

## The Deaf of Argentina The Argentine Sign Language Community

There is an estimated 33,000 Deaf Argentines who do not adequately understand the Bible in any other language. In Buenos Aires there are a few Deaf Christians but there is no indigenous Deaf church. There appears to be a higher level of bilingualism in Spanish among the Deaf in Argentina than in other countries with Deaf communities, however, most are still unable to comprehend a complex text like the Bible in Spanish. There is definitely a need for a Bible translation into Argentine Sign Language

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Most Deaf people are Catholic, but that they rarely attend mass. When they do, they just go and sit in the church and think about God (without anyone interpreting and without really understanding much of what is going on). On rare occasion an interpreted mass is given and it is a big social event for the Deaf. There is a mission group called MIES (Ministerio Esperanza) that is run by three hearing Argentine women. It is an inter-denominational ministry. Their primary ministry is to teach sign language to Christians from various churches around Argentina who are interested in starting a ministry to the Deaf in their churches

Argentine Sign Language (LSA) is descended from Italian Sign Language. Education for the deaf has been purely oralist (teaching lip reading of Spanish and prohibiting any use of sign language) since its beginning. There are some Deaf clubs that hold classes especially for deaf people who want to learn sign language. Linguists as well as some Deaf people are pushing to have LSA officially recognized by the government and for a change to bilingual education for the deaf. There are many clubs for the Deaf that seem to get along fairly well with each other.

Many Deaf people work in banks, counting money. More recently, many Deaf have been trained in computers, and many now work in some sort of computer job, often data entry. A few work on the streets selling lottery tickets along with the handicapped with the money going to help handicapped people.

<b>Primary Religion:</b>	Christianity
<b>Disciples (Matt 28:19):</b>	Some
<b>Churches:</b>	0
<b>Scripture Status (Matt 28:20):</b>	None
<b>Population (date):</b>	33,000

