

# Sign language video support for the electoral participation of people with hearing disabilities

## CHILE – SANTIAGO / SERVEL – SIGN LANGUAGE VIDEO INTERPRETATION SERVICE

The National Electoral Service (SERVEL) is a public entity in Chile in charge of electoral and voting processes. In 2021, SERVEL introduced a permanent video-interpretation service in Chilean sign language on its website to support the electoral participation of persons with hearing disabilities. It provides guidance on electoral related issues, as well as real-time information during elections, through specially trained sign language interpreters. In 2021, 340 people used the service.

### Problem targeted

Often persons with disabilities are unable to participate in elections due to a lack of voter information and accessible voting methods.

### Solution, innovation, and impact

On the occasion of the Chilean presidential elections in 2021, SERVEL implemented a permanent video-based service providing online Chilean sign language interpretation for the deaf and persons with hearing impairments. The aim of this new digital platform, called Vi-Sor, is to provide personalized sign language support; and there is pre-recorded material such as videos explaining information about voting dates, which authorities are being elected, etc. This

“The sign language interpretation service on our website has a great impact on the deaf community.”

Ricardo Downey, Head, Citizen Attention Unit, SERVEL

material has sign language translation or subtitles. For direct support services users can access SERVEL’s platform through web or mobile devices. They are then connected to a trained interpreter, who is able to answer their questions as well as to provide useful electoral information. The service is enhanced during election days with more interpreters added to the platform and voting centre staff receiving training on how best to support persons with hearing impairments during election day. In 2021 the platform supported 340 persons.



Since 2021, Chile has a permanent video interpreting service in sign language for elections.

### Outlook, transferability, and funding

The SERVEL platform is hosted by Red Apis, an external service company (and 2021 Zero Project Awardee), which currently operates the programme for an approximate annual cost of \$10,000. For the next three years, given that several elections are fixed in the electoral calendar, the objective is to have more material available for the most vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities and women. For non-election periods, SERVEL plans to carry out field activities in isolated places to inform citizens about specific procedures (e.g., change of electoral address) and it hopes to bring the Vi-Sor platform to these areas as well.

### FACTS & FIGURES

Start: 2021

- The sign interpretation service has an annual cost of \$10,000.
- There are pre-recorded information videos available that provide guidance on the election process.
- *A project of the Public Sector.*



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