



Deaf Senior Education for Active Living

Project Number: 2020-1-it02-ka204-079227

**IO1 - Deaf Senior needs in Europe:
Analysis and Abstract**

**INTERNATIONAL OR NATIONAL COUNTRY
REPORT**

Organisation: European Union of the Deaf (EUD)



1. NATIONAL BACKGROUND

Based in Brussels, the EUD (<http://www.eud.eu>) is the only umbrella organisation at European level representing deaf sign language users in all 27 EU Member States, and in Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. EUD has the sole mandate of the National Deaf Associations (NADs) to work towards a more socially cohesive, sustainable, and accessible Europe for deaf citizens realising their inherent human rights. It is the EUD's aim to achieve equality in public and private life for deaf people all over Europe to ensure they can become full citizens. Its main objectives are the recognition of the right to use an indigenous sign language, empowerment through communication and information, and equality in education and employment. Aiming to establish and maintain EU level dialogue with the European Union institutions and officials in consultation and co-operation with its member NADs, the EUD also has participatory status with the Council of Europe (CoE) and is a full member of the European Disability Forum (EDF), as well as a Regional Co-operating Member of the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD). The EUD's Statement on Intersectionality highlights its commitment to employing an intersectional perspective in the realization of full and equal participation of deaf citizens in the EU. The EUD values the unique and diverse perspectives and needs of deaf people with intersectional experiences, including seniors, women, LGBTIQ+ persons, refugees, BIPOC persons, deafblind persons, and deaf people with additional disabilities.

2. THE QUESTIONNAIRE AND ITS FINDINGS

As an umbrella organisation, the EUD invited European NADs to complete a survey on the needs of deaf seniors regarding activities and training. The EUD was able to collect information from 17 participating NADs across Europe on the actual situation of deaf seniors in the respective countries. Regional diversity is well balanced in the sample, which includes NADs in countries across Northern, Eastern, Southern, and Western Europe. The following four sub-sections discuss the aims of the survey, its methodology, and the process and limitations of the data collection. Then, sub-section 2.5 gives an overview of the results.

2.1 Aims

The questionnaire aimed to gain insight into the current living situation and needs of deaf seniors from the perspectives of NADs across Europe, to inform the development of training, activities, and resources for these purposes at national levels. The survey aimed to gain a picture of this diverse population, as well as an overview of the current work of NADs regarding training, activities, and (support) services for deaf seniors, and an understanding of changes needed or new developments taking place.

2.2 Methodology

To achieve these objectives, a survey comprised of 14 questions was formulated. There were 11 multiple-choice questions on the deaf senior population, NADs' activities for them, and the related organisational structures, resources and support services, including those available outside the NAD. These questions could be answered by ticking a box. Specifically, they aimed to collect information on the following topics (see Appendix I for the full list of questions):

- the deaf senior population as it is known by the NADs
 - number of deaf seniors
 - profile of deaf seniors, e.g. bilingual, oral, signer
 - languages used
- the work of NADs regarding activities for deaf elders



- kinds of activities organised
 - financial support to facilitate attendance
 - who are the teachers, speakers, or other people involved
 - when and how often deaf seniors are able to attend activities
 - whether there is mini bus service for transport to the activity
- organisational structures and resources, including those external to the NAD
 - whether there is a deaf senior committee or working group
 - whether there is a care home and/or any support services for deaf seniors, and whether these are partnered with the NAD

Three open-ended questions were added to the survey which enabled NADs to share their own experiences and perspectives and highlight any needs for change, on-going developments or innovative practices. The first, which was informed by the unique experiences of deaf culture, explores deaf seniors' needs for international networking and how this could be beneficial for their wellbeing. International peer contact has been documented as a vital element of deaf culture in Europe and across the globe, which may be experienced by deaf signers as empowering. Since research regarding international networking among deaf seniors is scarce, it has been important to use the survey to investigate the potential role of international connections in deaf elders' active living and learning. To document good practices for deaf elders, the second question asked for members to share any best practices or inspiring examples regarding services, training, or activities in their country. The third open question allowed NADs to provide feedback regarding topics that may have remained uncovered, and in support of data saturation, share any other ideas regarding initiatives for training and activating deaf seniors. The open-ended questions were analysed thematically.

Data collection

The EUD invited all its 31 NADs to complete the 14-question survey. A letter of invitation (see Appendix II) was sent out by e-mail on 2nd February 2021, followed by a reminder sent on 4th March. The survey stayed open until 13 April 2021. It was completed by 17 out of 31 NADs, which means that a response rate of 51.6% was reached.

The survey was administered through Typeform, a secure and password-protected digital platform that enabled the participants to access the questions via a [weblink](#). Typeform allows for questions and responses to be provided both in English and International Sign, to ensure full accessibility for participants whose first language is likely to be a signed language.

The information sheet, informed consent and survey questions were provided in both English and International Sign (see Appendix III). Participants were informed via the information sheet that it only takes 15-30 minutes to complete the survey and that participation is anonymous and entirely voluntary. They were told that they would not experience any disadvantage or stigma if they opted not to participate. They were also informed that the objective of the study is to create an international guide about educating and activating deaf seniors. The weblink to the online survey guided participants to the informed consent form, which had to be submitted in order to proceed with the survey. It was possible for participants who had questions regarding the informed consent or the survey questions to contact the EUD researchers.

Most of the survey questions could be answered by simply ticking a box, but the three open-ended questions could be answered by a written response, a signed video, or a videocall with the researcher. All the participants completed the survey through written responses or signed videos, and none used the videocall option. One NAD responded in their own national written language; these responses were translated into English. The EUD did not receive any questions regarding the informed consent or the survey questions. The responses to the open-ended questions were very informative. As such it may be safe to conclude that in general, the format was experienced by the NADs as accessible.



A data minimisation policy was adopted: data were only collected and processed by the EUD's research team, which consisted of two researchers. Personal data is stored securely in the EUD's database premises and unauthorised access to it is prevented by password protection and encryption. The data are not shared with or disclosed to anyone outside the EUD research team, and not shared with any other DESEAL partners. The participants were informed of this and told that all personal data collected during the research will be permanently and irrevocably erased two years after the project's end date of 30th November 2022. Comments or examples in this report are anonymised so that there is no identification possible.

2.4 Limitations

Four limitations of the survey need to be kept in mind when looking into the results: working from home during the pandemic made it difficult for NAD officers to collect information and cooperate with colleagues; insufficient resources for NADs to provide staff time may have stopped NADs participating; in some countries, deaf senior activities are organised at the local level, while the survey concentrates on the national level; and finally the survey format may not have been optimal for research with deaf signers. These limits are discussed further in the next paragraphs.

During the lockdowns, most staff members from European NADs were working from home, and their training schedules and activities for deaf seniors were put on hold. It is likely that this hindered the collection of information. Working from home also restricts opportunities for staff members of NADs to work together and collate information when filling in the survey. The EUD has tried to meet these challenges by extending the deadline and offering more time for them to complete the survey. The EUD is also aware that some NADs do not have sufficient financial resources to provide staff hours devoted to deaf senior issues. After receiving the invitation to participate in the survey, one NAD responded that they had only just started to work on a project proposal in support of deaf seniors and that, therefore, they did not feel ready to share any information.

Since the EUD is an umbrella organisation of NADs, the main focus of the survey is the national level. In some countries, activities and training for deaf seniors are organised locally rather than nationally and, when there is no national-level organisation, it is time-consuming for NADs to collect information from local levels. One country gave a number of responses from local deaf organisations rather than through their NAD participating through Typeform. These responses had to be removed from the survey. These organisational issues may have caused a lower response rate and led to a smaller sample.

The limits of a written survey format for research participants whose first language is a signed language, have been described by international scholars. Whereas qualitative research enables researchers to optimise communication and understanding, for example when collecting data through interviews, a survey format is fixed. The EUD is used to visually communicating and translating information, and tried to make the survey as accessible as possible through working with a visually oriented digital platform and International Sign translations for all of the questions. The responses to the open-ended questions indicate that the participants' overall understanding was good. A few responses suggested that some questions were not fully understood by some participants (e.g. an NAD described a preferred good practice instead of an existing one). International Sign is not the first sign language of the respondents, and it may have been a drawback that officers were working from home when responding to the survey and often did not have opportunities to discuss the questions with co-workers.

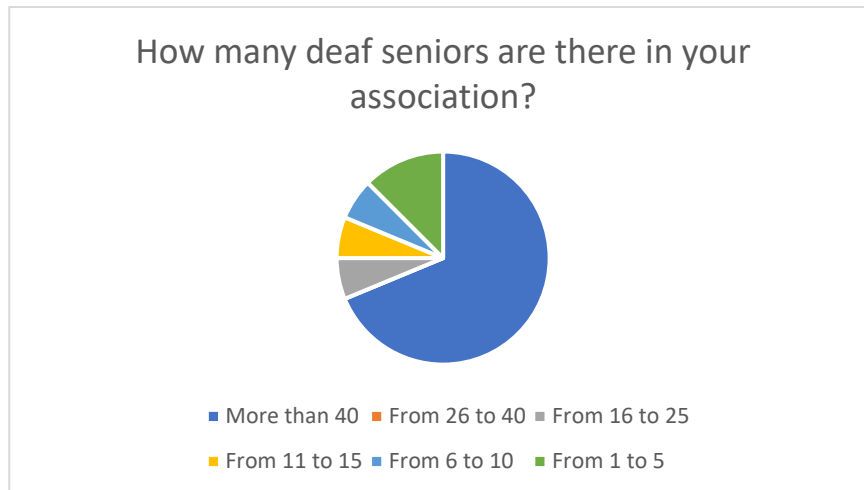
2.5 Results

This section provides an overview of the responses to the research questions. Questions 1-4 of the multiple-choice component were answered by all of the NADs (16 out of 16); questions 5-11 were answered by 15 NADs. Pie and bar charts are provided to visually represent the findings of the closed questions. The three open-ended questions were answered by respectively 14, 15, and 13 NADs out of 16. For these three questions, this section describes the themes that could be identified in the answers.



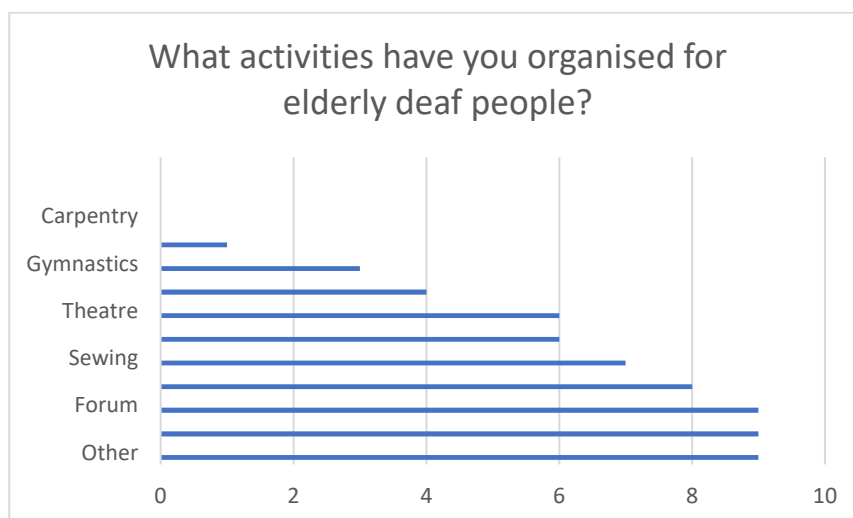
QUESTION 11: How many deaf seniors are there in your organisation?

This question was answered by all the NADs; 68.8% (or 11 out of 16) reported having more than 40 deaf seniors in their organisation. No NADs reported a number between 26 and 40, which means that the other NADs have small numbers: 6.2% (one out of 16 NADs) reported having 16 to 25 deaf seniors, and 11 to 15 was selected by the same proportion, as was 6 to 10. Two NADs, which is 12.5%, reported having 1-5 deaf senior members.



QUESTION 2: What activities have you organised for elderly deaf people? (Tick all that apply)

All NADs (16 out of 16) answered this question. Activities that are mostly organised by NADs are computer science (56% or 9 out of 16 NADs); forum (56% or 9 out of 16); deaf history (50% or 8 out of 16); sewing (43.8% or 7 out of 16); art such as decoupage or decorating vases or plates (37.5% or 6 out of 16); and theatre (37.5% or 6 out of 16). The other activities they mentioned are cooking (25% or 4 out of 16 NADs), gymnastics (18.8% or 3 out of 16); and gardening (6.2% or 1 NAD). 56.6% of the NADs also reported organising other activities; unfortunately, these were not specified.



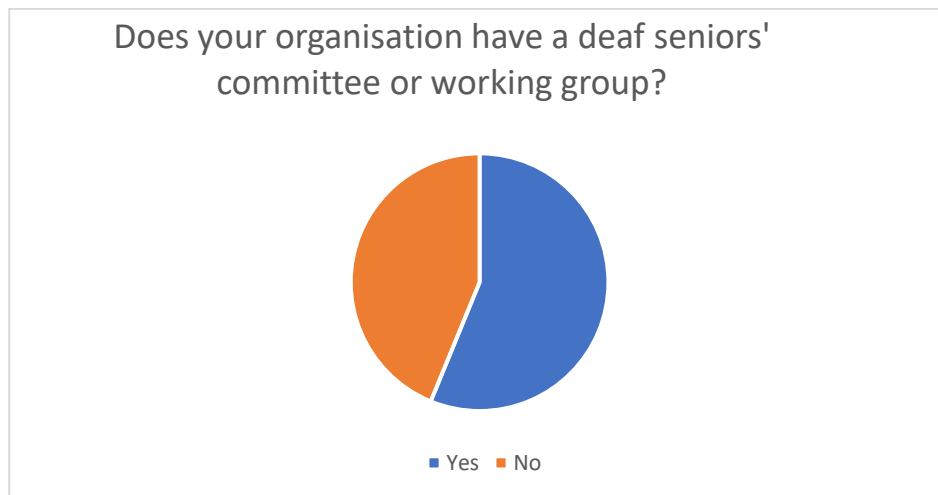
¹ Due to formal constraints of the Typeform format, which requires that all items are numbered in one sequence, the numbering in Typeform starts with the informed consent. Consequently, the first question is number 4 in the digital format.

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QUESTION 3: Does your association/organisation have a deaf seniors' committee or working group that concentrates on deaf seniors' issues?

This question was answered by all the NADs. 56.2 % (9 out of 16) had a deaf seniors' committee or working group; the other 42.8% did not.



If yes, please type here.

The 9 NADs that responded positively provided further information. The organisational structures for deaf seniors' issues that they reported are as follows:

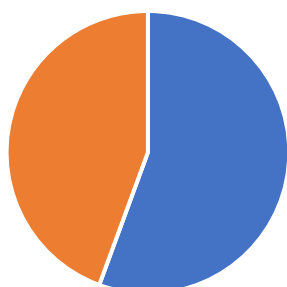
- 'Deaf senior committee'
- 'Committee of senior activities'
- 'Deaf senior organisation'
- 'A regular club day'
- 'A senior forum, where all the chairmen from the local senior associations meet twice a year'
- 'A political adviser who is working on the seniors' rights, such as access to sign language in retirement homes, hospitals, senior courses, [and] senior trips'
- 'Support structures and help with [...] management problems (light, water, housing), transportation, senior cards, travel preparations, and attending to health problems'
- 'A team within the NAD collects data from local associations regarding their deaf elderly members and residents in care centres or other institutions in the country and organises a survey on deaf elderly homes in different regions'

QUESTION 4: Is there a care home and/or are there any support services for deaf seniors in your country?

This question was only answered by 9 out of 16 NADs: 55.4% of the participating NADs (5 out of 9) responded positively, confirming that there is a care home/and or support services for deaf seniors; 44.4% (4 out of 9) responded negatively.



Is there a care home and/or are there any support services in your country?



■ Yes ■ No

If yes, please type here.

Eight NADs answered this question. Two of these answers mentioned that no care home was provided, which may indicate that the question was not fully understood by these NADs. Examples that were mentioned are:

- 'A department for deaf seniors in a regular care home'
- '6 deaf elderly users have a care home; the rest live in their own homes'
- 'We have some care homes [in our country] with a specific section for the elderly deaf. The staff are required to use sign language with the patients'
- '[In our country] we have 4 care homes for elderly deaf people. Not all staff members are deaf but they have to learn sign language'
- 'The [name of deaf foundation] and [name of deafblind organisation] have centres providing housing services and home services'

One NAD mentioned their efforts to meet this challenge: 'We are trying to deal with this.'

If yes, is the care home or service partnered with your association?

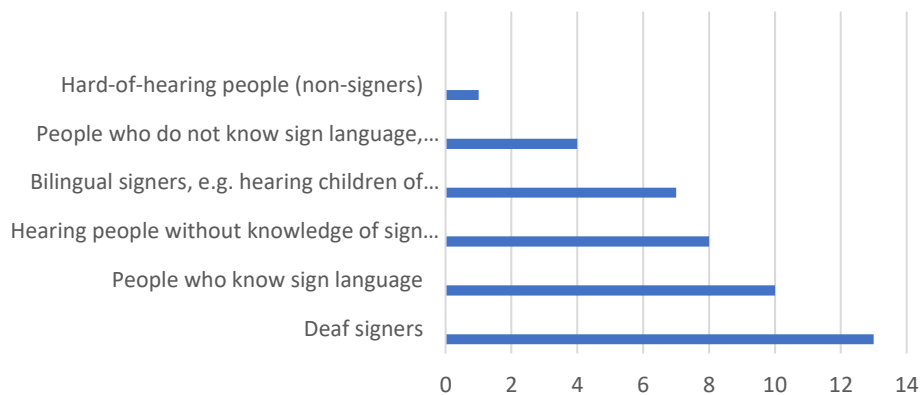
Only 2 NADs (out of 8) confirmed that the care home or service is partnered with their association.

QUESTION 5: The teachers, speakers, and other people (e.g. fellow participants) who are involved in the activities that you provide for deaf seniors are mostly...

15 NADs answered this question. They reported the involvement of deaf signers (86.7% or 13 out of 15 NADs), people who know sign language (66.7% or 10 out of 15), and bilingual hearing signers (46.7% or 7 out of 15). The involvement of hearing people without knowledge of sign language, but with access to interpreters, was also high (53.3% or 8 out of 15). The involvement of hearing people without knowledge of sign language and without use of an interpreter was reported by 26.7% (4 out of 15); only one NAD reported the involvement of hard-of-hearing non-signers.



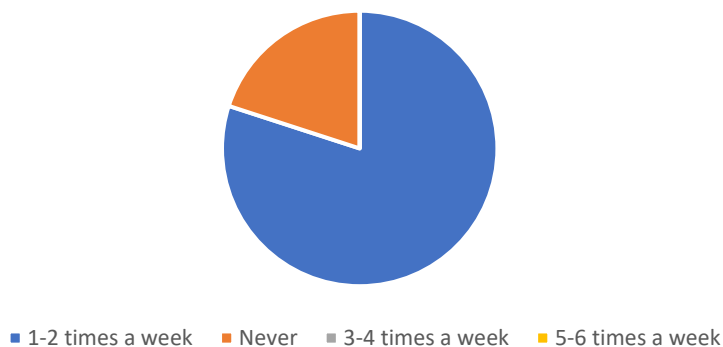
The teachers, speakers, and other people involved in the activities for deaf seniors are mostly...



QUESTION 6: How many times per week do deaf seniors attend events at your association?

15 out of 16 NADs answered this question. 80% (12 out of 15) reported that deaf seniors attend activities 1 to 2 times a week; 20% (3 out of 15) reported that deaf seniors never attend activities. The boxes for 3-4 times a week and 5-6 times a week were not ticked.

How many times a week do deaf seniors attend events at your organisation?

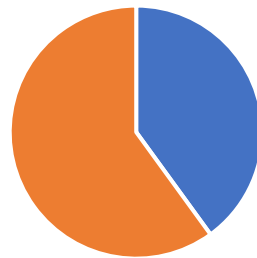


QUESTION 7: Is there enough money to support deaf seniors to do the activities that you organise?

15 NADs answered this question. 60% (9 out of 15) responded negatively, suggesting that there are financial barriers that prevent deaf seniors attending activities organised by NADs. 40% (6) responded positively.



Is there enough money to support deaf seniors to do the activities that you organise?

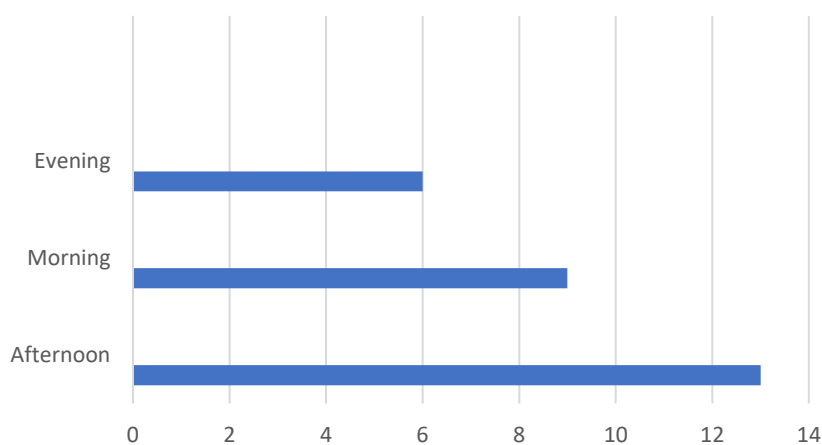


■ Yes ■ No ■ ■

QUESTION 8: At what time of day do you schedule activities for deaf seniors? (Tick all that apply)

15 NADs responded to this question: 86.7% (13 out of 15) scheduled activities in the afternoon, 60% (9) in the morning, and 40% (6) in the evening.

At what time of day do you schedule activities for deaf seniors?

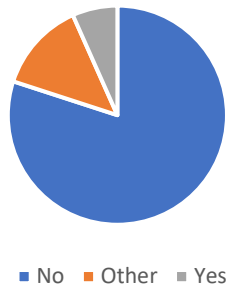


QUESTION 9: Do you have a minibus service for elderly people's mobility between their home and place of activity?

This question was answered by 15 out of 16 NADs. 80% (12 out of 15) do not have a minibus service; 13.3% (2 out of 15) mentioned having another form of transport; only 1 NAD (6.7%) reported having a minibus.



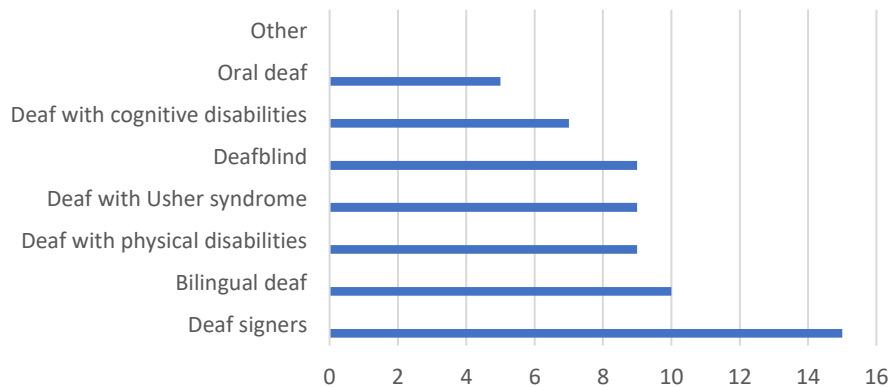
Do you have a minibus service for elderly people's mobility between their home and place of activity?



QUESTION 10: What types of seniors are there in your association? (Tick all that apply)

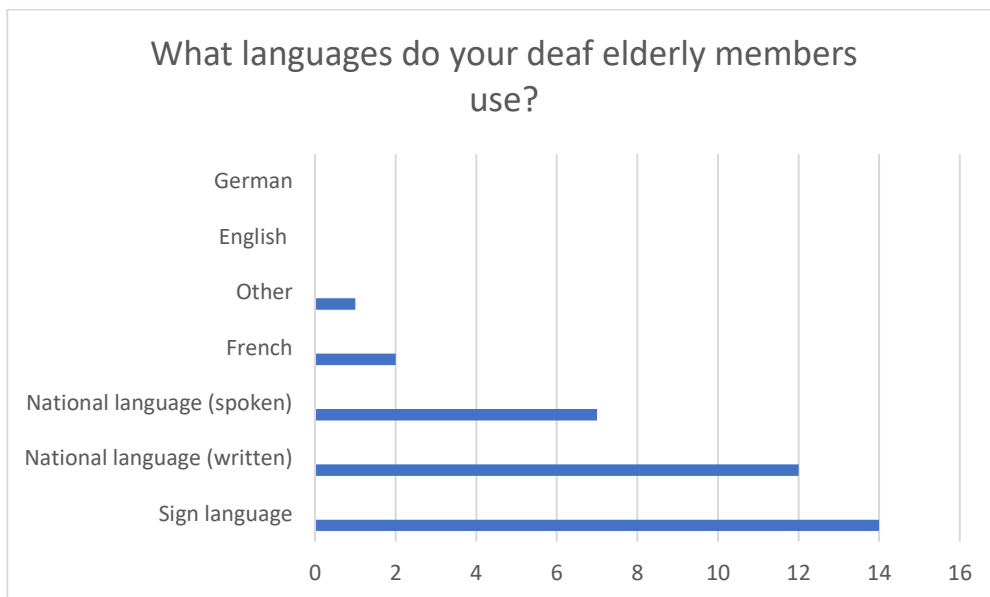
15 NADs answered this question. All 15 reported having deaf signers in their association, and 66.7% (10 out of 15) mention bilingual deaf people. Heterogeneity among the senior population was identified, with 60% (9 out of 15) of NADs reporting that their seniors include deafblind people, deaf people with Usher syndrome, and deaf people with physical disabilities. Deaf people with cognitive disabilities were included in 46.7% (7 out of 15) of NADs, and oral deaf people in 33.3% (5 out of 15).

What types of seniors are there in your association?



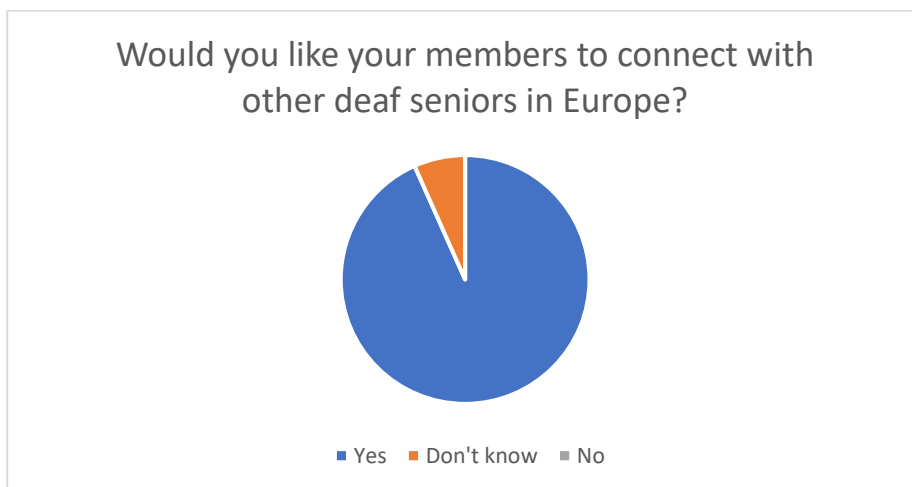
QUESTION 11: What languages do your deaf elderly members use? (Tick all that apply)

15 NADs participated in this question. All but one of them (93.3%, 14 out of 15) reported having deaf senior members who use sign language; 12 (80%) also mentioned the use of a written national language; and 7 (46.7%) reported the use of a spoken national language.



QUESTION 12: Would you like your members to connect with other deaf seniors in Europe?

15 NADs responded to this question. Perhaps unsurprisingly, a majority of 93.3% (14 out of 15) said they would like their members to connect with other deaf seniors in Europe. One NAD responded that they did not know. There were no negative responses.



If yes, could you please explain why and how this could be beneficial for your members?

14 NADs out of 16 responded affirmatively to this question, and also explained why international connections could be beneficial for their members. As for the other two NADs, one responded 'don't know' and another did not respond.

Themes that came to the fore in the potential benefits described by the 14 respondents are:

- 1. Empowerment**, e.g. 'This will provide them with the necessary network to empower, enable and inspire them'.
- 2. Networking and meeting other deaf people**, e.g. 'extending networking and sociocultural exchange opportunities' and 'getting to know the deaf community in Europe'. One of the NADs



mentioned that international exchange is particularly beneficial for their small population: 'The seniors [in our country] are so few, it will be good for them to meet other deaf seniors.'

3. **Sharing deaf senior (cultural) experiences within the EU**, e.g. 'It's important to share our experiences, to learn other sign languages in other countries and other cultures.' One of the countries mentioned a good practice in their region: 'We have senior activities in Nordic countries (meetings, gatherings etc.). We would be interested in exchanging information and experiences in EU countries. Many elderly people [in our country] conceptualise what it is like to live in other European countries. They would benefit from meeting "real" people [in these countries]'.
 4. **Exchanging information about deaf seniors and (barriers to) accessing daily life and support services** is also seen as an aspect of deaf senior cultural exchange, e.g. 'Most deaf seniors would like to learn and exchange knowledge of cultures and new experiences, for example in relation to accessibility at the day centre and their residences. [This] will help them to learn about the culture of senior deaf people and the difficulties they face at the hospital and when communicating with their doctor. They can also meet other deaf seniors to go shopping and have a good time together'.
 5. **Visiting new places, exchanging cultural experiences, and developing new friendships**, e.g. 'Seniors are usually very interested in history, and the experiences of other people. We think they would be happy to meet deaf seniors from neighbouring countries. [But] maybe it would be difficult to communicate'. While this NAD reports that the use of different sign languages may be a barrier, another NAD mentions the opportunity to learn other sign languages: 'It's important to share our experiences and learn other sign languages in other countries and cultures, ...and [keep contact] through video chat etc.'
 6. **Physical and mental wellbeing**, e.g. 'It's always great to meet other and get to know each other. It is good for both the mental and physical health.'

The response of one of the NADs, which has been translated from their national language into English, captures a number of the abovementioned themes: 'Why [could it be beneficial]? Because international contact facilitates arranging meetings and getting to know towns in Europe and their environments, histories, cultures, and way of life, as well as sharing pleasant moments, overcoming isolation, building morale, and exchanging experiences'.

QUESTION 13: Are there any good practices regarding services, training, or activities for deaf seniors which may be inspiring for other countries and which you would like to share? If yes, please share with us.

This question was answered by 15 NADs, 8 of which responded affirmatively and shared their good practices.

The good practices they mentioned are related to:

- **Volunteer services** for...
 - **Mobility:** 'We have volunteers who pick up and drive home the elderly who need it, to and from events'
 - **Home visits:** 'We have a visitor service, where volunteer elderly deaf people [who are in good health] visit their peers [who may not be as mobile]. For some elderly deaf people, their volunteer visiting friend is their only chance to have person to sign with'
- **Events for deaf seniors**
 - Annual Information Day
 - Annual Senior Meeting Day



- **Training programmes**
 - Empowerment training
 - Wellbeing training such as keep-fit exercises
 - A course for enhancing deaf seniors' digital skills
- **Activities**
 - Art
 - Dance
 - Gardening
 - Crafts
 - Sharing skills and ideas
 - 'Activities led by a team of deaf animators with the aims of fostering social ties among pensioners, stimulating their capacities, preventing the loss of autonomy, offering wellbeing, and supporting their connections with the outside world'
- **Networking**
 - 'We have a good network with opportunities to meet each other, for example via Zoom'

QUESTION 14: What other ideas do you have about initiatives for training and activating deaf seniors?

13 out of 16 NADs shared their ideas. Six themes could be identified in their suggestions:

1. **Human/deaf senior rights information**, in the form of training, and in relation to deaf leadership, e.g. 'empowering deaf seniors to become leaders of their communities in the area of deaf seniors' rights';
2. **Deaf leadership and intergenerational contact**, e.g. 'to be role models for young deaf people';
3. **International connections**, for sharing experiences with other deaf seniors and learning about other cultures;
4. **Signed communication**, both in the country and for international exchanges, e.g. 'training in International Sign'; 'travelling and learning different sign languages'; and 'It is important for deaf people to be able to use this sign language regularly. It allows them to communicate effectively and to share common experiences with each other';
5. **The use of digital platforms** for learning, networking and facilitating international bonding among peers, e.g. 'to set up a European Zoom group to share experiences, interests and skills, and make friends';
6. **Improving and extending training programmes**, e.g. 'adding senior culture and politics' and 'improvement of the activities programme for deaf adults and deaf seniors'.

The themes and responses reveal a shared interest in travelling and the empowering and bonding potential of international connections. This is captured in this response: 'Maybe deaf seniors from abroad could come and meet our seniors, share experiences, and teach something about their culture. That would be something new'.

3. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS



For the purpose of providing a European deaf senior perspective to inform the future developing educational development material of national level training materials and initiatives, the study aimed to document the current living situation and needs of deaf seniors from the perspectives of National Associations of the Deaf (NADs) across Europe. Although a survey format has limits for research with deaf signers, it seemed to be useful for initial information collection on the topic among European NADs; a digital survey platform with International Sign videos made the survey accessible. 11 closed survey questions asked for information from the NADs on the deaf senior population, the activities for elderly deaf organised by NADs, NADs structures and resources in support of deaf issues, and support services and/or care homes in the country. To gain further understanding of changes needed or new developments taking place, three open-ended questions explored 1) whether there were needs for international networking and how deaf seniors would benefit from international exchange, 2) whether NADs wanted to share best practices regarding services, training, and activities, and 3) whether NADs had any other ideas or suggestions. Responses to open-ended questions were analysed thematically.

Although the survey received a good response rate of 51.6 % and the responses indicate a good understanding of the survey questions, the limits of the survey format for working with deaf signers for collecting data have been documented and need to be taken into account in its evaluation as well. Other limits that have been noted are working from home during the pandemic, which was a drawback for NAD officers to collect information from regional or local levels and to cooperate with colleagues; in some countries the responsibilities for the organisation of deaf senior activities and trainings are concentrated on the local level, while the focus of the survey is on the national level and the working of NADs; some NADs have limited resources and staff time for deaf senior issues.

The research findings provide a sketch of the deaf senior population as it is known by 16 NADs across Europe, regarding the number of deaf seniors, the types of deaf seniors, and the languages used. Although most of the NADs (68.8% or 11 out of 16) report having more than 40 deaf seniors in their organisation, some report relatively small numbers and two of them had 5 or fewer. Further research is needed to find out why there are so few deaf senior members in some NADs, and whether this makes it difficult for these NADs to be a drawback for the organisation of training and events, and it might be a risk factor for social isolation. One of the NADs with very few members suggests that international encounters may be beneficial to compensate for the limited opportunities to meet with deaf seniors in the country, which dovetails with the international connections theme highlighted below.

Since the EUD represents deaf signers in the EU, it is not surprising that all of the participating NADs report having signers among their deaf seniors, and most (66.7%) have bilingual deaf members. Although not all aspects of diversity among the population have been investigated, it has been found that the senior population at a majority of the NADs (60%) includes deaf people with physical disabilities and people who are deafblind or have Usher syndrome. The languages used by deaf seniors include mostly signed and written languages, with spoken ones being in the minority. This diversity in the deaf senior population suggests that an inclusive and intersectional perspective is needed in the organisation of activities, training, and events.

The findings also provide insight into the activities organised by the NADs. Computer science, forum and deaf history were mentioned by more than 50% of them. The activities tend to be held in the daytime, especially the afternoon (80%), and are generally offered 1 or 2 times a week; however, 3 NADs reported that they have no activities for deaf seniors. Sign language use is central in the organisation of these activities, which is reflected in the backgrounds of the teachers, presenters and deaf people involved: most of them know sign language, and where they do not, it is common for them to work with interpreters. It is remarkable that 26.7% mentioned involvement of hearing people without knowledge of sign language and use of an interpreter.



Regarding transport to activities, only one NAD had a minibus, and a few others offered alternative forms of mobility support. The scarcity of transport assistance among NADs may mean that some deaf seniors are prevented from attending activities. Most NADs (60%) reported that deaf seniors are also hampered by monetary constraints, and cannot participate in activities without financial support. This calls for attention for the financial vulnerability of deaf seniors and for an inclusive approach in activities in support of active living to make sure that all deaf seniors are able to participate.

In terms of organisational structures and resources, only 56.2% of the NADs confirmed that they have a deaf senior committee or working group such as a deaf senior organization, a deaf senior forum, a political advisor on deaf senior rights. A slight majority (55.4%) said that there is a care home/and or support services for deaf seniors, and in two countries these are partnered with their local NADs. But this means that the deaf seniors in almost half of the countries do not have any deaf-centred support services or care homes. It seems to be a point of advocacy (e.g. 'we are trying to deal with this').

The findings related to the open-ended questions reveal a strong interest among NADs in facilitating international exchange for their deaf seniors, and a sense that the benefits this would attract might include empowerment; networking and meeting other deaf people; sharing cultural experiences; learning about accessibility and support services; developing new friendships; and improving their physical and mental wellbeing. Their ideas confirmed and emphasised needs that already came to the fore in the survey, such as the need for international connections, the use of signed communication, the improvement of training programmes, and the use of digital platforms for learning and networking with peers. The responses also highlighted the issues of human and deaf senior rights and deaf leadership, which are also related to international connections and intergenerational transmission, advocacy and empowerment. Since local and national deaf communities are relatively small, and even become smaller when age increases, European interaction with deaf seniors may meet the deaf cultural need for peer interaction.

The informative and rich responses to the open-ended questions demonstrate that core deaf cultural values, such as international peer contacts in support of networking, exchange of information, empowerment, and friendship through digital and face-to-face signed communication are important for deaf seniors' active living and wellbeing. Signed communication and peer contact are vital for accessing daily life contexts, training and activities, as well as for developing friendships and improving physical and mental wellbeing. The term 'deaf senior culture' was used by one of the respondents to articulate the shared values of a growing group within the deaf community with specific and diverse needs; the emphasis on deaf senior rights and advocacy and intergenerational cultural transmission also hint at a deliberate movement towards deaf senior empowerment. Further qualitative research is needed to explore this emerging movement and how it relates to deaf seniors' identities and needs.

Against the background of this growing deaf senior identity and awareness, the limited resources within NADs and deaf services also point to their vulnerability. This means that European level and national level advocacy is needed, along with further scientific research, especially since substantial proportions of NADs report not having a committee, working group, support service or care home that is specifically for deaf seniors. The findings on deaf senior rights and empowerment also call for the involvement of deaf seniors in the development of training and activities. This report has fostered the exchange of good practices of training, support services and activities, which may be beneficial to NADs in their advocacy. A few best practices of deaf senior support services and care homes have also been also documented in De Clerck (forthcoming), the EUD's fifth volume on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, entitled *UNCRPD Implementation in Europe – a deaf perspective: Article 9 – Access to information and communication*.



Appendices

I List of questions

1. How many deaf seniors are there in your association?²
 - a. From 1 to 5
 - b. From 6 to 10
 - c. From 11 to 15
 - d. From 16 to 25
 - e. From 26 to 40
 - f. More than 40

2. What activities have you organised for elderly deaf people? (Tick all that apply)
 - a. Computer science
 - b. Foreign sign language courses
 - c. Cooking
 - d. Art (e.g. decoupage, decorating vases or plates)
 - e. Sewing
 - f. Deaf history
 - g. Gardening
 - h. Carpentry
 - i. Gymnastics
 - j. Theatre
 - k. Forum
 - l. Other (please specify)

3. Does your association/organisation have a deaf seniors' committee or working group that concentrates on deaf senior's issues?

If yes, please type here.

4. Is there a care home and/or are there any support services for deaf seniors in your country?

If yes, please type here.

If yes, is the care home or service partnered with your association?

5. The teachers, speakers, and other people (e.g. fellow participants) who are involved in the activities that you provide for deaf seniors are mostly...
 - a. Deaf signers
 - b. Hard of hearing people (non-signers)
 - c. Bilingual hearing signers, e.g. hearing children of deaf adults (CODAs)
 - d. Hearing people without knowledge of sign language, who use an interpreter
 - e. People who know sign language

² Due to formal constraints of the Typeform format, which requires that all items are numbered in one sequence, the numbering in Typeform starts with the informed consent. Consequently, the first question is number 4 in the digital format.

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- f. People who do not know sign language but have access to interpreters
6. How many times per week do deaf seniors attend events at your association?
- a. Never
 - b. 1-2 times a week
 - c. 3-4 times a week
 - d. 5-6 times a week
7. Is there enough money to support deaf seniors to do the activities that you organise?
8. At what time of day do you schedule activities for deaf seniors? (Tick all that apply)
- a. Morning
 - b. Afternoon
 - c. Evening
9. Do you have a minibus service for elderly people's mobility between their home and place of activity?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Other
10. What types of seniors are there in your association? (Tick all that apply)
- a. Bilingual deaf
 - b. Oral deaf
 - c. Deaf signers
 - d. Deaf with Usher syndrome
 - e. Deafblind
 - f. Deaf with cognitive disabilities
 - g. Deaf with physical
 - h. Other
11. What languages do your deaf elderly members use? (Tick all that apply)
- a. National language (Written)
 - b. National language (Spoken)
 - c. Sign language
 - d. English
 - e. French
 - f. German
 - g. Other

For questions 12, 13 and 14, please write down your views or upload a video in International Sign. If you prefer to respond through a videocall, please tick the box and email goedele.de.clerck@eud.eu for an appointment.***

12. Would you like your members to connect with other deaf seniors in Europe?
- a. Yes
 - b. No



c. Don't know

If yes, could you please explain why and how this could be beneficial for your members?

13. Are there any good practices regarding services, training, or activities for deaf seniors which may be inspiring for other countries and which you would like to share?

If yes, please share with us.

14. What other ideas do you have about initiatives for training and activating deaf seniors?

II Letter of invitation

Dear EUD members,



[Video in International Sign](#) →

EUD is a partner in an international project called DESEAL (**Deaf Senior Education for Active Living**), which is funded with support from the European Commission under the **Erasmus+ programme**.

The project aims to **identify deaf seniors' needs for training and activities**. The EUD is responsible for collecting information from national deaf associations. **We warmly invite you to take part** in this work by completing a survey that allows you to share your experiences and views.

Participation in the survey takes only **15-30 minutes** and is **anonymous**. All of the questions are provided in both written English and International Sign, and you will be able to respond to most of the questions by simply ticking a box. There are only three open-ended questions which could be answered by a written response, a signed video, or a videocall with the researcher.

Your participation will help the project team to create **an international guide about educating and activating deaf seniors**. This guide will then be available for download at the project [website](#) as a PDF in written English with a summary video in International Sign.

We appreciate your time and engagement with this valuable study in support of deaf seniors' quality of life and kindly request that you complete the survey by **15 February 2021**.



[Start the survey](#)

In case you have any questions about participating in the study, please contact the EUD consultant, Goedele De Clerck, on mail.

III Information sheet and informed consent

You have been invited to take part in a survey for national deaf associations, which is part of the DESEAL project (Deaf Senior Education for Active Living), funded with support from the European Commission under the Erasmus+ programme.

We (Mr. Frankie Picron and Dr. Goedele De Clerck) are researchers at the European Union of the Deaf (EUD) in charge of organising this survey. So you can take an informed decision about whether to take part, it is important that you understand:

- 1. What the survey is about;**
- 2. Why your participation is valuable;**
- 3. What the possible benefits and disadvantages are;**
- 4. How we keep your data and information confidential; and**
- 5. What your participation would involve.**

This Information Sheet is designed to explain these aspects to you. We are available to provide further information by email or video call if there is anything you want to ask or discuss.

1. What is the survey about?

The project aims to identify the needs of deaf senior citizens in terms of various forms of education and activation (i.e., active participation in society). This survey is particularly oriented towards the views and work of national deaf associations in Europe, and their involvement in training and education for deaf seniors.

2. Why is your participation valuable?

Your answers will help the project team to create an international guide about educating and activating seniors. The international guide will be in the form of a pdf, which will be downloadable from the project's website (www.deseal.eu), with a summary in International Sign.

3. What are the possible benefits and disadvantages of taking part?

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to answer questions regarding initiatives for training and activities for deaf seniors.

By taking part in the DESEAL survey for national deaf associations, you will not be placed in any situation in which there is a likelihood of physical, mental or emotional harm. We (Frankie and Goedele) are available to satisfy any reasonable request or need you might have.

You will not be provided with any incentive to take part to the survey.



You have – and retain at all times – the right to withdraw yourself and your data from the DESEAL project. You may do so for any (or no) reason and without prejudice. You will be briefed, from the outset, on the procedures for ending your participation, i.e., by simply expressing your free choice to withdraw.

4. How do we keep your data and information confidential?

A data minimisation policy is adopted by the DESEAL project so that no data that is not strictly necessary for the project is collected.

By taking part in the survey for national deaf associations, you will be asked to provide the following information:

The name of your national deaf association, its website URL, and the city/region/country it covers
Data on your personal or professional views or opinions on the activities, training, or initiatives addressed in the DESEAL project will be gathered either in written English through an anonymous questionnaire and/or in sign language through a video or video call.

These data will be collected and processed by the EUD's research team, namely Mr. Frankie Picron and Dr. Goedele De Clerck. The processing will only be for the purpose of the DESEAL survey for national deaf associations and for carrying out project research activities.

The data you provide by completing the survey and signing this informed consent form will be stored in the EUD's database premises and accessed only by us (Frankie and Goedele) and other EUD personnel who are specifically authorised to work on the DESEAL project. Unauthorised access is prevented by the adoption of the following security measures: computer files storing your personal data will be password-protected and encrypted through available encryption software.

These data will not be shared with or disclosed to anyone outside the EUD research team, and will not be shared with any other DESEAL project partners. Your personal data will be permanently and irrevocably erased after completion of the DESEAL project.

Any personal or professional views or opinions you might express during your participation are confidential. The only people who will see the information collected will be the above mentioned EUD team. Research reports will not mention any names. We may illustrate the findings through providing anonymised comments or examples, in which case we will ensure that there is no identification possible. The opinions and views you express will not be related or traceable to your personal data, because your data will be processed in a way that stops anyone tracing them back to you.

The research findings will be presented through conference presentations, webinars, and research reports. A project summary will be available on the project website, www.deseal.eu, and on the Erasmus + platform.

All personal data collected and stored within the EUD's DESEAL project survey for deaf associations, is for the purposes of the project only and will be permanently and irrevocably erased on 30 November 2024, which is two years after the end date of the project (30 November 2022).

5. What your participation will involve if you choose to take part

Participating in the survey takes about 15 to 30 minutes. You will be asked to answer 14 questions regarding education, activities, and initiatives for deaf seniors. You will be able to answer most of these questions by ticking a box. All questions are provided in written English and signed in International Sign. Three of the questions in the survey are open-ended and specifically ask you to describe your views on training or activities, or share information on practices in your country. These questions can either be answered through written English or International Sign.



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If you prefer to respond through International Sign, you may either create a signed video and upload it in the response form, or have a conversation with Goedele through a 30-minute video call. To request a video call, write 'videocall' in the response form and contact Goedele.De.Clerck@eud.eu. (These instructions are also included in the survey form.)

Participation is entirely voluntary and you are under no obligation whatsoever to take part. No disadvantage or stigma will arise should you decide not to participate.

Further information

Thank you for taking the time to read this informed consent form. If you have any questions about any aspect of the DESEAL project, or your prospective involvement in it, please contact:

Dr. Goedele De Clerck

Email: goedele.de.clerck@eud.eu

Mr. Mark Wheatley

Email: mark.wheatley@eud.eu

Telephone: +32 2 280 22 59

Address: Rue de la Loi - Wetstraat 26/15, 1040 Brussels, BELGIUM

A I accept.

B I don't accept.



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