

**online event**



Koninklijke  
Kentalis

# Crossing the Barriers

The aim of project 'Crossing the Barriers' (also known as 'Language Barriers' or 'Taalgrenzen' in Dutch) is to develop standards for specialized health care, education and social integration of deaf and hard-of-hearing adult migrants in the Netherlands. This online event will take place to present different international research projects, to share knowledge and to inform practitioners on the latest insights.

**Date** Wednesday November 3, 2021 \*

**Time** 09.00 - 13.00

**Location** online

*\* Note: due to unforeseen circumstances, the national part of the event (previously scheduled on November 4 & 5) will be postponed to the spring of 2022. More information on new dates will follow soon!*

## For whom

This event is for anyone who is interested in the results and continuation of the project, including all project participants. Feel free to join us during this online event! Interpretation into Dutch Sign Language (NGT), International Sign (IS), spoken English and Dutch is provided as well as live captions in English and Dutch.

## Program

09.00	Opening	Linde Terpstra
09.15	Crossing Language Barriers (project 'Taalgrenzen')	Peia Prawiro-Atmodjo-Puts, the Netherlands
09.45	Break	
10.00	Experiences of deaf refugees seeking asylum in Finland	Nina Sivunen, Finland
10.25	Deaf refugees' languaging in Kakuma Refugee Camp	Amandine LeMaire, Belgium
10.50	The complex language situation for deaf migrants in Sweden	Ingela Holmström, Sweden
11.10	Break	
11.30	Crossing the barriers: experiences of deaf and hard of hearing migrants	Lisa Hinderks, Mirjam Blumenthal, Andrea Hubbers, the Netherlands
12.00	Panel session	Chair Linde Terpstra
12.45	Closing	Linde Terpstra

## Registration

This is a free event. Please register via this [link](#). We hope to see you there!

## Questions and information

If you have any questions or require any further information, feel free to contact us at [kennisevenementen@kentalis.nl](mailto:kennisevenementen@kentalis.nl) (presentations see next pages).

# Presentations

## 1. Crossing Language Barriers (project 'Taalgrenzen')

*Peia Prawiro-Atmodjo – Puts, Senior Researcher, Royal Kentalis*

In the Netherlands, over the last few years National health care and special educational service organizations for the deaf and hard of hearing (D/HoH) have seen a growing number of migrants with little to no language and limited educational experience, including children and adults. Concerns were raised, as many of the D/HoH migrants had only found their way to specialized services with a certain delay. Throughout the country practitioners reported to struggle with assessment and service provision because of the incredible language and educational diversity of this group. In this practice-based research project, expert professionals develop a guideline for clinical practice as well as three online modules for the professional development of service providers nationwide. By interviewing 21 parties in the asylum and integration chain, current policies concerning the assessment and placement of D/HoH migrants were researched. Additionally, to inform clinical practice 15 D/HoH migrants were interviewed. Initial results of the project will be presented.

## 2. Experiences of deaf refugees seeking asylum in Finland

*Nina Sivunen, PhD researcher, University of Jyväskylä, CALS*

The aim of this presentation is to highlight the experiences of deaf asylum seekers in the asylum procedure and the diverse challenges they have faced in Finland. Still very little is known about deaf refugees' experiences of applying asylum, displacement, and communication in a new host country. The presentation data comes from linguistic ethnographic methods with 10 deaf asylum seekers from Middle East in six different reception centers around Finland, at folk high school for the deaf and in their new home during 2015–2017. Findings show that they have faced diverse linguistic challenges and social challenges, such as loneliness at the reception centers. Finally, this presentation also discusses critically linguistic social injustice, that the world's most vulnerable people, particularly deaf, face in the asylum procedure.

## 3. Deaf refugees' languaging in Kakuma Refugee Camp

*Amandine le Maire, PhD student, Heriot-Watt University*

This presentation will discuss data I have collected during the course of the research I am undertaking on deaf languaging. I will present on data collected during my four-month fieldwork at the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya from January to May 2018. This camp has a particularly high number of refugees with a count of over 185,000 registered residents from 13 Sub-Saharan African countries. This count includes a high number of deaf refugees who are also residents of the refugee camp.

I will focus on the languaging of deaf refugees in their everyday life in the camp. Deaf refugees use a very diverse language repertoire and use a large variety of ways of communicating such as signing, writing or speaking. They are from diverse ethnic and national backgrounds and are gathering in a same location. Their communication incorporates a diversity of sign languages and spoken languages which are mixed up and practiced in their everyday encounters. My research investigates the existence of formal contexts such as schools and informal spaces where deaf people gather to experience language learning.

#### **4. The complex language situation for deaf migrants in Sweden**

*Ingela Holmström, Associate professor/Docent/Reader, Stockholm University*

In this presentation, findings from an ongoing study on deaf migrants in Sweden will be presented. The deaf refugees are very heterogeneous as a group: some have grown up with limited or no access to a (signed or spoken) language, while others have had such access. Some have received little or no education, while others have education on a university level. When coming to Sweden, deaf migrants are required to participate in non-formal adult education to learn Swedish Sign Language and Swedish, i.e., two languages in parallel, compared to hearing migrants who only need to learn Swedish. Even more complicated is that many deaf migrants are emerging readers and thus also need to learn to read and write. But scientific knowledge regarding such learning for deaf adults is almost non-existent, and the teachers, most of them deaf, have to use their whole repertoire to teach them.

#### **5. Crossing the barriers: experiences of deaf and hard of hearing migrants**

*Lisa Hinderks - Mirjam Blumenthal - Andrea Hubbers, researchers Royal Kentalis*

15 deaf and hard-of-hearing respondents were interviewed in the 'Crossing the ' project. Most of them came to the Netherlands as asylum seekers. How were they raised? How did they come to the Netherlands? Did they receive adequate support? What obstacles in communication were there in the asylum seekers' center, and in getting a residence permit? What obstacles do they experience in their integration, in their work, in care and education? What do they need to be able to integrate properly? The first results of the analysis of these interviews are presented.

#### **6. Panel sessions**

In the panel sessions all presenters are asked to join us for a live discussion on the implications of their research for policy and practice.