



Stories of Disconnectedness and Belonging

- Exploring Deaf People's Experiences in Mongolia



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Abstract

Millions of deaf people around the world live without the possibility of going to school or learning a language and experience a prolonged disconnection from their social environments. The purpose of this study was to explore deaf people's experiences in Mongolia of a transition from social and psychological isolation towards a process of inclusion.

The research was carried out by using mainly narrative- and visual methods, and centres on the experiences of four deaf people who grew up living disconnected without a well-functioning language and who later came to learn sign language. The research is focused on how the informants subjectively perceive the impact that learning sign language had in their lives and what needs have been satisfied through it.

The results indicate the importance that communication has had in their lives as a medium to multi-dimensional forms of belonging and social inclusion. When given the possibility to learn sign language and to become part of a community, many of the informants' fundamental human needs were met and their rights were enhanced. Their process provides an example of how personal development is connected to societal and structural development.

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Abbreviations

CRDP United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

GM The Government of Mongolia

HIC High income countries

M/LIC Middle- or Low Income Countries

SL Sign language

UB Ulaanbaatar

UN United Nations

Glossary

Aimag Province

Ger A traditional Mongolian felt tent

Khuusuur Mongolian meat pastry

Tsagaan Sar Mongolian Lunar New Year

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1. Introduction

“I didn't even know my name”. This is what a teenage boy told me when he was telling his life story in a small Mongolian rural town. He is deaf and had learnt sign language (SL) just two years before I met him. His family were herders and he had lived in the rural areas without the possibility of going to school or learning a language, trying to interact with others by just using simple hand gestures. Millions of deaf people are facing this type of a reality in our world today (Haualand, Allen 2009). Not much is known about deaf people who grow up without a functioning language, what their experiences are and how their needs are met. This study aims to explore deaf people's experiences in Mongolia of living in such isolation, learning SL and becoming connected to other people and a community.

1.1 Background

There is very little data or statistics collected on the situation of deaf people around the world during the last 20 years (ibid). 80% of the world's deaf people live in middle-or low income countries (M/LIC) (Wilson, Kakiri 2010). For various reasons, the context of deaf people in these countries is very different than in high income countries (HIC)¹. According to Reagan et al (2006) and Earth (2013) the socio-economic and political context, including poverty and lack of rights, are the main factors that determine the situation of deaf people in M/LICs. Haualand and Allen (2009) claim that a large majority of deaf people in the world, possibly up to 90% have never been to school and are therefore more or less illiterate. SL is often repressed and its use might not be permitted in education. This results in deaf people being unaware of their rights. In M/LICs in particular they are very marginalized and there is often very little or no information available to them. As a consequence, they might not know what is happening in their immediate society, not to mention the larger world (ibid). Furthermore, in rural areas deaf people might be isolated among hearing people - disconnected partly from their families, other people and community due to

¹ ‘Deafness’ is typically viewed from one of two perspectives; a pathological perspective or a sociocultural perspective. There is a disputed practice in the field of deaf studies that differentiates between members of the deaf community and deaf people who are not members of the deaf community. This is done by using capitalized “D” in the word ‘Deaf’ to refer to those who consider themselves as a part of the deaf community, who are proud of their deaf identity and who use SL as their preferred language (sociocultural perspective). The lower case “d” in the word ‘deaf’ on the other hand is usually used as referring to those who see their deafness through a pathological model as a hearing loss rather than a positive identity and have more emphasis on hearing aids and contacts in the hearing world (O'Brien, 2013; Reagan 2009; Woodward 1972). These different perspectives have been highly debated and it can be argued that they are valid only to a certain extent in M/LICs and do not fully describe the context for deaf people in these countries (Reagan et al 2006, Earth 2013). I believe that this way of categorizing people is not fruitful in the context of this study. I therefore want to distance myself from this discussion and have chosen to simply use the lower case version of the word to refer to deaf people in general as well as to the informants of this study.

communication problems and shame. The exact amount of people that live without having either a community or a well-functioning language is impossible to know. (Bjarnason et al 2012;Earth 2013)

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRDP) sets focus on that people with disabilities have the right to enjoy full human rights². The main regulation of the convention is directed towards protecting disabled people from all forms of discrimination and ensuring their participation in society, including the right to education and work. According to the World Deaf Federation the core human rights issues for deaf people are access to and recognition of SL as well as respect for deaf people's linguistic and cultural identity. Furthermore, bilingual education, SL interpretation and accessibility are of great importance when it concerns human rights for deaf (Haualand, Allen 2009). In CRDP Article 2 (UN 2006) it is stated that "communication" includes languages among other factors and, moreover, the article explicitly states that the term "language", as used in the treaty, includes signed languages and other forms of non-spoken languages. It can be argued that SL is at the core of deaf people's lives and makes accessibility possible for them. Without accessibility they lack possibilities to get in contact with many sectors in society and become isolated. (Ball 2011;Haricharan et al. 2013; Haualand, Allen 2009)

In Mongolia, there were 12 633 (0.4% of the whole population) registered deaf people in 2010. 61% of them were born hearing, but became deaf later in their lives due to accidents or incorrect medical care. (GM 2010;Riordan 2008) Most deaf people in Mongolia are of working age. 72% of them are unemployed compared to 9.9% among the general population (GM 2010). In the rural, scarcely populated areas there are deaf people who live isolated, only having contact with their closest family and not having the possibility to learn SL. The situation for deaf people in Mongolia, as for people with other disabilities, is especially difficult due to lack of infrastructure, scattered nomadic population and very few possibilities for special education (Lambert et al. 2004; Sharma, Deepak 2000). Another challenge is the traditionally negative perception of people with disabilities. Stigma can be seen in Mongolian society e.g. in the fact that families might hide children with disabilities. Lack of knowledge can worsen stigmatization, as well as the lack of services, which in its turn can force people with disabilities to stay in their homes. (Lambert et al. 2004;Riordan 2008;Zinamider 2002)

² The CRDP's purpose is "to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity" (UN 2006, CRDP Article 1)

In Mongolia the situation for deaf people is better in urban areas than in rural areas. 63% of the registered deaf people live in the capital, Ulaanbaatar (GM 2010), where there is a school for deaf people, deaf organizations are set up and some development projects are working together with local deaf organizations. The deaf school started in 1964 with aid from Russia. Mongolian SL is the language of the deaf community, but currently varying versions of SL is in use among different groups of deaf people in the country and a government working group is aiming to standardize the language. (Geer 2011)

The CRDP was ratified by the Mongolian government in 2008. The legal framework for disabled people in Mongolia is provided by the Mongolian Social Security Law for People with Disabilities that was amended in 1998. However, when it concerns the rights of deaf people, there are some laws that are not in accordance with the CRDP. For example, the Mongolian Education Law has no definitive provisions that would facilitate the learning of SL or the promotion of the linguistic identity of the deaf community as it is stated in CRDP Article 24 (UN 2006; Casaubon 2010).

Knowledge about the lives of deaf people living isolated is scarce since they do not have access to language and live on the margins of society. As a result, it is difficult to recognize and reach them. (Earth 2013; Mayberry 2002) The lack of knowledge about the situation of deaf people makes education and improved awareness a great challenge in M/LICs and the lack of data impedes efficient planning and targeting of development projects and programmes (Bjarnason et al. 2012; Haualand, Allen 2009). Earth (2013:7) argues that the need for research on deaf people in M/LICs is immense and she writes that the most challenging of all issues is that “there must be strategies for reaching _ deaf people in remote areas, exposing them to language, and bringing them into the deaf community.” Other important questions include how they can be located, what attempts have been made to reach them, how they can be brought into deaf society and given a language, as well as if it is too late for adults to learn SL and become a part of the deaf community (ibid).

1.2 Purpose

Local and international organizations working to improve the quality of life and human rights of deaf people often have difficulties in reaching people who live without a functioning language and are disconnected from their communities. Very little is known about their lives. The purpose of this study is to explore deaf people's experiences of living in isolation, and also of becoming connected to other people and a community. The focus will be on learning SL, what role the participants perceive that it plays in their lives and what needs were satisfied through it. The study can be a

platform for further research to build on that can further enhance efficient planning and targeting of development projects and programmes for deaf people and other marginalized groups of people.

1.3 Research questions

How do Mongolian deaf people who grew up without knowing SL perceive the impact of learning SL in their lives?

- What needs do they express were satisfied through learning SL?

2. Methods

The fieldwork for this study was conducted mainly in Mongolia's capital Ulaanbaatar during autumn 2013. I used a qualitative mixed-methods design based on life-story narratives, paintings and observations to explore the experiences of deaf people.

I found myself in Mongolia in the beginning of 2013, working as a project advisor for an international non-governmental organisation. Some of the first people I met through my job were deaf people. One of them started to teach me SL and soon I knew Mongolian SL better than Mongolian spoken language. I loved to communicate with deaf people and realized that many of them were also beginners in SL. When it was time for me to do the fieldwork for this study, I decided that I wanted to know more about deaf people's experiences and I wanted people elsewhere to hear about their lives in Mongolia. I also wanted the deaf people to realize that they have special stories and experiences that others can learn from.

I started to think how I could get more information about deaf people who lived without a language, disconnected from other people. I thought the best way was to find people that had lived like that for a considerable time in their lives, but that had later come to learn SL or another functioning way to communicate. I decided to use narrative methods as I was seeking to understand their experiences and how they make sense of what has happened to them (Caine, Estefan, Clandinin 2013; Creswell 2007). My choice of methods and viewpoint might be affected by my previous experiences of using narrative methods when I worked as a counsellor. I see narrative inquiry as a powerful methodology that foregrounds the voices of the informants and respects them as narrators who have agency (West 2013, Bryman 2004). This means that the interviewees are recognized as capable of reflecting upon issues that concern themselves and having a relatively high level of control over what they take up during the interviews (Andrews et al. 2008, Skånfors 2009). My research has been mostly inductive

as I wanted to principally begin with the experiences as told by the participants and didn't have specific preconceptions about what types of themes would emerge (Creswell 2007).

I contacted a person I met through my work, who had grown up in the deaf community in Mongolia, but is a hearing person. She has studied SL interpretation and also speaks English. She liked my idea, agreed to interpret in the study and helped me to find people. She had contacts in the deaf community in Ulaanbaatar and found two men in their thirties that had lived in the rural areas with their families without knowing SL until they were 17-20 years old. I also wanted to interview women in order to possibly get a different type of angle to the stories I would hear, as the roles of men and women in Mongolia, specifically in the rural areas are usually quite clearly differentiated (Aramand 2013;Nozaki et al. 2009). By contacting a school that has deaf students two women were found that had learned SL during their later teenage years or in their late twenties. All of these four people agreed to be interviewed. Thus, purposeful sampling was used, in order to find participants that have a story to tell about their specific experiences that concern the topic (Creswell 2013;Mack et al 2005;Ragin, Amoroso 2010).

2.1 Telling through paintings

When I had decided what kind of people I wanted to interview I started to think about how I could help them to express their experiences as clearly as possible. As they had learned SL late in life, they were not totally fluent in it. In order to ensure that the research would be more accessible, empowering and equitable for the participants, I chose to use an alternative approach of visual data, in the form of painting. Alerby and Bergmark (2012) argue that visual images can be considered as languages and might help to represent knowledge and experience in a deeper way. Besides, previous existing empirical research has shown that visual data is processed in a qualitatively different way by deaf people's brains than by hearing people's brains (Campbell, MacSweeny, Waters 2008;Finney et al. 2003).

I asked the participants to paint about their experiences and the paintings were used as a support in communication and as reference points. It seemed important to explain to the participants before they started painting, that there is no right or wrong way and that it is totally their own experiences and thoughts that should guide the process of painting. This seemed to calm down most of the doubts that some of them had about their painting skills. To ensure that I and the interpreter would have as little influence on the participants as possible while they were painting, we let them paint by themselves and use as much time as they wanted. However, they had access to us during the whole time in case they had the need to contact us.

When planning the interviews the idea was that focusing on the paintings might remove pressure from the participants and make them more comfortable in discussing their feelings and experiences. According to Alerby and Bergmark (2012) art can also evoke reflections on experiences. This became evident in some of the interviews where the fact that they painted seemed to wake up more memories in their minds and inspire them to paint additionally. I also believed that communicating about a time when one's way to orientate oneself in the world was not through language but mainly visual, would be easier in a visual form. This seemed to be the case for all the informants except one, who rather wrote than painted. She had a different background from the others as she had been hearing as a child and then learned to read and write. It seemed to be a successful decision to ask the participants to paint as it gave the interviews more depth. By seeing what the participants had painted I could ask further questions about details in the paintings and get deeper into issues that I might have missed otherwise.

2.2 In-depth interviews

I chose to use in-depth narrative interviews in order for the participants to be able to convey their stories with their own words and from their own perspectives (Caine, Estefan, Clandinin 2013; Creswell 2007). The questions were asked in a way that aimed to encourage the interviewees to tell their life stories or stories from different parts of their lives. I attempted also to formulate the implicit messages that I sensed and give it back to the interviewees in order to see if I had understood them correctly as suggested by Kvale (2007). As a former counsellor this was natural to me and it often seemed to give a new kind of a depth to the interviews.

The interviews were conducted in three stages. The first part was shortly about the informants' background and situation when they lived without a language. Then the informants were asked to paint about their lives before they knew SL. After that, another interview was carried out, where their painting(s) and stories of their experiences from that time were in focus. Following this, they were asked to paint about their lives after learning SL. Finally, the interview further explored those experiences. This turned out to be a fruitful approach. The interviewees had time to reflect on their own while they were painting in between the interviews that lasted from 1,5-2 hours, and the divergences and/or similarities between the different parts of their lives became more evident.

The interviews were both filmed and audio-recorded and the recording was transcribed. Filming was done in order for it to be a support in the analysis in case there would be something unclear in the recording. Usually, an audio-recorder captures the interviewees' expressions of feelings to a

certain extent, but as the original language of the informants (SL) is visual and as their expressions of feelings is not possible to capture as sounds, the videotape turned out to be a useful tool. It was also helpful in keeping track of which painting, or parts of paintings, they were telling about. The participants seemed to accept well being filmed. Many deaf people in urban Mongolia are used to using video calls and watching each other in order to be able to communicate, which might make it more natural for them to be filmed.

2.3 Participant Observations

During my time in Mongolia I have earned general societal knowledge that has been helpful for the background information. However, I also did participant observations during the last half year in the country to gain even more familiarity with the group and get more knowledge on how the deaf people's situation in Mongolia is. Chambers (2008:77) writes about the importance of “walking, seeing and asking questions” as well as learning by doing. Mack et al (2005) write that the objective of participatory observation is to help the researcher to learn the perspectives held by the study population. Thus, the data that I collected through observations can give a wider view of the phenomenon. The observations that I made were mainly among deaf people themselves as well as among persons who work with deaf people in rural areas, where there are still many who have not learned SL. I kept a diary about such observations.

2.4 Ethical considerations

It is important for me as researcher to respect the rights and values of the informants as sensitive information came up during data gathering (Creswell 2007). I wanted the participants to understand as well as possible what the research was about and what it meant for them to participate in it. Prior the interviews I gave them forms to sign where they could choose whether or not they agreed that their paintings are shown in connection with the study. Two of the participants were not willing to let their paintings become public and were thus assured to that. The participants also received information about confidentiality, filming and recording both in writing as well as explained by the interpreter in SL and their informed consent was naturally asked for participating in the study. I did this in order to ensure “respect for the person” and that they could decide about their participation in a conscious and deliberate way (Mack et al. 2005:9).

Narrative inquiry should start with the experiences as told by the participants. In this case, the narrators are deaf people who tell their stories in SL and one of the major challenges is to re-present the stories that are told in Mongolian SL in written English (West 2013). SL is a challenge in research as “the facial expressions, body movements, and use of space - which add sense, depth,

and poetry to Sign - cannot be translated” and thus, “signed expressions translated verbatim often result in awkward or impoverished English” (Schaller 1991:9). I was dependent on the interpreter and was aware there is always danger of information loss and misunderstanding when interpretation is used (O'Brien 2013). Therefore I sought to communicate clearly my intentions concerning her work. She gave her interpretation of the signs in English and it is her interpretation that has been transcribed. Thus, it really is the translator's version of what the interviewees have expressed. This is a fact that I could not affect, and I as a researcher needed to reconcile myself and my ambitions with the fact that in reality it was the translator's interpretation that I was working with. At the same time the interpreter was my guide into deaf culture and the gate to communication with deaf people. Also, my interviewees trusted her enough to let her be the interpreter of their stories.

2.5 Positionality

Before the interviews I thought the fact that many deaf people in Mongolia recognize me as “the foreigner who works for an international organization” might affect the way they perceive the interview situations. However, the interviewees didn't know anything about my background or work history and I could meet them mainly as a student from a foreign country. My interpreter is very well known in the deaf community and is generally seen as a positive figure who advocates for the rights of deaf people, but at the same time is partly left outside the deaf community as she is not deaf herself. Some of the interviewees asked me if I was a hearing person or a deaf person. It made me wonder how it affected the participants that both me and the interpreter represent the hearing world. Our differences in positions most probably increased the feeling of power imbalance between us and the informants, regardless of whether the differences were real- or perceived (Scheyvens, Leslie 2000; Scheyvens, Storie 2003) and this can directly affect fieldwork (England 1994). However, I was also “dis-abled” in the interview situation and became dependent on the interpreter due to my inferior knowledge of SL. This situation illustrates the ambiguous and dialogical character of field work.

One aspect that can further increase the feeling of power imbalance is age, which is an important interaction factor in Mongolia. Older people are shown respect both through language and actions. Most of the interviewees were approximately the same age as I am, only one was younger. The interpreter was oldest of all. The fact that they were younger might have made them sense a higher imbalance, which can reflect in the stories they gave and what issues were left unsaid. For example, there is a possibility that in some cases difficult issues e.g. about their families were not taken up because of respect towards us or their own parents. The fact that both myself and the interpreter are women might have had a “balancing effect” concerning power relations. However, it seemed that

the men were open about both negative and positive issues, whereas the women seemed to be more reserved. I experienced those that had met the interpreter earlier and who were also most fluent in SL as most open. This shows that their trust towards the interpreter was most likely high and they felt comfortable in telling their stories openly.

Although there were power imbalances, throughout this work I have wondered if this research could empower the people that expressed their stories. I was interviewing people who had come up from significant adversity and managed to change their lives. Some claim that taking part in a research process can be an empowering experience for the participants, particularly for those who face “significant social disadvantage”. This can happen especially in cases when researchers ask the participants to reflect on their own experiences and to understand how the issues that give them a disadvantaged position can be challenged. (Scheyvens, Leslie 2000:127) I believe that by giving words to one’s own experiences people become more self-aware of their process. As our self-awareness rises we can further act and ‘re-act’ on the issues that are raised up within us. By expressing their own stories about what had made them come out of difficult situations possibly made the interviewees reflect over strengths within themselves and in their relations as well as good strategies that they have used. As such, maybe this research has potential to contribute positively to the participants own personal development.

2.6 Trustworthiness

As narrative studies' rigour and trustworthiness are often questioned, it is especially important to follow quality assurance procedures that the research community at large agrees on. This includes choosing from the criteria in establishing trustworthiness (e.g. as listed by Lincoln and Guba 1985) and analysing the narratives for their various contexts and perspectives that construct the reality for the participants (Loh 2013). One criterion that needs to be satisfied to establish trustworthiness is credibility, which means that a true picture of what is being studied is presented. This can be done by using time to gain familiarity with the situation and environment where and about what the study is conducted (Lincoln, Guba 1985;Loh 2013;Shenton 2004). Other ways to enhance credibility are triangulation of sources and methods as well as peer or audience validation (ibid). These issues are taken into account in this study as I have experience for over a year in the field of study, used triangulation in methods (interviews, paintings and observations) and also let peers and audience that are either in the academic world or have worked with deaf people in Mongolia read and comment on my study. Their views have been used to refine the interpretations. Furthermore, “member checks” were done during the interviews to test the accuracy of the data. This was done by re-framing what the interviewees said and letting them correct or confirm the statements. Guba

and Lincoln (1985) consider member checks the single most important issue that can reinforce a study's credibility. Also, describing the process of fieldwork and data collection in as much detail as possible with personal reflections included can as well enhance trustworthiness (Shenton 2004).

2.7 Data analysis

A thematic approach was used in the data analysis. The emphasis was more on the *content* of the interviewees' stories than on *how* they told the stories. The thematic approach has been found useful for theorising across a number of cases and for finding common thematic elements in the research participants' stories (Riessman 2003). The interviews were transcribed and subsequently analysed thematically. In this study themes were observed in an inductive way and I went into the research with the intention of merely exploring deaf people's experiences about life before and after learning SL. Theories and conceptual models were found afterwards depending on the themes that came up. As the research process continued I started to observe certain themes in the stories and the sub research question about needs was included afterwards, as I found it to be interesting both empirically and analytically. In addition to other theoretical frames, the matrix on human needs by Max-Neef (1992) was used to better capture needs that arose in the individual interviews³.

3. Previous Research and Theoretical Framework

In this section previous research related to the topic of this study will be briefly introduced. Firstly some examples of living isolated with limited communication and the consequences it has on learning a language is introduced. Secondly research about social isolation, communication and deaf community is elaborated on and lastly the concept of human needs is shortly presented. These issues will be further examined in the sections 'Results' and 'Discussion'.

3.1 Growing up without a language

As mentioned earlier, very little research is done about people who grow up without a functioning language. One of the few descriptions of such a case is Susan Schaller's Book "A Man Without Words" (1992). Schaller describes in diary form the case of a deaf man, Ildefonso, who lived through childhood in a rural, isolated part of Mexico without access to models of SL. Schaller compares the case of Ildefonso with two cases of "wild children": Victor (Lane 1975), who had grown up alone in a forest, and Genie (Curtiss 1977), who had lived her life locked up in a room by her parents. They grew up, not only isolated from language, but also from any social connection with people and thus lived deprived of human interaction. Padden (1992) points out that the

³ See appendix 1 for Max-Neef's human needs matrix and Appendix 2 for an example of how it was used in the analysis.

difference with Idefonso and these children was that he most likely grew up in normal social surroundings, albeit without a language and having limited possibilities to communicate. Therefore, he must have had a concept of human interaction, “of the rhythm of humans coming together and moving apart, of sitting in space with others, of encounters taking place in a pattern of time, even if he sat aside and watched from afar” (ibid:651). This means, that contrary to Victor and Genie who seemed to be pathologically asocial, Idefonso most likely had a framework of symbolic competence. According to Padden (ibid), without having the essential symbolism already, it is difficult, maybe even impossible to grasp the point of using linguistic symbols. This suggests that deaf people who do not have access to language but have a framework of symbolism, have better basis for learning their first language as adults.

3.2 Social isolation, community and identity

Being socially isolated due to the fact that one lacks language and is thus not able to communicate well is closely linked to one’s identity and belonging to a community. Research among elderly people in general (Cornwell, Waite 2009) as well as among deaf older persons (Shaw, Robertson 2013) has shown that social isolation in the sense of having a small social network, infrequent participation in social activities, and feelings of loneliness, poses health risks and reduces quality of life. Social isolation can be seen both as social disconnectedness and as perceived isolation. Social disconnectedness here means that one lacks contact with other people as well as participation in social activities and groups. Perceived isolation, on the other hand, is seen as a subjective experience of a “shortfall in one's social resources like companionship and support”, e.g. feeling lonely instead of belongingness. (Cornell, Waite 2009:33)

Previous research shows that these types of feelings are likely to decrease when deaf people get in contact with and become a part of a deaf community (E.g. Annet de Klerk 1998, in Reagan 2009; Shaw, Robertson 2013; Scherer 2004). Deaf culture has been described as having collectivist nature, which embraces issues like “identity, loyalty, obligation, and independence” (Mindess 2006:39 in Shaw, Robertson 2013:751). This type of culture is said to motivate people to maintain networks with others who share their cultural values (Shaw, Robertson 2013). Reagan (2009) argues that the single most significant element of deaf cultural identity is communicative competence in a common shared SL.

This way a deaf community can be seen as a speech community, which means that people that are a part of it share value systems and recognized beliefs about forms and styles of communication. The concept of speech community takes as fact that language “represents, embodies, constructs and

constitutes meaningful participation in society and culture” (Morgan 2014:1). It is argued that within these communities ideology, agency and identity are actualized in society (ibid:2; Bucholtz, Hall 2004;Ochs, Schieffeling 2011). Morgan (2014:2) further states that language ideologies and social identities are constructed through speech communities since a system of symbols and interaction is shared, taught and learned. According to Cohen (1985:12) communities are identified both by their *uniqueness*, i.e. that the members have something in common with each other, and by their *difference* that distinguishes them from other groups. Morgan (2014:2) argues that, for these reasons, speech communities are one of the factors through which ideologies and identities are constructed.

Morgan’s arguments seem to imply that people who do not belong to a speech community lack well-functioning ways of constructing identity and ideology. Identity is a complex issue and it is often described as something that develops in interactive processes and one’s own experiences (E.g. Eriksson 1980, Vygotsky 1978, Hadjidakou, Nikolraizi 2007). In this sense language becomes an important factor in constructing identity as it is a crucial part of interpersonal processes and is needed in order to reflect on one’s experiences with other people. It is argued that healthy identity on the psycho-sociological level is essential for a person’s well-being, for the ability to form relationships and to accept oneself (ibid). Carl Jung (1971) sets the focus on ‘individuation’, which he sees as the ‘development of consciousness’ out of the state of identity. He defines it as: “the development of the psychological individual /.../ as a being distinct from the general, collective psychology.” He further states that individuation is therefore a “process of differentiation” and has as its goal “the development of the individual personality”. (ibid:448) According to Myers (2013) Jung argued that the main goal for humans is to adapt both to the inner and the outer worlds, where the ‘collective’ demands the person to work for individuation, and where individuation presupposes collective relationships.

The issues of identity and individuation become intriguing factors in a situation where one grows up being deaf but only surrounded by hearing people. According to Reagan (2009) the social construction of deaf identity differs from most communities in the sense that it is primarily an emic construction i.e. a construction of the participants (insider perspective). This might be in conflict with a dominant etic construction of deaf identity, which means the construction by people who are outside the community (outsider perspective). The tension between the etic and emic constructions of identity is common especially among different marginalized groups. The construction of deaf identity gives a special example of this tension as most deaf people are not born into the deaf

community but construct their deaf identity relatively late and as the etic and emic constructions of deaf identity are often highly incommensurable. (ibid)

3.3 Human Needs

The issues of deaf identity, difficulties in communication, belonging and connectedness can be linked to human needs. Manfred Max-Neef (1992:200) demonstrates the importance of focusing on needs in his following statement: “In fact, any fundamental human need that is not adequately satisfied reveals a human poverty.” He argues that needs should be understood both as deprivations and potentials. Seeing human basic needs this way makes it possible to eliminate “the vicious circle of poverty” where scarcity is seen less as a physical or material concern but predominantly as a social issue. (ibid:212)

Max-Neef (ibid:199) understands human needs as a system where the needs are “interrelated and interactive” and without hierarchies (except solely for the need to survive being the highest need). He argues that basic human needs are finite (independent of time and place) and include issues that previous research suggests have relevance for deaf people as mentioned before e.g. 'participation' and 'identity'. Further needs Max-Neef takes up include 'subsistence', 'protection', 'affection', 'understanding', 'idleness', 'creation' and 'freedom'. 'Transcendence' is sometimes also included (Cruz et al. 2009). These do not change, but the way they are satisfied (or not) can change between time and culture. The satisfiers include everything that contributes to the fulfilment of human needs by *being* (personal or collective attributes), *having* (institutions, norms, mechanisms, tools), *doing* (personal or collective actions) or *interacting* (locations and milieus). (Max-Neef 1992)

4. Results

In this section the four interviewees' life stories will be introduced. Each story is followed by a reflection of some specific issues that can be considered as impacts of learning SL as well as some needs that can be identified in their narratives. After the stories some concluding remarks concerning the results from the interviews are presented. The issues will be further discussed in the following section.

4.1 Mungun

Mungun is a thirty year old man. He grew up in the rural areas with his seven siblings and his parents. He is the fifth child in the family and his parents were herders. They lived a traditional nomadic lifestyle, moving a few times per year with all their belongings, the cattle and their home,

the Mongolian “ger” (a felt tent). He learnt SL when he was twenty years old after moving to the capital. Mungun is currently married and works as a carpenter.

Mungun was hearing when he was born and became deaf when he was very young. He has never understood how he became deaf. One of his older brothers is also deaf and his mother used to tell him that he became deaf because he “*followed his brother*”. Mungun tells what happened when he asked about how he became deaf:

“So when I asked my mom she never replied. They said I was hearing and then when I grew up I was just like deaf. It was very hurtful and I had negative self-esteem.”

Mungun's brother was sent to the capital to go to the deaf school when he was ten years old, but Mungun stayed at home and worked as a herder. Mungun tells about his brother and about his disappointment of not being able to go to school:

“And he came from the school in [the] summer. /.../ That time he shared [with] me what [he] was learning [in] school, learning sign language and [he's] reading. And then I really wanted to learn and study. My mother wanted me to study in the deaf school, but my father didn't want [that]. He wanted me to be a herder. So I was disappointed and accepted [it] and I grew up being a herder. So I was so bored herding livestock. That's my growing up.”



Mungun's painting 1: "Riding horse, herding livestock. And we had cattle and sheep. So this [is] my beautiful birth place. /.../ I was herding livestock and I was really good in looking, but because I could not hear I had no communication and I [didn't] know sign language so I was disappointed with that."

In his first painting about life before knowing SL Mungun painted his birth place, their family's ger, cattle, a pile of food for the animals and a horse that is tied up. He also painted nature and he tells that the people in the picture are his father and himself holding hands. He tells about his family:

"[There was] good and bad together. And I wanted to study but, my family did not support me, so then I [was] disappointed. I was rebellious to my father and not doing good work. /.../ Before, my parents always hit me and the conversation was very bad. My mother hit my brother and I didn't like my parents. I [felt] hate."

He tells about difficulties in communication with his parents:

"I wish my parents had been warm people who could communicate with us and care for us, but they were not. They basically said 'no', 'don't' and they often hit us. So when I was a small boy I was playing and sometimes when I played wrong then they never explained to me why I did wrong, but they often hit me. So because of that I really hated."

When Mungun was fifteen years old his father passed away and he told us that consequently:

“The pressure was gone. There was nobody who hit and pressured. Then later on I missed him so much and when he died I thought OK, he's gone and [I was] quite relieved, but then later on I really missed him. I wanted him alive.”

He often got into fights with his siblings and his mother and he hit them:

“And then I felt bad, never felt good, it felt bad. It [was] very disappointing and I fell down and my heart was very dark. And that time nothing was correct and right and righteous. No success. And I was continually disapprov[ing] myself and had low self-confidence.”

He tells about his perceptions of his social milieu:

“I thought the people who were speaking look[ed] so nice and I was a bit jealous. There was no deaf person like me around where I lived, so when they were talking and conversing I looked at them and was very jealous. They were talking. I wanted to hear what they were talking. What were they speaking? I really wanted to know, but I couldn't be with them and I was very bored, lonely. And sometimes when I involved in the conversation and tried to sign and people didn't understand and looked frowning at me and I was embarrassed. /.../ So, if I met a new hearing person I couldn't converse. I couldn't communicate with them.”

“Sometimes my parents' friends came to visit. My parents [were] embarrassed that we were signing to them and my mother and father told me that you should learn to speak, you should try to say a word - don't sign!”

When Mungun had problems he tried to “ignore and forget”. He also tells:

“When I had problems and discouragement I went out, rode my horse with my friends. Running around, galloping across the steppe. That [I] really enjoyed. /.../Meeting my friends, close friends and enjoying. Play times. Those are the good times [that] helped me manage.”

Mungun tells about more things that he enjoyed: *When I saw the nature, beautiful mountains, beautiful sky. That was [a] really nice feeling. I really enjoyed.”*

“I was so disappointed being Deaf, but sometimes I forgot. During celebration, Tsagaan Sar, I was really happy. But other normal days I was disappointed, you know, up and down.”

When Mungun was twenty years he learned SL after moving to the capital from the countryside. He found a deaf church through two deaf people that he met when he was working as a carpenter:

“Then we found [the] deaf church, were able to meet deaf people and that's the time I was excited meeting so many deaf people. /.../ And that's when everything began. People were signing. There was teaching and I was so interested, I wanted to learn sign. Deaf people who work in the church taught us Mongolian language, written language, maths, basic maths. So then I came to church often and learned God's work. /.../ I learned sign language so fast and I [was] continually learning writing and reading. That was my exciting time. And before that: no school, no success, nothing! I could imagine that life was very bad, but after twenty I was able to communicate with deaf people and it was very enjoyable. It was totally contrast[ing] life.”



Mungun's painting 2. After learning SL: “This is the church and people who attend church because they are believers. /.../ It's about my life related with the church life and deaf community and the church.”

In his second painting Mungun illustrates the deaf church and how becoming a part of the church community was the biggest changes in his life after learning SL. The people on the picture are other deaf people that belong to the same church and the building is the church itself. He tells what he thought about when he was painting:

“It was very nice thinking about God's word and good fellowship at the church. It's very beautiful. /.../ Because sun shines beautifully and I don't like darkness, I love light, that's why I painted like this.”

He continues: *“The important thing in my life is church /.../. If there was no church, no community, no conversation, then nothing [that] I belong to. But at the church I belong to the church community, to deaf Christians.”*

“I became a Christian and I went to church and continually studied [the] Bible, and I want to share [the] good news to many people. So that many people would be saved. So I love to work and continually serving the church.”

Mungun compares his life before and after learning SL:

“Now I understand. I have ideas, thoughts, and things are very different. Maybe before I learnt sign language there was nothing, no development in cognitive development. But now I can reason. I can have ideas. I can tell my ideas to people /.../ I learned in conversation and I even learned moral codes and learned not to steal and what is right and what is wrong. I can distinguish and make wise choices.”

“So when I talk with Deaf people. It's so nice. I'm soooo positive and happy and joyful, like bubbling, bubbling joyful. Before: no school, no communication, couldn't communicate, [I was] not happy. But now I'm so interested in receiving new information, new knowledge. Communicating with deaf people is very exciting. I'm so happy. /.../ I love to hear ideas, interesting news, recent information, something that really catches my attention. I love to hear and converse.”

“Before: no school. Then my life was not good. Education really helps my cognitive development and human development.”

Mungun tells how learning SL affected him:

“Before, we can say, my life was not so successful. There was no communication, it was so boring, lonely and [I had] low self-esteem and [I was] disappointed. But now I love to converse with deaf people, to learn, love to study /.../ Now I can say, “I can be successful” because I can communicate in sign, I can communicate with hearing people through written language. [I'm] so very confident to live and work. /.../ And now I study and I can say: “Oh, I can be successful, I have a talent, I can work. /.../ I love the work too, to support my family”.

“Before, I had no meaning of life and I couldn't have ideas. Just bored, just work just life, but then I studied, I learned, I have work and I'm learning God's word, so my life is different now.”

Mungun ends his story by telling what he thinks about deaf people who have not yet learned SL:

“There are many deaf people like me who have not learnt sign language, who are not educated in the countryside. And I believe that everybody, every deaf, can learn sign language, can be educated. So I want them to be successful like me. Before, my life was so boring and I'm sure there are so many deaf people in [the] countryside. So boring, so lonely, no sign language. So, I have [a] heart for those people. And I wish they would...I don't want them to grow old like that, because it's no good life, no fun. And I wish they could go to school or come to deaf community, learn sign language and be educated. So I wish good luck and success for them”

4.1.1 From hate to love

In his story Mungun takes up several issues that are linked to basic human needs according to Max-Neef (1992)⁴. When Mungun talks about his childhood, the feelings he describes include being bored, lonely, disappointed, jealous, embarrassed and hateful. He also said that his ‘heart was dark’ and that he had ‘low self-esteem’. He most often links these feelings to not being able to communicate, which shows how it affected his view of himself and made him be disconnected from others. Mungun takes up positive feelings in connection to being with friends, the nature and celebrations, which shows the link to the need for ‘affection’, that is satisfied e.g. through personal experiences of having friendships as well as relationships with nature (ibid). In Mungun’s earlier experiences these issues were expressed as positive parts of his childhood. This was also the case for others, as we shall see later.

In Mungun’s explanations about life after learning SL, feelings like being excited, happy and loving are emphasized and he links them to learning, belonging to a community, working and faith in God. Mungun states that after learning SL his self-esteem, that is linked to the needs of ‘affection’ and ‘identity’, improved. The sense of disconnectedness is also related to the need of ‘identity’, which is satisfied e.g. through the sense of belonging and having a language, group or religion (ibid).

Mungun shows that this need was better satisfied for him after learning SL as he now belongs to the deaf church community. Based on Cohen's (1985:12) idea of communities Mungun's church community can certainly be identified both by its *uniqueness*, i.e. that the members have deafness

⁴ See Appendix 1 for Max-Neef’s human needs matrix and Appendix 2 for the matrix based on needs captured in Mungun’s story.

and being Christian as something in common with each other, and by its *difference* i.e. how these factors distinguish it from other groups in the society. In this way this specific community can be a setting where ideologies and identity are being constructed (Morgan 2014). The need of 'identity' is furthermore satisfied through having work and being able to commit and actualize oneself (Max-Neef 1992), which Mungun also takes up as important parts of his life. So, in addition to enrichment in the life of *feelings*, there seems to be enrichment in the sphere of *doing*.

Belonging to a church and a community is also linked to the need of 'participation', which is connected to being dedicated, having duties as well as interacting and sharing (ibid). Mungun also tells about his personal development and that it affects his agency as he can share his ideas with others and make wise choices. This is tightly linked both to 'participation', but also to the need of 'understanding' that is connected to having critical conscience and being able to analyse and interpret (ibid). He also takes up issues that are linked to the needs of 'freedom', which includes autonomy and self-esteem, and 'creation' that is linked to having abilities, working and being autonomous (ibid). He can provide for his family and he feels successful and confident. He also explains that intellectually his life is now more interesting and says that these issues “help [his] human development”. Thus, the development of the *thinking* capacities that make up of human's needs is also revealed.

When looking at what Mungun describes it cannot be ignored what a central point spirituality and transcendence have become in his life as he keeps on taking up “God” in his story. His connection to the divine clearly brings great meaning in his life. He tells that he is studying God's word and expresses a motivation to work so “that other people would be saved”. It was Max-Neef's initial intention to include the “search for transcendence” in his model (Max-Neef 1992). Some argue that he felt that the time was not ripe then as it was unaccepted to take up spirituality and it would have been too daring to have it as a part of his model (Woiwode 2013, Drekonja-Kornat 2001). Max-Neef (in Cruz et al 2009:2024) later argued that “humanity has been developing the needs mentioned previously” and that now 'transcendence' is identified as one of “fundamental socio-universal needs”, which means that its fulfilment is “always desirable for all”.

4.2 Nara

Nara is a 22-year old woman who grew up in the rural areas with her parents and two younger siblings. When she was 10-years old she attended third grade in Ulaanbaatar deaf school for a short while, but moved soon back to the countryside and went to a hearing school as her mother didn't

want her to attend deaf school. She stayed in the hearing school until she was 17-years old. At that time she was sent back to the deaf school and started to learn SL.

When Nara tells about her life before learning SL she concentrates on life at the hearing school. She does not know why her mother didn't let her continue in the deaf school. She says:

“I don't know what happened. I don't know. My mother decided I should not go to deaf school, so she took me away. /.../ She felt I could learn better so she took me to the hearing school”

While she had been in deaf school she learned very little SL due to the short time she was there. Her parents worked as herders on the countryside. She lived in the dormitory of the hearing school that was situated in a small rural town. She tells how it was for her to come to the school from the 3rd grade in the deaf school in Ulaanbaatar:

“I thought this would be another deaf school. Everybody was talking. /.../ I [thought]: this is not somewhere I belong. And I felt the teacher would start using sign language or manual alphabet but [the] teacher was speaking all the time. I was really surprised and I was a small girl and couldn't remember where I was, where I came. Is it countryside? Is this home?”

Nara drew a picture of being in the hearing school when asked to paint about life before learning SL. She doesn't want her pictures to become public, but we used them in the interview situation. She drew two students sitting by a desk and a teacher standing by the blackboard. On top of one of the student's head she wrote “me” and on the other she wrote her friend's name. She drew the two of them also outside in the school yard together and smiling as well as on a third spot with their mouths downwards watching two other children playing basketball. Nara points at the picture she drew and says:

“She's my teacher who's standing next to the blackboard, talking and pointing at me. I'm deaf, I have no idea, I [don't] understand. So during brake time I liked to play with the kids. The kids played basketball, but the hearing people would tease me. They said, ‘oh you can't speak, you have no language, you can't speak’. So they didn't feed me [the] ball, they teased me, they didn't want to play with me. I was so hurt.”

Nara tells that her friend she drew knew some finger spelling in SL and often helped her to write, and tried to explain some things that the teacher had said. They often communicated in written language. She describes the feeling of not being able to understand what is going on:

“That's the teacher, who is hearing and talking and teaching and writing. So I often copied from my friend. I had no understanding, no explanation of the lecture. [The] teacher didn't know sign language, I didn't know sign language. And [in] physical education when they said, 'oh you need to go there and do this, run', I had no idea what he was talking about. [It was] often disappointing.”

Nara tells about living in the dormitory:

“While I was at the dormitory, [in] my room, [the other children] said... they often scolded me, that I was a stealer, or... I cried, it was hurtful”

“And then during lunch, kids were all sitting together, laughing and chatting, but I was so lonely. And I didn't want to go to the dormitory and I told my mom and I showed my mom the bruises I got from the kids and I told her. So I opened up to her”.

Nara tells that her mother was supportive and told the teachers in the school when Nara expressed about difficulties with the other children. Some of Nara's relatives lived in the same town as her school was in. They often helped her with school subjects and when Nara found a book about SL some of the relatives tried to help her to learn it. She tells about her relatives:

“They don't like to neglect deaf, because I'm deaf. They want to see me succeed and improved. And they are very supportive.”

Nara continued in the hearing school until she was 17 years old. At that time a local government official came to talk to her mother and recommended that Nara should go back to the deaf school. When her mother heard that the school receives even late learners she agreed to send Nara back and Nara moved to the Ulaanbaatar deaf school dormitory.

When I asked Nara to paint a picture about life after learning SL she drew a picture from the deaf school. She drew many children in the classroom as well as outside in the yard, sitting on benches or playing basketball. Nara tells about her drawing:

“This is school number 29 and this is the sign language teacher who thought us ABC. /.../ I started to learn ABC, it's quite interesting, finger miming alphabet. And we were so happy. /.../ After class we are playing outside. All girls and boys are together playing basketball and it was really good. And I started to become friends [with] one of the girls.”

She continues to tell about the deaf school:

“I went to deaf dormitory and when dormitory kids talked so many different sign languages it was so amazing! I wanted to learn more and I was so happy /.../ There I have three girlfriends with whom I really like to talk, talk in sign language. They thought me sign, different unique signs that deaf communicate [with].”

She tells about the differences of being in the hearing and the deaf school:

“It was very different. At the hearing school they don't know sign language, but deaf school we all have one another /.../ And I'm so satisfied and content with being around deaf people.”

“I had a communication problem. But now, with deaf, I can communicate. It's the communication [that] is very different. Being with hearing I had problems. My heart was not peaceful. But then, being with deaf I really enjoyed. [I was] content.”

Nara tells about new things she learned and participated in:

“There are so many things they thought us: living in the dorm, being polite and using the bathroom, cleaning for the next person to use. So living in the dormitory there are a lot of rules and I learned a lot. You need to be clean and after toilet you need to wash your hands. Step by step I learned everything.”

“Being with deaf and playing and acting drama, it was so good. /.../ And I participated in the act and drama and dance and all. And we won first prize at the deaf school. /.../ They said that I was a pretty girl who was a good a dancer. So I was very happy.”

“Now I'm studying at the rehabilitation centre and learning to do bakery. Tsetsge is our teacher who taught us how to cook bread and cookies and pastries. /.../ I like [it]. And she explained and now I understand. She informed us: you need to follow the ingredients and size and then cooking and baking, temperature, everything. So I'm so happy doing this.”

Nara tells how it is for her now compared to before: *“It’s very different. Before I often struggled with communication, but now, with deaf, I am very confident. Communication is very clear and correct.”*

4.1.2 From not belonging to participation

Nara expresses the feelings of being ‘hurt’ and that her heart was ‘not peaceful’ when she was in the hearing school, compared to the feelings of being ‘happy’, ‘satisfied’, ‘content’ and ‘enjoying’ that she experienced later. Her experience of ‘not belonging’ in the hearing school shows a sense of social disconnectedness and perceived isolation. Nara was also confused as a result of not receiving information due to communication problems. She expresses both the feeling of isolation as well as low self-esteem in her first painting. This is in line with other findings on that communication problems can lead to feelings of failure, isolation and a low self-esteem (Annet de Klerk 1998, in Reagan 2009:58) as well as to the sense of disconnectedness (Shaw, Robertson 2013). Fortunately during the difficult times Nara had supportive persons close to her, both in school as well as in her family. Having even one ‘significant other’ (a person that one has a close and positive relationship with) when being in the middle of adversities has been shown to have major positive effect on the development and well-being of children (e.g. Masten et al. 1990).

When Nara tells about the deaf school she expresses a sense of belonging that she lacked earlier in the hearing school. Previous research shows that the feelings of isolation and failure are likely to decrease or even disappear when deaf people get in contact with and begin functioning within the deaf community (Annet de Klerk 1998, in Reagan 2009:58; Shaw, Robertson 2013; Scherer 2004). Nara seems to sense ‘belonging’ as soon as she arrives at the deaf school, even before she had learned SL. This goes against Reagan’s (2009) thesis that you cannot become a member of deaf community just because you are deaf and that you need to be able to communicate with SL in order to belong. For Nara it seemed that just being in the same space and connecting with “similar others” relieved the stress she had felt before. Later on Nara shares a language with the others and gets further connected to them. She tells that the children were helping each others to learn SL and expresses the importance of language for the feeling of belonging. This reveals that Nara’s need for ‘identity’ was met as it is satisfied through the sense of belonging and self-esteem (*being*) as well as *having* language, reference groups and roles (Max-neef 1992). The *interactions* for the need ‘identity’ occur in everyday settings that one belongs to (*ibid*), which for Nara is the deaf school and dormitory.

From Nara's story further needs can be identified as becoming more fulfilled that seemed to enrich her life. For example, realization of the need 'participation' comes up in several of Nara's descriptions. According to Max-Neef (ibid) it is linked to the satisfiers of *having* duties, responsibilities and rights. Nara often associates it to situations where she has learned new things or can be creative (e.g. learning rules and having responsibilities in the dormitory as well as taking part in sports, dancing and drama). By starting to learn SL and new skills in the school, baking classes and the dormitory also the needs for 'creation' and 'understanding' start to be met. Similarly to 'identity' these issues are also linked to self-esteem (ibid). For Nara the issues of how she sees *herself* (self-esteem, confidence) in relation to *others* (identity, belonging) seem to be at the core of what became different in her life after learning SL.

4.3 Tuya

Tuya is a 30-years old woman and has grown up in rural areas with her parents and her siblings. She became deaf after an illness when she was 7 years old. She got married to a hearing man when she was 25 years old and has a four-year old son. Her husband is currently living in the countryside with his parents and Tuya's son stays with her parents in another part of the country. She had just moved to the capital and started to learn SL one month before the interview. She has been able to communicate with her closest family by lip-reading and has learned to read and write. During the interview she is mostly lip-reading and signs are used as a support in the communication. Tuya chooses to write instead of painting as it is a way of communication that she is used to.

She tells about how she became deaf and how she learnt to read and write:

“When I was seven years old - that time in my class [we were] taught this old Mongolian script and then I got ill and was unconscious for three days. And for a month after that I was very weak and unable to walk. /.../ And starting from ten years I started learning letters one by one and I self-taught the script, Cyrillic script. So I came to school and my writing has improved. I can't do cursive writing, but I can do script.”

She tells about how she communicates:

“Everything I receive through my eyes. I lip-read. If I close my eyes I don't understand anything. If it is dark then I can't understand anything. Everything I understand through my eyes. /.../ I was able to communicate with my family members, with my father, my mother and siblings, but outside of my family I couldn't communicate with people.”

Tuya had started to sketch something on a paper when I asked her to paint about her life before learning SL. She chose, however, to write instead of painting. She doesn't want pictures of her texts to be published. Following is the translation of what she wrote.

I DREAM TO GET HEALTHY AND EVERYDAY I SIT HOME ALONE. NOW I HAVE ACCEPTED MY SITUATION AND I WANT TO HELP OTHER PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND BECOME A HUMANITARIAN WORKER. THAT'S MY DREAM

Tuya's text 1: She tells about what she was thinking of when she wrote it:

"I thought [of] myself. And I was hearing when I was a child. I could hear, but now I can't hear. Then I remember[ed] that I stayed home alone."

She tells about how she felt at that time:

"So bad, kind of dark. I didn't go out [from] home, didn't communicate or meet people."

"I stay[ed] home all the time. /.../ It [was] very very difficult. I couldn't study, it was very hard. When my parents [went] to work I stayed at home. I was quite and stay[ed] home alone. /.../ I sew or just sat. Did nothing. Thinking I would be... thinking my hearing would be improved. /.../ [I was] dreaming. 'No class, no school, I can't study, I can't go back to school' - that's what I was thinking."

She tells that her dreams about becoming hearing made it more difficult for her. She says:

I went to see many different doctors. They all said: 'yes, you can improve; your hearing can be improved'. That's why I didn't come to UB early. I was waiting [that] my hearing would be better eventually. So, often [I went] to acupuncture, I received different treatments in order to improve. I thought I will improve, so that I don't need to be with deaf people."

When asked about her family and how living with her parents was she simply says:

"It's ok. Kind of average. Not good, not bad, but average."

She tells that she enjoyed cooking and sewing and that she worked in a pharmacy just before she came to Ulaanbaatar. She tells about how it was for her to work there:

“It was a bit difficult. There were so many hearing people, we could not communicate. It was very difficult. /.../ Somebody I knew helped me to find this job, but then I wanted to learn more, so I quit from my work and came to study here.”

She tells that a government official from the education department in her province told her, during a training that she was sent to, about the possibility to study in a rehabilitation centre in the capital. She said that thinking of being with other deaf people helped her at that point.

“I [could] see [that] my age is adding up and I'm not educated. I wanted to learn with deaf people. [That's why] I came up here.”

She moved to Ulaanbaatar by herself and tells about coming to town:

“[I] managed myself. I know how to count money and I know how to buy tickets and I know [how to] follow [the] ticket seat and to take the bus. Even though I cannot communicate I know sitting in the bus and [how] to come.”

Tuya is then asked to draw or write about her life after she moved to Ulaanbaatar. This is what she writes:

NOW I HAVE MANY FRIENDS AND IT'S SO NICE

Tuya's text 2: “Now I can communicate deaf people who [are] like me and it's so nice. /.../ Since I'm deaf. I remember, I didn't have a friend before and now I have a friend. And she's deaf and I'm deaf and it's so nice.”

She tells about the difference between the time on the countryside and the time in Ulaanbaatar:

“It [was] very difficult. Could not hear, could not understand, but now I can communicate [with] persons like me. [I feel] very peaceful now.”

“I was sitting, sitting, sitting alone and no communication with people. But this one (she points at her text 2) I can communicate with people and I can understand.”

“Before, I can see my life was in darkness, but now I can see my life in the light.”

She tells more about her life now:

“I want to learn everything. /.../ I often see everything and memorize everything. /.../ I was thinking to study computer class and my writing is not good and my English is not good, so I took the bakery class.”

She tells that now that she is in town she likes to work. When asked about who she enjoys being with, she answers: *“The deaf. It's very difficult to communicate with hearing people. It's hard.”*

She tells about her dreams and plans:

“I think if I learn sign language I can be a teacher for deaf children. It's my dream to become a teacher. /.../ I'm thinking that after I graduate [from] my school, I want to work in UB and live here. There are very few deaf people in the countryside and there are no workplaces there, so I would like to work here. I want to live independently.”

4.3.1 From darkness to light

Tuya is in the beginning of her transition to being able to share a language with other deaf people. In her story she concentrates on loneliness and being disconnected from others before she came to Ulaanbaatar. As soon as she explains about her life now, she mentions having friends and that it feels ‘nice’ and ‘peaceful’. This shows that her need of ‘participation’ and ‘affection’ are starting to be more satisfied through sharing and interacting (*doing*) and friendships (*having*) (Max-Neef 1992). What is striking in her story is how she expresses her will to learn, which points towards the thirst of ‘understanding’. She also expresses that she is longing for ‘freedom’ as she wants to live independently. The need for freedom can be satisfied through assertiveness and boldness (*ibid*), which Tuya demonstrated already by leaving her job and coming alone to town. However, she yearns for even more freedom in the sense of having autonomy and working in her dream job.

Another factor that Tuya seems to have dealt with is construction of deaf identity. Her dreams about hearing again were passivizing her, and she tells about her wish of not needing to be with other deaf people at that time. It shows that she had not accepted her deafness and possibly that was the case with the people around her as well. Previous research suggests that family background, and particularly the parents, have a significant influence on the deaf identity of an individual, especially in cases where a deaf person becomes marginalized (e.g Bat-Chava 2000; Maxwell-McChaw 2001). Tuya says that only when she accepted the fact that she could not become hearing again, did she take the step to move to Ulaanbaatar to study. For Tuya, becoming a part of the deaf community

gave her the opportunity to positively strengthen her identity and construct meaningful participation in society.

4.4 Itgil

Itgil is a 30-year old man. He grew up on the countryside in a military family. They moved many times due to his father's work in the army. He has an older brother, two younger brothers and a younger sister. Itgil learned SL when he was 18-years old.

During the interview Itgil paints several paintings.



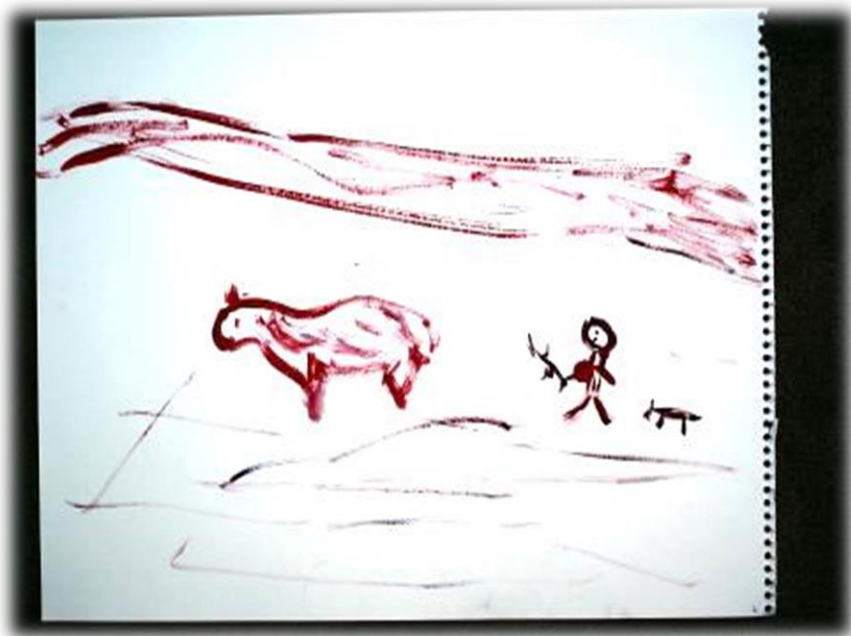
Itgil's painting 1: *"This is the place where I was born. And then we moved with the entire herd, and moved with a big Russian truck to [another] aimag with a lot of high mountain area."*



Itgil's painting 2: "This is the area. The mountains are so beautiful, but there were so many different animals that I was so amused to look at and wonder."



Itgil's painting 3: "So these are veeery big mountains. There are a lot of wild livestock and birds. This is a very nice big tree. It's a biiiiiig tree. This is a very nice big river. That's... (he points at the person in the picture) I'm bored. I wanted to swim. And I did swim in the river. There were soooo many different, different, different wild berries [that] grew in the area. I ate them, I swam in the rivers. It was like daily life. No communication, but I walked around, beautiful nature"



Itgil's painting 4. "So this is me being bored. Bring[ing] the livestock home and walking around."

Itgil tells about his everyday life:

“And there was no communication. Just visiting family and just eating and herding livestock and sometimes our family invited us to come. /.../ I couldn't communicate with them. In the evening they always said: ‘Why are you herding in the evening? There is a very scary animal that [can] bite you’. And my family tried to tell me that there is a danger. I didn't care. We used to ride camels all the time. I was riding a camel to my father one night and my father hit me because I was travelling at night and they thought there is danger. So I cried. Even the next morning I was angry that he was beating me and I went to the mountains where there is a nice place and then I went herding livestock.”



Itgil's painting 5: “This is made of stone for the animals (Itgil points at the picture). This is me [being] bored/.../ Every time I got bored I had very big dreams, like riding a horse and driving very fast across the steppe. So every day I had the dream about horse riding or shooting or even becoming a general. /.../ I stayed at home and I was thinking, I was dreaming, I wanted to learn to shoot and I wanted to learn to drive very fast on a bumpy road. I was dreaming of driv[ing] a tank. That was my dream. I mostly stayed [at] home and got really bored. And people were talking, I didn't understand. No communication, nothing”



Itgil's painting 6: He tells when he was herding "the strongest" animals, a cross breed between a yak and cattle: "I rode them to herd. There was this small child that I met there. And then I took his shoes. He was running. Then the next day I was hit by my father for stealing his shoes. Because his shoes were very small I couldn't fit my feet anyway, but then I hit my father. So when I hit my father I felt hate."



Itgil's painting 7: "I was angry at this livestock because my father hit me. And then I got all this stress. [I was] hitting this yak and relieving my pain and anger, but that yak died because I was hitting, and hitting so bad. So I dug the ground and hid him. My parents said: 'what happened to that, what happened to one livestock?' and I didn't tell. So one day I took my clothes and I ran away from home to a friend. Then I couldn't find a lot of food, so I visited my friend. So no communication. It was just like 'father', 'mother', 'good' or 'bad', 'eat'. Those were the basic communication signs."



Itgil's painting 8: "There was a very beautiful big herd of wild mountain goats. /.../ In this area there were sooo many mountain goats. They were running and running. It was very beautiful. Very interesting thing that I saw. Almost a hundred of them circling around and running around and circling, but on top there were big vultures circling on top, but under this all the mountain goats were circling./.../ I [had] never seen that phenomena. It was quite strange. The next morning there was nothing. There were no vultures in the air, no mountain goats. I often wonder what was happening. Why were they running in a circle? Almost a hundred of them running in a circle."

Later during the interview he takes up the same situation as he describes in painting 8:

"You know I was very upset with my father and very angry and hurt, but seeing the interesting nature and beautiful phenomena was very good. Because I [was] hit by my father, so I hit my brother. /.../ But then I saw the livestock circling around and the vultures circling up in the air.. it was very unique. When I saw that, all my anger to my father was gone. /.../ That was a very unique experience that I'll never forget in my heart and my mind."

Itgil takes one of the earlier paintings (number 2) up and continues to tell:

"There was a time I wanted to die. I wanted to be a soldier. I was very angry at that point, I was very upset. I had a very hard feeling and I was crying and running to this water and I was angry at my father for hitting me. And [I was] thinking, sitting next to the river. And then the next day I

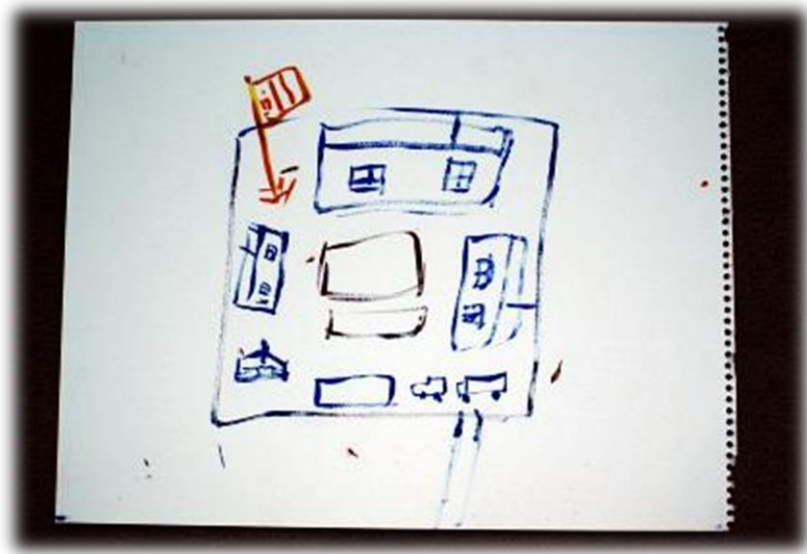
forgot [the anger]. Seeing the beautiful nature, looking at the sun and the livestock, looking at these different animals, marmots. And looking at night I could see through the woods. /.../ There were very nice stars and then there was a shooting star. Then, the next morning I was herding my livestock.”

Itgil wanted to become a soldier and when he was 16 years old he got to wear the soldiers' uniforms and spend time with them:

“The soldier's clothing, I liked to wear them, just like being one of the soldiers. The general of that army agreed that I could stay with them and be just like one of the soldiers. I ate with the soldiers; saw all the vehicles and everything. One evening, seven o'clock, there was some kind of celebration and they were just marching and during that march they called me and they [had] a long speech and brought me to the front. They gave me lot of gifts and I didn't understand, so I took the gifts and I asked my mom: 'what was this?'. And I think my mother told: 'you are the first deaf soldier at a border.”

With the soldiers Itgil started to learn new things like disassembling guns and throwing grenades. He tells that he was good in wrestling and once he became second in a competition:

“[The] reward they gave me... there was some colourful paper, with some candy and food. I ate the candy but that colourful paper I gave to my parent's. 'Oh', they said, 'this was good, good’”. Itgil laughs and continues: “- It was money.”

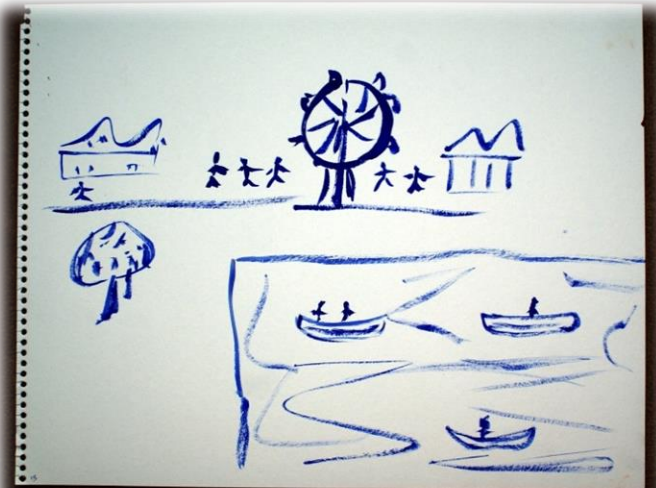
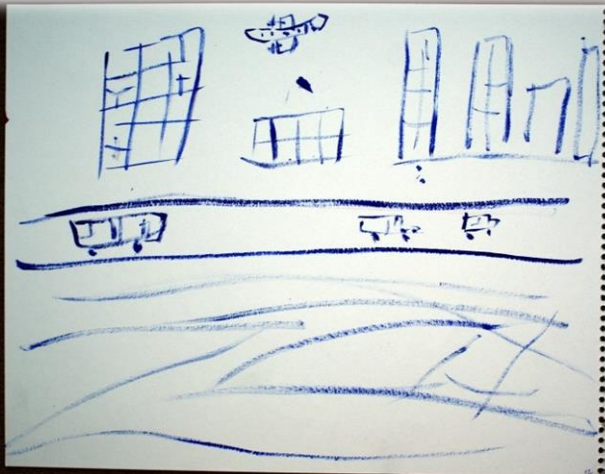


Itgil's painting 9: "This was the boarder soldiers' army area and that was the kitchen. This is where I stayed at the ger with my family and that's where soldiers eat and sleep. And in the middle that's the training area where the soldiers march. And that's a flag. So this is the area where I mostly grew up and spent lots of time."

Itgil tells about what gave him joy at the army base:

"Driving and walking with the soldiers. I was very surprised to see the soldiers, all the routine, the marching. I was very surprised. I liked to see them. And there were a lot of wedding ceremonies and feasts and all different things. And then someone's wife became pregnant. I thought, because she ate a lot of food during the wedding her...she got a big stomach. That's what I thought."

In 1998 Itgil flew to the capital for the first time to visit his relatives. Painting 10 tells about that experience.



Itgil's painting 10: "I came with my mom and I [was] walking around the city. I was really amused! So many people! I was so happy /.../ My brother took me to eat khuusuur. [For] a long time I [had] eaten only a lot of meat with bone and soup. But then I came to UB and was eating this khuusuur and different types of stir fried... very different soup. I never met deaf people that time, but my relative took me around the city. I could not communicate with hearing people. There were so [many] buildings and apartments. I had never seen a toilet. I had never seen TV. Everything was new to me. And I thought it was drinking water, but then it was the sink and they taught me: 'this is the toilet and this is the sink, you wash the hands, this is the bath you can take a shower'. /.../ I was playing with children's toys and looking at a toy car. I didn't understand then, it didn't make sense. And when I [went] out from the apartment, I [got] lost. I was shouting and my relative took me, held on to me. So everything was new and amusing to me"

Itgil tells that when he went back to the countryside he felt very bored again:

"Then we met the big general, he gave me medals too and more stars. So every time I got more medals and more stars. And I [was] really bored and I wanted to go to these buildings and [the] city. I was so bored with the livestock; I didn't want to go there."

Itgil explains that his relatives in Ulaanbaatar thought that he should live in a community and his parents realized that he was bored on the countryside, so in 2000 he moved to the capital. He tells about life in town:

"[My relatives] gave me food and clothing. I never got work and needed to get money. I was truly bored and I never met deaf people"

Itgil paints about when he got in contact with SL:



Itgil's painting 11: "So this was the sunrise centre of [the] church and this is my mother bringing me there. And I went there and I met this [lady] and my mother talked with her. So, then I was telling her how good I am a soldier and I'm good at [using a] gun and, since I'm a soldier, they gave me a sign-name. (Itgil shows the sign). That's my first sign I received. At the church, I met the teachers who thought me the alphabet and names of clothes, names of things. So these two are the ones with whom I really communicated with every day, and learned 'father', 'mother', 'boot' and 'clothes' /.../ So I learned the names of things. They thought me."

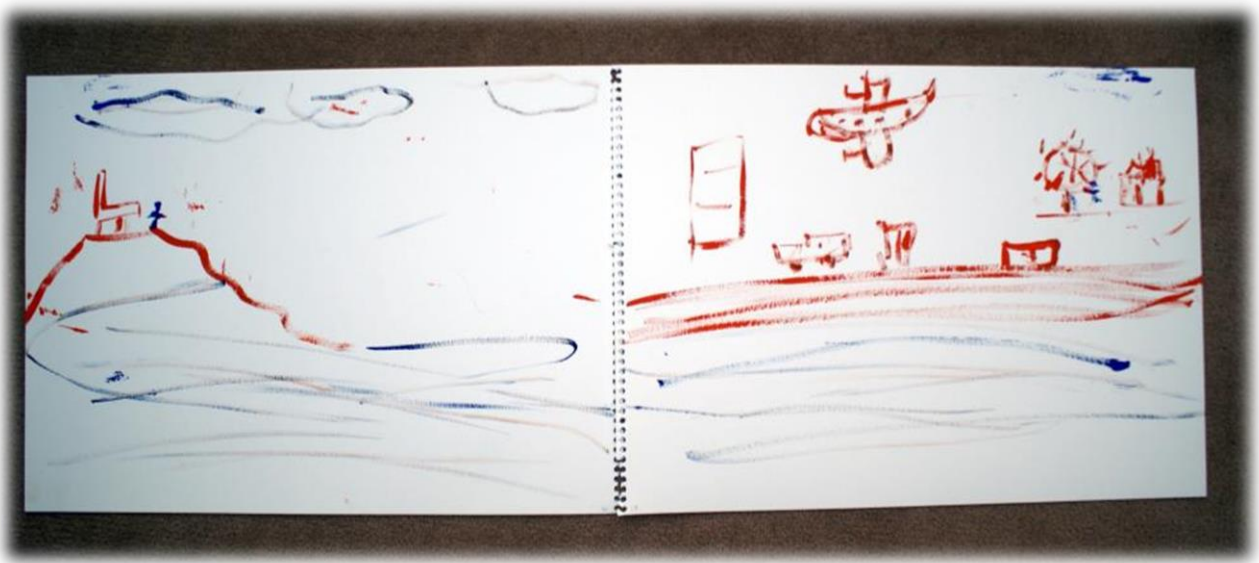
Itgil tells about how he got to the deaf church:

"My mother's friend knew. She's a believer. /.../ So my mother's friend helped me, she thought it's good that I could be part of [the] deaf church and the deaf community. So if my mother [had not] helped me...I wouldn't [have been] able to find deaf people by myself. I see God's hand on this situation now."



Itgil's painting 12: "I met sooo many deaf people. Learning sign language and seeing the sign was so interesting. Seeing their facial expressions. Since I couldn't talk like them, I couldn't really communicate. [The teacher] explained to the deaf people that I'm learning sign language. So they accepted me and they talked very slow to me and then I learned [at] church. And then slowly my heart was opened up and [I was] able to express and learn."

For Itgil learning new things didn't automatically translate into joy. He said that when he understood that it was wrong how he had been treated earlier, he got very angry. He painted a picture about that.



Itgil's painting 13: "So this is the city. This is Zaisan mountain. That is me. And I went and walked on top of the mountain. So when it was very difficult, I had no school, no communication...everything was on top of my throat and I did not learn, no school and I was illiterate. I was so angry at that point [when] I understood what was happening a lot before. So I thought that in the future I will get my revenge from those who were hurting me."

"When I learned to communicate with deaf people they cheated me. I sold livestock, but they didn't give me the money. So [the teachers] taught me 'there are some people who can cheat you'. So in the world, /.../ there are good and bad people. It's everywhere. Even foreign people can be good and bad, so you need to be careful. So I learned. I was too late to learn about everything."

Itgil tells that his two teachers thought him both about social issues, for example that it is important to communicate in a relationship with a woman, and about practical issues like how to use a mobile phone and get work. He also described issues that he learned in the deaf church and links it with the special experience that he had with the mountain goats and vultures:

"I learned from the church, that everything you had from growing up God has forgiven you. And then this circling in the mountain -sheep and the birds- it's like circling, circling and, like, stirring my sin away. God is stirring the sin away. So I can see this was God's plan and I understand".

Through the deaf community Itgil got the possibility to participate in sports competitions. Through them he got to travel to different parts of the world e.g. to Russia and Kazakhstan. He tells what he learned during those trips:

“The human is same everywhere. That's what I learned. /.../ I went to these different countries. Being a part of these competitions I have learned [that] people who have very good education and people who are illiterate, like me, it's the same. Humans are the same, we can communicate, we can talk. I met Australians and Kazakhs and there are different cultures, but when I look closely, everybody is the same.”

“Human kind is the same. So it's important to support one another, deaf and hearing people. It's important to support. And God has created everybody.”

Itgil tells about his thoughts about the future:

“[Now] I can communicate with people. My goal is... I want to work, I want to study, I want to get married and I want to be smart. So [I] plan my future and my life. It's important to learn family communications. So now I'm communicating with my family and writing and they even ask me ‘where is your wife? Where can you bring a wife [from]?’”

Itgil compares life before and after learning SL:

“Before, it was a totally different feeling. Before I learned I had nothing, no communication, no thinking, and then it was more pure and more innocent. But now I learned sign language. Being involved with many people, sometimes I get angry, I'm frustrated, I hate, I have so many negative feelings towards people. It's troublesome. When I think about life before I learned sign language it's more innocent. No worry, no problem.”

“I think I have more worries now when I understand life. Hearing people and smiling people can afterwards talk bad about me behind [my back]. But even though I'm patiently being kind, I still can have hurt in my heart, real hurt. But I'm learning to get rid of this bad feeling and people who are troublemakers. So [I'm] learning to handle that. When I think about Jesus and when I'm being with him, when I forgive others, I'm more happy and peaceful. When I forget and forgive people. My teachers [are] still helping me to improve and grow in God and forgiving and forgetting. So loving others [is] what makes me happy.”

3.4.1 From boredom and hate to forgiveness

I see Itgil's story as a remarkable example of the process of real development and growing up. First he expresses how difficult it was not being able to communicate and shows different ways in which his frustration manifested in his thoughts, feelings and actions (he was bored, wanted to die, hit his father, run away from home, killed a yak etc.). He tells about how connection to nature and belonging to the community of soldiers was a relief for him in the midst of adversities. Later on, he describes, as do the other interviewees, how he learned many things and made connections with other people as he learnt SL (i.e. needs like 'participation' and 'understanding' became more fulfilled). His testimony also reveals how the learning of values and norms that people usually acquire within primary socialization were, for him, delayed until a much later stage.

Itgil presents another side of learning and connection that the others do not take up: that it can be painful. Jung's thesis of individuation can help us understand what is going on with Itgil. Jung states that "every step forward along the path of individuation is achieved only at the cost of suffering" (1969:par. 411). The pain comes from different factors in the process of individuation. Firstly, one part of the process, that also Itgil seems to have experienced, is coming to realize that for years one has been living a lie by trying to become what was expected by one's parents and the surroundings through compromising, adapting and sometimes even betraying one's authentic nature. According to Jung (1966), the person at that stage is not one's 'true self'. Secondly, individuation is challenging as it entails 'divisio' (being divided both from others and within oneself), 'separatio' (separation both from family and collective society as well as from the person one used to be) and 'solutio' (seeing the familiar structures of one's life dissolve). Thirdly, a painful growing self-knowledge is a part of the process, meaning that one becomes 'conscious of the unconscious' and thus develops an awareness of the dark sides in oneself. (ibid 1969) Itgil expresses the simplicity of life when it was more "pure and innocent" and the difficulties that emerged as he developed both self-awareness and also became more conscious of other people and their unpleasant sides. At the same time he also tells how "human kind is the same". I believe that Itgil's process can be linked to Jung's (1954:108) description of how individuation "brings to birth a consciousness of human community precisely because it makes us aware of the unconscious, which unites and is common to all mankind. Individuation is an at-one-ment with oneself and at the same time with humanity, since oneself is a part of humanity".

Through Itgil's process of individuation he shows how the need of 'understanding' has been an important factor in fulfilling his needs. One satisfier for the need of understanding is critical

conscious (*being*) (Max-Neef 1992), which Itgil is constantly wrestling with. ‘Transcendence’ and spirituality have helped him to deal with the difficulties that he has faced in the past and the struggles that he is facing today. Learning to forgive others and understanding that he is forgiven himself, helps him to love other people, and feel solidarity as well as joy and peace. It gives meaning to his life.

4.5 Concluding remarks on results

The change that the interviewees describe is significant and many basic human needs were met that had, to a greater or lesser extent, not been met earlier in their lives. It could be questioned whether the changes occurred because they moved to the capital or because they learned SL, since these changes happened nearly simultaneously for most of them. They themselves, however, link the major changes to learning SL, to being able to communicate and to becoming a part of a community.

Even though all of the interviewees repeatedly tell that there was ‘no communication’ in their lives before learning SL, each of them could, in one way or another, communicate with their closest family members or friends, albeit in a simple and mostly unsatisfactory way. It seems that they had more capabilities in connecting to people than just ‘symbolic competence’ gained by observing other people as described by Padden (1992:651). Most of them also had at least one person that they felt was supportive or that they could enjoy being with. Furthermore, the men in particular tell that a connection to animals and nature was important for them when they felt disconnected from people. The fact that the men brought this up is likely due to the role men have in the countryside, where they are more connected to the exterior of the household than women.

From the individual interviews I also learned how each of them came in contact with SL. All of the interviewees needed help in order to get the possibility to learn SL, and were guided by people around them who were aware of how important it might be for the individual. While visiting a rural area in Mongolia, I met local volunteers who tried to assist people with disabilities in their province. They told that in their experience deaf people are the most difficult to support and advocate for, as none of the known deaf people (over 100) in that area knew SL and neither did the volunteers. The stories here demonstrate that people who live disconnected in the rural areas can be brought to a community, learn SL and lead more fulfilling lives.

5. Discussion

In this section some of the needs that arose in the interviews will be further discussed and their links to development and rights examined. The relationship between human rights and human needs is complex and academic discussions on the subject usually take place within moral, philosophical, or legal frameworks (e.g. Conrad 2010; Gewirth 1982; Streeten 1980; Wellmann 2012). Rights are usually aligned with justice and fairness or they can be seen as the protections that are generally needed in order to be able to lead a “minimally decent human life” (Wellmann 2012:119). Max-Neef’s suggestion is an interdisciplinary approach to development that addresses both structural realities as well as individual human needs. He argues that social and personal development cannot be separated and that a healthy society advocates above all the development of every human being as a whole person. I believe that this shows how human needs (personal) can be linked to human rights (structural). In Max-Neef’s model rights are in some cases included as satisfiers of needs (e.g. for the needs of ‘participation’ and ‘freedom’).

A central thought of Max-Neef’s human needs model is that the best development processes happen when people’s quality of life is improved and that development is sustained by the satisfaction of fundamental human needs and growing levels of autonomy (Cruz et al 2009). Critics of needs theory tend to take up a variety of criticism, for example that it underestimates the “social logic” of consumer society (i.e. individuals chasing their own happiness through objects that are expected to provide the best satisfaction) (e.g. Baudrillard 1970) or risks environmental sustainability as an urgent need that should be satisfied might be prioritised before long-term environmental goals (e.g. Douglas et al 1998). However, the critics seem to be attacking a different kind of usage of the word “need” than what is used by the needs theorists, namely what is associated with “the external environmental requirement of achieving an end” instead of the “underlying physiological, psychological and social functionings that contribute to human well-being” (Jackson et al 2004:25).

The concept of freedom is linked to this discussion. Learning SL is a crucial precondition for being able to study and receive more information. Education and acquiring knowledge leads furthermore to being able to be critical, to learning moral codes and not the least to learning about one’s rights and responsibilities. This again enhances one’s autonomy and freedom in various ways. Abraham Maslow (1970) defined freedom as social and political liberty and identified it as a precondition to the fulfilment of basic human needs. Rountree (2011) argues that increased awareness of oneself and the world can lead to experiencing the freedom of *being*, but creating structures and practises is crucial in order to protect the *outer* freedoms that can further enhance human well-being. This

shows the importance of creating *means* for deaf people to get in contact with SL and a deaf community. This can be done by creating possibilities that they can benefit from e.g. through awareness raising (especially reaching family members of deaf people), advocacy (for the rights of deaf people) and policies that lead to building structures and practises (e.g. schools and SL interpretation services).

Some human needs might be seen as more controversial than the need for freedom. Max-Neef (in Cruz et al 2009) argues that ‘transcendence’ has become a universal human need that is desirable for all people at all times. The cases of Mungun and Itgil show how spirituality has become central for them in their lives and how it satisfies many needs and contributes to their human development. Spirituality helped them to find meaning in adversity and to have a more positive outlook on life, as suggested by Walsh (2006). Woiwode (2013) argues that the spiritual and transcendental dimensions of life are neglected in international development discourse and practice. To a certain extent it has even been treated as a “development taboo” (ibid 2011, 2013). He argues that the experience of development practitioners as well as researchers in the field show how real spirituality is for many people and that it is important for human development (ibid). It has even been argued that “only a new moral, spiritual and even religious sensibility’ can underpin ‘the struggle to eliminate the world’s worst poverty” (Wallis in Clarke 2007:89). I believe that spiritual issues should be seen as more central parts in development cooperation, than has hitherto been the case, especially when they are deemed central by social actors themselves. I believe, furthermore, as do Moyer et al (2012) that faith can play a significant role in effecting sustainable and holistic change as spiritual communities are often well rooted in societies, produce social capital and are often respected.

6. Conclusion

The participants of this study provide an example of how being able to communicate is a crucial and utterly central part of human life, without which many basic human needs remain unsatisfied. Living without a language and thus a well-functioning means of communication suggest that one’s human rights are not being realized. The results of this study suggest that when deaf people who live without language and disconnected from their communities are given the possibility to learn SL and become a part of a community, their quality of life and human rights are enhanced. Learning a language is in itself a human right as well as a precondition for other rights to be fulfilled. It can be seen that the rights to education and work, as well as accessibility were enhanced in all of the four cases in this study. These factors are taken up as central issues for deaf rights and are included in the CRDP (UN 2006). When these rights were realized by the participants, they also experienced the

satisfaction of many of their needs. This development, though sometimes painful, was crucial to the expansion of their autonomy and freedom. I believe that the development of every individual as a whole person is the key to the development of entire societies. Policies should be created that provide possibilities for basic needs to be fulfilled and strengthen the prospects of people benefiting from these possibilities.

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Appendix 1

Matrix of human needs and satisfiers (Max-Neef 1992: 206-7; Cruz et al 2009:2025)

Needs according to existential characteristics	BEING (personal or collective attributes)	HAVING (institutions, norms, tools)	DOING (personal or collective actions)	INTERACTING (spaces or atmospheres)
Needs according to axiological characteristics				
Subsistence	1/ Physical health, mental health, equilibrium, sense of humour, adaptability	2/ Food, shelter, work	3/ Feed, procreate, rest, work	4/ Living environment, social setting
Protection	5/ Care, adaptability, autonomy, equilibrium, solidarity	6/ Insurance systems, savings, social security, health systems, rights, family, work	7/ Co-operate, prevent, plan, take care of, cure, help	8/ Living space, social environment, dwelling
Affection	9/ Self-esteem, solidarity, respect, tolerance, generosity, receptiveness, passion, determination, sensuality, sense of humour	10/ Friendships, partners, family, partnerships, relationships with nature	11/ Make love, caress, express emotions, share, take care of, cultivate, appreciate	12/ Privacy, intimacy, home, spaces of togetherness
Understanding	13/ Critical conscience, receptiveness, curiosity, astonishment, discipline intuition, rationality	14/ Literature, teachers, method, educational and communication policies	15/ Investigate, study, educate, experiment, analyse, meditate, interpret	16/ Settings of formative interaction, schools, universities, academies groups, communities, family
Participation	17/ Adaptability, receptiveness, solidarity, willingness, determination, dedication, respect, passion, sense of humour	18/ Rights, responsibilities, duties, privileges, work	19/ Become affiliated, cooperate, propose, share, dissent, obey, interact, agree on, express opinions	20/ Settings of participative interaction, parties, associations, churches, communities, neighbourhoods, family
Idleness	21/ Curiosity, receptiveness, imagination, recklessness, sense of humour, lack of worry, tranquility, sensuality	22/ Games, spectacles, clubs, parties, peace of mind	23/ Day-dream, brood, dream recall old times, give way to fantasies, remember, relax, have fun, play	24/ Privacy, intimacy, spaces of closeness, free time, surroundings, landscapes
Creation	25/ Passion, determination, intuition, imagination, boldness, rationality, autonomy, inventiveness, curiosity	26/ Abilities, skills, method, work	27/ Work, invent, build, design compose, interpret	28/ Productive and feedback settings, workshops, cultural groups, audiences, spaces for expression, temporal freedom
Identity	29/ Sense of belonging, consistency, differentiation, self-esteem, assertiveness	30/ Symbols, language, religions, habits, customs, reference groups, roles, groups, sexuality, values, norms, historic memory, work	31/ Commit oneself, integrate oneself, confront, decide on, get to know oneself, recognize oneself, actualize oneself, grow	32/ Social rhythms, every day settings, setting which one belongs to, maturation stages
Freedom	33/ Autonomy, self-esteem, determination, passion, assertiveness, open mindedness, boldness, rebelliousness, tolerance	34/ Equal rights	35/ Dissent, choose, be different from, run risks, develop awareness, commit oneself, disobey, meditate	36/ Temporal/special plasticity

Appendix 2

Example of how the need's matrix was used in the analysis (from Mungun's story)

	Being (personal or collective attributes)	Having (institutions, norms, tools)	Doing (personal or collective actions)	Interacting (spaces or atmospheres)
Affection	Better self-esteem, solidarity	Friendships with deaf people and Christians	Being able to express emotions, taking care/providing for his family, telling the 'good news' to others, serving the church	The church community, family
Identity	Sense of belonging, self-esteem	Language, religion, church, community	Committing himself, actualizing himself	Church, work, family
Participation	Solidarity, dedication, passion	Responsibilities, duties, work	Cooperate, express opinions, interact, share	Deaf church community, work, family
Freedom	Autonomy, self-esteem, passion	Enhanced rights	Choose, develop awareness, commit himself	
Idleness	Curiosity, tranquillity	Church, peace of mind	Enjoying	Surroundings, landscapes, church
Subsistence		Work	Work	Work
Protection	Care, autonomy, solidarity	Enhanced rights, family, work	Cooperate, take care of, help	Home, church (spaces of 'togetherness')
Creation	Passion, curiosity, autonomy	Abilities and skills (e.g. SL, reading), work	Get new information	Church community
Understanding	Critical conscience, moral, curiosity, rationality	Teachers, education	Investigate, study, find information	SL teachers, deaf community
Transcendence	Spirituality, faith	Belief system, faith, God	Believing, spreading the 'good news', serving	Own time, church