

The Deaf of Nicaragua



The Nicaraguan Sign Language Community

Nicaragua is the largest country in Central America. Its population is estimated to be six million people, with one-quarter of these living in the capital city of Managua. Approximately 600,000 of its people are deaf, far exceeding the estimates in surrounding Central American countries.

Elementary education is compulsory and free in Nicaragua, but secondary education for the deaf is lacking, primarily due to the lack of interpreters. The small Christian Deaf School in Managua appears to be the only one that offers a high school education to deaf students.

In addition to secondary education, the Deaf in Nicaragua feel the need for a broader public knowledge of sign language in order to provide for employment and integration of deaf people; interpreting services by the government for national news and messages from the President; investigation, compilation and standardization of Nicaraguan Sign Language; and, sign language awareness in government institutions.

There are five small deaf ministries conducted in Nicaraguan Sign Language connected with local churches in Managua but it is unknown if any exist outside the capital city. Jehovah's Witnesses have a strong presence in the country.

Primary Religion:

Christianity

Disciples (Matt 28:19):

Few

Churches:

5-6

Scripture Status (Matt 28:20):

New Testament, OT in progress

Population (date):

3,000 signers (1997)



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Have They Heard The Gospel?

Any Hindrance To Scripture
Distribution?

The estimated deaf population in Nicaragua, at 600 thousand, far exceeds the estimates in surrounding countries, and ANSNIC, the national deaf association, recognizes the continued need to include this large population in their community. With an estimated 3,000 ISN signers today, this is only 0.05% of the deaf who could understand Scripture if it were available.

Bilingualism

Ability to communicate in Spanish is very low. It appears that one of the primary pressing needs currently felt by the deaf community is that of continued education. While education beyond primary level is not required or necessarily provided, deaf people largely lack any prospect of pursuing it at all, due to lack of interpreters and lack of opportunity in the special schools. The small Christian Deaf School in Managua, appears to be the only school that offers a high school education to deaf students

Are Cross-Cultural Missionaries
Needed?

People to provide schooling would be effective teachers administrators, facilities and finance caretakers, etc. Deaf Nicaraguans indicate the following to be their top five community development needs:

1. Knowledge of sign language in Nicaragua for employment and integration of deaf people
2. Interpreting services by the government for national news and messages from the President
3. Investigation, compilation and standardization of Nicaraguan Sign Language
4. Awareness about sign language in government institutions and society in general
5. Access for deaf people to all education (primary school, high school, university, and technical training).

Projects should include cooperation with researchers and organizations that have been involved with the Nicaraguan deaf community from its initial stages. All projects should also be done in cooperation with ANSNIC, as this national association is the primary leader and connector of the Nicaraguan deaf community.

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Number of Congregations
Serving Group.

There are five small deaf ministries connected with local churches in Managua. All of these services are held in or interpreted to Nicaraguan Sign Language. It is unknown if any deaf ministries exist outside of the capital city.

Number of Congregations Using
Local Language in Service

A few in Managua

Primary Communication/Trade
Language Used By This Group

Spanish