

Regular sign language TV programme on the topics of welfare and community

JAPAN/OKAYAMA BROADCASTING – SIGN LANGUAGE TALKS WELFARE PROGRAM

The Okayama Broadcasting Corporation is a regional TV-broadcaster in Okayama City, Japan, an affiliate company of the large Fuji TV Network. Sign Language Talks Welfare is a regional programme with sign language interpretation, informing the deaf community on topics such as the welfare system, emergency care, and community issues, and mainly produced by people who are deaf themselves. The programme was launched in 1993, is fully self-funded by advertisements, and has about 300,000 regular viewers.

Problem targeted

People who are deaf or hard of hearing can miss out on important societal information, such as the welfare system and emergency care.

Solution, innovation, and impact

For 28 years the Okayama Broadcasting Co. Ltd. (OHK) has informed the deaf community about important aspects of society through a special TV programme. Every episode relates to welfare, especially about persons with disabilities, including but not limited to the deaf and hard of hearing.



Sign Language Talks Welfare keeps the deaf community up to date.

“OHK’s sign language programme is a true epitome of the implementation of the CRPD as well as disability-inclusive SDGs.”

Aiko Akiyama, Social Affairs Office, ESCAP

The programme carries superimposed sign language interpretation provided by the deaf members of the production team. OHK has expanded the initiative to areas such as sign language lectures, production of original songs with sign language, and production and airing of videos of dance classes for deaf and hearing children. The monthly programme with 10 minutes exclusive airing time is also available on the Fuji Network’s on-demand video platform and on YouTube. In 2020 the Japanese Government awarded OHK the Excellence Award in Universal Design, the first for a TV broadcaster. On 23 September 2021, the International Day of Sign Languages, OHK carried out a major campaign and produced a special programme

on “Information accessibility thinking from sign language,” for which companies have sponsored the sign language interpretation.

Outlook, transferability, and funding

OHK is a free-to-air commercial broadcaster, whose business model is based on selling advertisements. In addition, OHK has been working under the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications to support the improvement of TV programmes with sign language interpretation across the country, along with signing an agreement with Keio University to conduct joint research on accessibility and accessible broadcasting. OHK wants to expand its scope to cover other neglected groups in the future, and aims to demonstrate that accessibility is not charity, and that it can be sustained.

FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 1993

- Sign Language Talks Welfare has been broadcasting for over 28 years.
- The programmes have around 300,000 regular viewers.
- A practice from the Business Sector.



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