

Professional Sign Language Interpreter –SASL [SATI] & IS [WFD-WASLI]

THELMA KOTZÉ

Master of Arts in Translation & Interpreting

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PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

Highly talented, qualified and experienced International and South African Sign Language Interpreter, with an extensive commercial, academic and practical knowledge base developed across three decades of service delivery to Deaf, hard-of-hearing and hearing individuals, as well as private, public and educational institutions.

Established the South African Sign Language Interpreting National Centre (SASLINC CC) in 2005, serving as the first professional South African Sign Language interpreting services agency in the country. As Managing Member and Professional Consultant, she leads a team of well-qualified Freelance South African Sign Language Interpreters who are accomplished in delivering a broad range of interpretation services.

Committed to advancing equal access for Deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals, as well as positively promoting community awareness, she strives to train and develop role-players and impacted parties in this specialist subject area - including supporting the creation of currently relevant and value-adding training materials / curriculums, and implementing intensive training interventions.

Her deep understanding of the linguistic, social and cultural influences that impact communication and comprehension is founded on a strong academic grounding and dedication to the professional development of both herself and fellow interpreters. A true passion for championing the human rights of Deaf and hard-of-hearing people has led to her sector specialisation at both local and international levels.

Future ambitions include the advancement of her professional involvement as an Accredited International Sign Interpreter, alongside employing her extensive knowledge and talent in support of the ongoing empowerment of Professional SASL Interpreters, while taking the next step in her academic journey.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Professional Strengths:

- Subject Matter Expertise | South African Sign Language (SASL) | International Sign Language | Sign Language Interpretation | Advanced Language Knowledge | Professional Subject Matter Interpretation & Communication (Simple & Complex) | Productive Communication & Communication Skills Development | Improvement of Conditions for Successful Communication
- Professional Consulting | Professional Practice / Professional Interpreter Services | Professional Training & Development for Sign Language Interpreters | Curriculum Development / Programme Development / Development of Training Materials | Professional Presentation, Conferencing & Research | Interpreting & Review Processes
- Tactile South African Sign Language | One-Hand Fingerspelling & Two-Hand Fingerspelling | Lip-Speaking Interpreting Services in English & Afrikaans | Interpreting Services for Deaf Persons Who Do Not Use SASL | Diverse Vocabulary in Interpreting | Interpreting Spoken Language to Sign Language / Interpreting Sign Language to Spoken Language

- Legislative & Regulatory Compliance Regarding Sign Language & Interpreting Service Delivery | Emerging Trends & New Legislation Relating to Sign Language & Interpreting Service Delivery
- Special Project Management | Complex Assignment Planning, Implementation & Management | Interpreting Service Delivery Co-ordination | Service Delivery Quality & Best Practice Standards
- Networking & Relationship Building | Cross-Functional Collaboration | Professional Stakeholder Relationship Management | Commercial, Corporate, Government, Community & Educational Contexts

Personal Strengths:

- Communication Skills | Interpersonal Skills | Multi-Cultural & Diversity Sensitivity | Leadership & Mentoring Skills | Preparation & Organisation Skills | Conscientiousness, Resilience & Adaptability | Professional Ethics, Sound Judgement & Community Service Orientation

KEY CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

- Served as **Chairperson of the Organising Committee** for the African Federation of Sign Language Interpreters' Conference held in Kigali, Rwanda, in March 2026.
- **Served as International Sign Interpreter for:**
  - The International Disability Alliance General Assembly in Bangkok, Thailand, in January 2026.
  - The Global Disability Summit in Berlin, Germany, in April 2025.
  - The Topics in Sign Language Research Conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in January 2025.
  - The XIX World Congress of The World Federation of The Deaf in Jeju, South Korea, in 2023.
- **Provides pro bono South African Sign Language Interpreting Services** to members of marginalised communities in South Africa.
- Served on the **Board of the South African Language Practitioners Council** between 2023 and 2025.
- **Council Member** of the **South African Translator's Institute** between 2015 and 2016.
- Served on the **Standards Generating Body for South African Sign Language** between 2004 and 2007.
- **Co-developed South African Sign Language Interpreter Training Material** for UNISA's Programme in South African Sign Language Interpreting in 2005.
- Led planning and execution of the **World Association for Sign Language Interpreters Conference** in Cape Town, South Africa in 2005.
- Among the **first group of South African Sign Language Interpreters to be accredited by the South African Translator's Institute** in 2004.
- **National Chairperson** of the **South African Sign Language Interpreting Association** in 1999.
- **Award in Recognition of Good Professional Practice in Conference Interpreting** from the **Pan South African Language Board** in 1998.
- **Co-ordinator of National and Provincial South African Sign Language Interpreting Services** in 1995.

PROFESSIONAL REGISTRATIONS

International Sign Interpreter Accreditation – IS <> English; WFD-WASLI, 2023
South African Sign Language Accreditation – SASL <> English; South African Translator's Institute, 2004

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

National Association for South African Sign Language Interpreters (NASASLI)
South African Translator's Institute (SATI)
World Association of Sign Language Interpreters (WASLI)
World Federation of The Deaf (WFD) - Individual Member

LANGUAGES & INTERPRETING LANGUAGE COMBINATIONS

Languages: English C2 | Afrikaans C2 | South African Sign Language C2 | Namibian Sign Language B2 | International Sign Language C1

Sign Language Interpreting Language Combinations: English - SASL - English (1994 - Present) | Afrikaans - SASL - Afrikaans (1994 - Present) | English - International Sign Language - English (2007 | 2021 - Present)

INTERPRETING SETTINGS & SECTORS

United Nations New York; 2024 to Date
United Nations Economic Commission for Africa; 2021 to Date
Television and Live Events; 2007 to Date
Educational Institutions; 2000 to Date
Business, Legal, Medical and Religious Institutions; 1995 to Date
Various Regional, National and International Conferences and Meetings; 1995 to Date

TRAINING PRESENTED

National Diploma: Liaison Interpreting; Employ and Empower the Deaf (eDeaf), 2021
Introduction to Namibian Sign Language Interpreting; Namibian Association for the Deaf, 2021
Introduction to South African Sign Language Interpreting; Government and Privately Funded, 2016
Introduction to South African Sign Language Interpreting; University of the Witwatersrand, 2010
Introduction to Mauritian Sign Language Interpreting; Wits Language School, 2009
Introduction to South African Sign Language Interpreting; UNISA, 2005
Introduction to South African Sign Language Interpreting; Centre for Deaf Studies at Wits University, 2003

QUALIFICATIONS

PhD in Interpreting; University of the Witwatersrand, *In Progress*
Master of Arts (MA) in Translation and Interpreting; University of the Witwatersrand, 2025
Diploma in Counselling and Communication; South African College of Applied Psychology, 2023
Bachelor of Arts (With Honours) in Translation and Interpreting; University of the Witwatersrand, 2012
Senior Certificate / Matric; Hoërskool Jeugland, 1989

COURSES & TRAINING ATTENDED

Assessor and Moderator Qualification (Registered Assessor and Moderator for ETDP-SETA); PMADS Holdings, 2018
SASLI Professional Development Workshop on Medical Interpreting; South African Translator's Institute, 2013
Training of Trainers Seminar; International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC - Nairobi), 2012
Specialised Conference Interpreting Practice; University of the Witwatersrand, 2010
Introduction to Conference Interpreting; University of the Witwatersrand, 2010
Orientation to Sign Language Interpreting; University of the Free State, 1997

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE (CURRENT)

South African Sign Language Interpreting *July 2006 to Date*
National Centre (SASLINC) - Johannesburg, South Africa

Owner | Managing Member | Professional Consultant | Interpreter | Trainer

- *Core Services:* SASL Interpreter Services | Co-ordination of SASL Interpreter Services | SASL Interpreter Training | SASL Interpreter Mentorship Programme | SASL Interpreter Consultation | Training individuals and institutions in the appropriate employment of SASL Interpreters.
- *Key Client Base:* Deaf and Hard-Of-Hearing Individuals | Private Institutions | Public Institutions.
- *Major Sectors Served:* Legal, Medical, Education and Corporate.

Rochester Institute of Technology - New York, USA *January 2025 to Date*

Academic Contributor - Certificate in International Sign Interpreting

- Co-presents a module within the programme | Assesses student assignments for the module.
- Provides individual feedback to students | Promotes development of interpreting skills.

University of the Witwatersrand - Johannesburg, SA *January 2024 to Date*

Student Mentor - Masters Programme (MA) for SASL Interpreting

PRIOR TENURES

University of the Witwatersrand *January 2002 to June 2006*

South African Sign Language Interpreter *(South African Sign Language Department - School of Literature and Language Studies - Faculty of Humanities)*

Pieter Cilliers Productions *March 1999 to September 2001*

South African Sign Language Interpreter | Assistant Producer

Deaf Federation of South Africa *April 1995 to February 1999*

South African Sign Language Interpreter

PERSONAL DETAILS

Nationality	South African
Languages	English | Afrikaans
	South African Sign Language | International Sign Language
Driver's License	Code 08
Availability	Negotiable
References & Certificates	Presented Upon Request