

# Deaf role model evaluator training report

Kolkata, West Bengal October 2017





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Deaf Child Worldwide

# Background

Deaf role models (DRMs) are employed by each of Deaf Child Worldwide's South Asia partner organisations. Deaf adults can be excellent role models for deaf children and their families. By drawing on their own experiences, they can show families that deafness does not need to be a barrier to achievement. The DRMs work with deaf children and young people – helping them improve their communication skills, self-confidence, aspirations, self-advocacy skills and positive deaf identity. They are expected to share their personal experiences as a deaf young person and serve as positive role models for the deaf children and young people they work with. They help the families to identify practical solutions for navigating some of the common challenges that deaf children and young people face as they transition into adulthood.

This training took place in Kolkata, in October, to train eight DRMs to be evaluators for Deaf Child Worldwide projects.

The DRMs have initially been required to work with an external evaluator to do an end-of-project evaluation for the Big Lottery Fund funded Deaf Children and Primary Education in West Bengal project. The project aims to improve the quality of primary education for 720 deaf children in West Bengal. The lead implementing partners in the project are Graham Bell Centre for the Deaf (GBCD), Khagenhat Welfare Organisation (KWO) and Child in Need Institute (CINI). The DRMs were trained to work with deaf children, both in one-to-one interviews, and in participatory group work, to learn how effective the project had been in achieving its outcomes.

We trained three DRMs from KWO, three from GBCD and two from CINI over a four-day period. The DRMs had varying levels of deafness, backgrounds and communication methods. The training was designed to be fully inclusive and accessible and to cover evaluator skills, safeguarding, confidentiality, communication, information gathering and reporting.

# Training day 1

## Aims and objectives of day 1

- › For the deaf role models to establish their sense of identity as role models and enable them to understand the impact they can have on the deaf children and young people they work with.
- › For the group to understand what skills and attitudes a good evaluator needs to have and to recognise why these qualities are important to the role.
- › To give the DRMs a chance to practise good communication and consider how their body language and behaviour affects the people around them.
- › To help DRMs understand the concept of confidentiality and how important it is to keep it.
- › To ensure the group understand when they may need to break confidentiality and speak to another member of staff.

## Activity 1: Characteristics of a role model

The DRMs were split into two groups and asked to consider what skills you might need to be a good evaluator. They used images and writing to show the skills they felt were important and then presented their work back to the group.

This activity was initially very difficult, as the DRMs didn't understand the word 'skills', and didn't know the ISL sign for it. It was clear that they hadn't considered themselves and their role in this way and so we spent a while discussing the skills they needed and used when being deaf role models. It was interesting to see their reaction to thinking about this and considering that they needed to have strengths in certain areas in order to be good at their job. We discussed, among others, communication, friendliness, confidence, and deaf identity in relation to being a good role model and all seemed confident that they had strengths in these areas.

Once the group were happy with the concept of skills, we started thinking about their role as an evaluator. Having clarified exactly what an evaluator was, the groups worked together to create images showing skills and presented these back.

The DRMs stated that communication skills were essential for evaluators, good sign language knowledge and the ability to explain things clearly to children. Being kind and friendly and being able to work in a team were also considered important. Being observant, having new ideas and being willing to learn new things were also raised.




**“You have to good behave with others,  
you should have own responsibility, if needed help others.”**

## Activity 2: Yes, no, don't know

The DRMs were read a series of statements. They moved to different areas of the room, to show if they agreed with the statement, disagreed with it, or if they felt they didn't know the answer.

This activity was difficult for the DRMs, partly because of the widely varying communication needs within the group and partly because of time restrictions meaning we couldn't spend as long as we needed on explaining the statements.

We asked seven questions in total the results are show in the table below.

			
	Yes	No	Don't know
<b>Statement</b>			
1 I feel confident meeting new people	8		
2 I feel confident communicating with hearing people	2	6	
3 I feel happy working alone	3	3	2
4 I would prefer to work in pairs	8		
5 I feel confident about speaking to a group of people			8
6 I feel confident about travelling to different locations	5	3	
7 I have good leadership skills			8

It's interesting to note that while feeling confident about meeting new people, the majority of the group felt unconfident communicating with hearing people. It's important to consider how regularly they have to do this within their role, both with people they work with and with the families of the children they support, and how many of them struggle with this.

The DRMs found the statement 'I feel confident speaking to a group of people' difficult to answer; none of them had any experience of speaking to groups of people and so weren't sure how they felt about this. One DRM stated that it depended on the group of people; if it was a group of children they felt confident, if it was hearing adults, very unconfident.

The DRMs couldn't respond to the statement 'I have good leadership skills'. They didn't seem to understand the concept of leadership, especially when connected to themselves – the idea was too new and difficult for them. They didn't consider themselves leaders and didn't seem to have been trained to think of themselves in this way.

## Activity 3: Communication line

The DRMs sat in rows facing each other. Row A were given topics to talk about and Row B were given behaviours to act out.

Row A: Topics	Row B: Behaviours
Favourite food	Don't make eye contact
Something that makes you happy	Interrupt all the time
Your time at school	Laugh at everything they say
Your favourite animal	Look bored
	Ask them to hurry up
	Treat the person like a baby
	Overreact, as if what they are saying is terrible
	Act like what they are saying is very rude.

The DRMs seemed to get a lot from this activity, they discussed in length how it made them feel to have someone ignore them, or rush them.

We then asked the group to try it again, but practise good communication and see what the differences were and how it made them feel to have someone be attentive to what they were signing.

Overall this was a useful way to remind the DRMs how important good communication is when working with children and encouraging them to talk about their lives.

## Activity 4: Confidentiality

The DRMs were all asked to write something down on a piece of paper that they would rather keep as a secret. They were then asked to fold it up into a tiny square. The facilitator then asked the DRMs to hand their paper to the person sitting next to them.

The request was met with a mixed response, some DRMs felt comfortable handing their secret to their neighbour (this was usually dependant on how well they knew and trusted the person next to them) and some were horrified to be asked and refused.

This activity is a tool to get the DRMs to consider confidentiality and the importance of keeping it. We gathered the 'secrets' from the group and shredded them so no one would read them, and then had a discussion about what confidentiality means, how it would apply to them being evaluators and why it is important.





## Activity 5: Safeguarding and child protection

The DRMs were split into groups and given twenty scenarios. They were asked to discuss the scenarios together and to sort them into two groups.

- 1 Tell a member of staff.
- 2 Don't tell a member of staff.

### Scenarios

My father hits me, I'm worried about my exams, I feel really sad, I might be pregnant, I had an argument with a friend, maths is too difficult, my father is dying and I am very sad, my mum likes my brother more than me, I'm worried about the future, I hate being deaf, I'm going to run away from home, my father beats my mother, hearing people get angry with me because I cannot speak, I don't get enough food, my teacher beats me, people laugh at me because I am deaf, I feel left out, people are mean to me at school, I love a girl but she does not love me, my parents want me to get married but I don't want to.

The aim of this activity was to encourage the DRMs to think about challenging conversations which may arise when talking to children, and to consider how they might manage them. Getting an idea of how the DRMs feel about the seriousness of child protection scenarios and their knowledge of who to speak to about them is useful when planning their future training and responsibilities.

The activity elicited interesting discussion in each group – particularly around teacher's beating children; a lot of the DRMs were unaware that this was illegal. Overall the group were confident around what information should be shared and what could be managed confidentially as part of their DRM role. Interestingly, when asked who they would tell, the majority of the group didn't know. One DRM stated that she would tell her mother as she is the person she trusts the most. Only one of the group said that they would tell their manager.



# Training day 2

## Aims and objectives of day 2

- › For the DRMs to think about why we are evaluating with children, to discuss the theory of children and young people's participation and to learn about the wider positive impact of involving deaf children in evaluation.
- › To introduce the children's evaluation questionnaire to the group and work through it together to ensure all feel confident and understand their role as evaluators.

## Activity 1: Who should we ask?

Images were laid on the floor representing the following: deaf children, teachers, families, deaf organisations, community-based rehabilitation workers, deaf role models, the Government.

The DRMs were asked a series of questions and had to go to the image which they felt represented the answer to the questions.

In this activity we didn't get far past the first question as it raised so many interesting questions and discussion points. When asked 'who is the best person to ask what life is like as a deaf child?' the DRMs all chose 'family' as their response. Some moved to 'DRMs' after further consideration.

The facilitators explained that deaf children are the experts in their own lives, and that discussion with them would be the best way to find out about what their lives are like. This was a very new concept to the DRMs and took a lot of explaining and thinking about. We talked about what it feels like when people make decisions about you without asking you, what their own personal experiences of school were like, and what things people might be able to learn from deaf children. By the end of the session the group were unanimous in agreeing that deaf children were the best people to talk to about their lives and understood how their role as evaluator was key in this.

## Activity 2: Questionnaire run through

The children's questionnaire was put up on the walls around the room and the facilitators lead the DRMs through each question. This provided time for the DRMs to ask questions, raise any worries about the evaluation interviews, and for the facilitators to learn where the group felt confident or unconfident. The DRMs then spent the afternoon practising the questions on each other to prepare for the next day.

# Training day 3

## Aims and objectives of day 3

- › For the DRMs to practise the evaluation interviews with deaf children.
- › To allow the group opportunities to reflect on the process and allow time for development, questions, and any additional support.

## Interviews with children at Child in Need Institute

The DRMs meet children aged between 7 and 18 at CINI and practised the evaluation questions with them. Overall it went very well and some useful discussion points were raised around some of the questions and processes in the questionnaire. [See Appendix C for feedback from DRMs]

This opportunity to practise the questionnaire with children was incredibly useful. The DRMs ability to communicate with and engage the children was impressive and they confidently lead warm up games, introductions and then individual interviews. Despite the challenges some of them faced, with literacy and with explaining complicated questions and concepts to young children, they were resourceful, patient and recorded the children's responses carefully.

**“I thought she will not able to answer those questions. But after evaluation I find that as I explain the question she had given proper answer.”**

**“As I explained the child could comprehend the question and fluent her answers. There was no problem as she understand ISL and it didn't take much time. I didn't expect the child will be able to answer all the question nicely.”**



# Training day 4

## Aims and objectives of day 4:

- › For the DRMs to feedback their experiences, suggest changes to the interview questionnaire, and work together to develop solutions to any problems that arise.
- › To allow the group to reflect on their role and suggest training and support needs for future role models.
- › To gain feedback from the group on the training.

## Activity 1: Questionnaire feedback session

The DRMs were given different coloured stickers and asked to stick orange on the areas of the questionnaire that they found easy, and green in the areas they found difficult and faced challenges.

This activity was hugely useful in tackling any last minute problems with the questionnaire. As a result of their feedback some of the questions were removed, and some re-written. The DRMs suggested better images and wording for the more difficult questions.

Predominantly the children found open questions difficult to answer and consequently the DRMs struggled with them. The facilitators encouraged the DRMs who had found solutions to these difficult questions, and successfully got an answer from their child, to share their techniques with the rest of the group. The successful techniques included giving examples, but not answering the question for the child or asking the question in a slightly different way to make it simpler for the child to understand. Once given the opportunity to work things out as a group, the DRMs generally came up with all the solutions themselves and left the activity confident and looking forward to the evaluation.



## Activity 2: Training evaluation

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The DRMs were asked three questions:

- 1 What was good about the training?
- 2 What was difficult about the training?
- 3 What did you learn?

They wrote their responses on post-it notes and stuck them on posters on the wall. Their responses are listed in Appendix A.

**“Initially it was challenging. I understood after explaining through sign language.”**

**“[I learnt that] deaf role models are important.”**

**“[I learnt] how to understand children’s experience.”**

**“[I learnt] the qualities that a deaf role model should have to be an evaluator – smile, love, feeling towards the children, ISL, all to be treated equally and openness to learn new things.”**

## Activity 3: Advice for new deaf role models

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We asked the DRMs to provide some guidance and advice for new role models (see Appendix B for table of responses).

**“New DRMs should learn new ISL words. They need to have training different subjects. They need to know how to construct new sentence with the help of ISL. They need to develop their skill.”**

**“You have to understand where deaf children are facing challenges.”**

**“You have to inspire the children even if they are wrong.”**

**“What you have learnt, you should teach children.”**

# Conclusion and recommendations

The training was overall a success, and by the last day the deaf role models clearly understood their role as project evaluators and felt confident about the upcoming consultation with deaf children. In some areas the DRMs showed considerable strengths, and it is clear that they are very valuable members of our partner organisation's workforce. Specific areas of strength included, communication skills, the ability to positively engage with deaf children, reliability, patience, enthusiasm and an impressive commitment to their role.

Further training in human rights, theory of participation, deaf identity, safeguarding and equality would hugely benefit the DRMs and enable them to advocate more effectively for the deaf children and young people they work with. Also deaf awareness training (for hearing staff) and guidance on communication with hearing people (for the DRMs) would help them to work and to be meaningfully involved in their predominantly hearing/non-signing teams.

Monitoring the support and supervision they are given within the organisation they work for, and their recruitment, training and role development is something that would be beneficial both for the DRMs themselves and the wider work of the partner organisations. Understanding what their role was, why they had been recruited, and how valuable they are as a deaf role models is something that the group really struggled with on day 1, and seeing themselves as skilled individuals who have a valuable role to fulfil was something quite new to them. There is definitely scope for a lot of work here.

Ensuring they have the correct communication support is essential. Their sign language, lip-reading skills and literacy levels varied hugely across the group, and this must be taken into account to ensure any future training is fully accessible to them.

In conclusion, the eight DRMs worked incredibly hard to cover all that was needed to get them ready for the evaluation and showed notable commitment and dedication. Their engagement with the deaf children they interviewed was patient, encouraging and they took great care over their responses. They gave constructive feedback, worked well as a team and were able to develop the interview questionnaire to ensure that it made sense to them, and to the deaf children they were interviewing.

# Appendix

## Appendix A

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### What was good about the training?

Taking the test (exam) of deaf children.

Games that were used before and after the test.

Communication game.

Shared personal experience – not to communicate and or useful to communicate.

Evaluation through play.

In this programme everyone is very friendly.

What does it mean by DRM.

How to use the games.

The way it was explained through sign language

### What was difficult?

Some part of the question paper was difficult to answer.

A few questions are challenging.

More or less understood.

Initially it was challenging. Understood after explaining through sign language.

Some areas need more discussion.

I have more or less understood the process of taking exam of deaf children.

Deaf children answer the questions using some speech and some signs. Initially it was difficult to understand. After training it is clear.

### What did you learn?

DRMs are important.

Personal information – not to share and or must to share (otherwise the child may be at risk).

Games with the children.

Skills needed for DRMs.

Games are important.

How to chat with children to make them easy and comfortable How to work as per the office/class rules.

The skills that DRMs require to be an evaluator.

Whom to ask about my worries.

How to give training through games.

How to understand children's experience.

How to fill up evaluation sheet.

How to provide training through games.

## What did you learn? (continued)

How to motivate the children through play.

Whom to ask about how deaf children learn.

The qualities of an evaluator.

How I shall be able to understand that the child is concentrating and learning

The qualities that the DRM should have to be an evaluator – smile, love, feeling towards the children, ISL, all to be treated equally and openness to learn new things.

The skill that we (DRM) should have, about games, ISL, use of teaching learning materials etc. What to share and not to share.

Training of DRM is good.

The skills that DRMs should have to be an evaluator.

An evaluator should be aware of the problems of deaf children.





## Appendix B

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### Advice for new deaf role models

I like this training very much and want this type of training in future.

Have to learn new signs and also mime that will help to understand other languages.

Need to have appropriate attitude to work with children, TLM is also very important.

How to teach Deaf children and what should you do to get attention from the children.

What you have learnt, you should teach children. You should have TLM to teach Basic concepts. Picture has to be used along with ISL & lip reading. Games are also to be used.

I will ask the new DRMs to observe in CINI on how they are working with Deaf children, how they are supporting them to do mime & how they are supporting Deaf children according their wish.

DYPs should be taught to use of sign language properly.

How use TLMs. They should be taught which habits are good and which are bad.

It will take 4 months to orient new DRMs on ISL and use of TLMs.

You have to understand where deaf children are facing challenges.

You have to inspire the children even if they are wrong.

New DRMs has to learn Mime.

They should teach Deaf children some other things rather than academic subjects.

New DRMs should learn new ISL words. They need to have training different subjects. They need to know how to construct new sentence with the help of ISL. They need to develop their skill.

## Appendix C

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### Feedback from DRMs following practice interviews with deaf children

- 1 I like this interview very much. The child was able to question understand. I have not done much to make her understand. I thought she will not able to answer those questions. But after evaluation I find that as I explain the question she had given proper answer those.
- 2 [Child's] mother and sister can understand his ISL at home. Teachers in the school can't understand his ISL. [He] can read & write. He had reading comprehension. His mother was taught that. When he comes to the community centre he become very happy as other children of the centre also use ISL.
- 3 This is a nice experience. The child is too young to answer all the question. I explain all the questions. So she could answer some question but not all. It was a bit chilling for me as the child is very young but I think the child is very good.
- 4 I liked it. The child could understand all the questions. There was no problem. It was same I was expected.
- 5 Today I came CINI office with DCW team. At first there was an introduction then I started evaluation of [child]. She was communicating with me through ISL. I could understand her ISL but she could not always. There is lot of distraction. So I felt a bit challenging to understand her ISL. But it didn't create much problem as the interpreter was supporting me. I liked her way of communication and I think they should go through this type of process.
- 6 Her speech is intangible. She is good in ISL also and she need more support.
- 7 The interview was very good. As I explained the child could comprehend the question and fluent her answers. There was no problem as she understand ISL and it didn't take much time. I didn't expect the child will be able to answer all the question nicely.
- 8 The child is good in signing. He answered all the question nicely. There was no problem. Sometimes it was a bit challenging but after all it was a nice experience. The whole process was not as it was expected.



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**[info@deafchildworldwide.org](mailto:info@deafchildworldwide.org)  
[www.deafchildworldwide.org](http://www.deafchildworldwide.org)**

National Deaf Children's Society  
Ground Floor South, Castle House  
37-45 Paul Street, London EC2A 4LS

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