what the future will be as there are conflicts and friction between groups, as there are more Deaf people with cochlear implants, or maybe in the future a new invention of pills which can change deaf people by into turning them into hearings.... what will happen to the Deaf people... but at the same time there are many chances for the Deaf, getting in to Universities and work etc. Its like the future is vague.

Frontrunn3rs: Now for the third question, what changes would you make in the Deaf World to make a better future?

Hilde Haualand: The changes I would like to happen is that the Sign Language to become an official language. At the same time, the hearing people to respect our language is the Sign Language which is very important. To increase the awarenesss of Sign Language and to show that people should not treat deaf sign language people differently, being afraid of them or over sympathatic or helping them. The Sign Language is a Language with inspriation also has many other positive things in. I hope for this changes.

Frontrunn3rs: For the last question. Anything you would like to tell us, the Frontrunners 3?

Hilde: I have given talk and met all of the Frontrunners 1, 2 and now 3. I feel very much inspired by the good and positiveness of the the Frontrunners. I feel that the future of the Deaf Associations and Community will be good and stronger because of the Frontrunners participants can be good encouragement and leaders, its a good group. Thank you.