

# LIFE STORIES OF DEAF SENIORS

## THE EXPOSÉ



### WEBSITE

<https://www.uni-goettingen.de/de/ausstellung/598123.html>

### VIDEO INTRODUCTION IN GERMAN SIGN LANGUAGE WITH GERMAN SUBTITLES

<https://vimeo.com/322830322>

Editors

**CHRISTA GAISBICHLER AND JANA HOSEMANN**

# BACKGROUND

## INTERVIEWS WITH DEAF SENIOR CITIZENS

How did Deaf people live 70 years ago? What schools did they attend? How did they communicate with the majority of hearing people?

Since 2016, our collaborative research teams at the Universities of Göttingen and Hamburg have studied these and other questions as part of a unique project to document the life stories of Deaf seniors. To date, we have conducted almost 50 interviews with Deaf people born during the 1930s and 1940s.



In these interviews, the seniors talk about topics such as growing up in Nazi Germany and their lives after the war up to the present. These interviews provide a unique socio-cultural, historical and linguistic perspective from an almost invisible community within our society.

## CONCEPTION AND DESIGN

A team of 13 students and three lecturers (Jana Hosemann, Jens-Michael Cramer and Markus Steinbach) have made it their goal to make the content of these interviews accessible to the general public for the first time. Over the course of many months and in the context of a project seminar, we designed and built a mobile exhibition integrating the contents of the interviews in a creative and accessible manner.



The result of this project is a versatile exhibit with exciting insights into the world of the modern and historical Deaf Community in Germany. Through our research, we have been able to gain a deeper understanding of the Deaf Community, and we would love to share this knowledge with you!

## YOU CAN RENT OUR EXHIBITION!

Project title and sponsorship:

1. "A digital archive of old signers' linguistic and cultural heritage" (EU, Horizon 2020)
2. "(Un)sichtbare Lebensgeschichten — Dokumentation des Lebens, der Kultur und der Sprache älterer tauber Menschen" (Land Niedersachsen, Pro\*Niedersachsen)

# OUR GOALS

The Deaf Community in Germany represent a cultural and linguistic minority about which the majority of the hearing population knows very little. While persistent prejudices about Deaf people and sign languages circulate, little knowledge about German Sign Language (DGS) and the Deaf community is made accessible. The resulting lack of understanding leads to an intensification of the existing communicative barriers for both Deaf and hearing people .

## WE WANT TO CHANGE THIS!

With our exhibit, we aim to raise awareness not only about the experiences of Deaf people in Germany but also about how their language and culture enriches society as a whole. An overarching goal of this project is to fight prejudices against the Deaf Community and show that living conditions for Deaf people in Germany were sometimes very harsh — and still are in some places.



Our exhibit is designed to target a broad group of people: young and old, Deaf and hearing as well as those with and without background knowledge of German Sign Language and Deaf Culture in Germany.

Attendees to our exhibit will leave with a new appreciation for Deaf Culture, and together we are taking a small step in the direction of inclusion and equality in our society.

## IN OTHER WORDS: EVERYONE IS WELCOME!





# THE EXHIBITION

## ACCESSIBILITY

For linguistic accessibility, the texts on posters and illustrative objects are also available via QR codes as sign language videos (German Sign Language and International Sign).

## VIDEOS

Excerpts from interviews with Deaf seniors, as well as film excerpts from major films produced by the Deaf Community provide additional visual input. All videos are subtitled.



## OBJECTS

Historical objects and documents from the Deaf Community are presented in showcases.

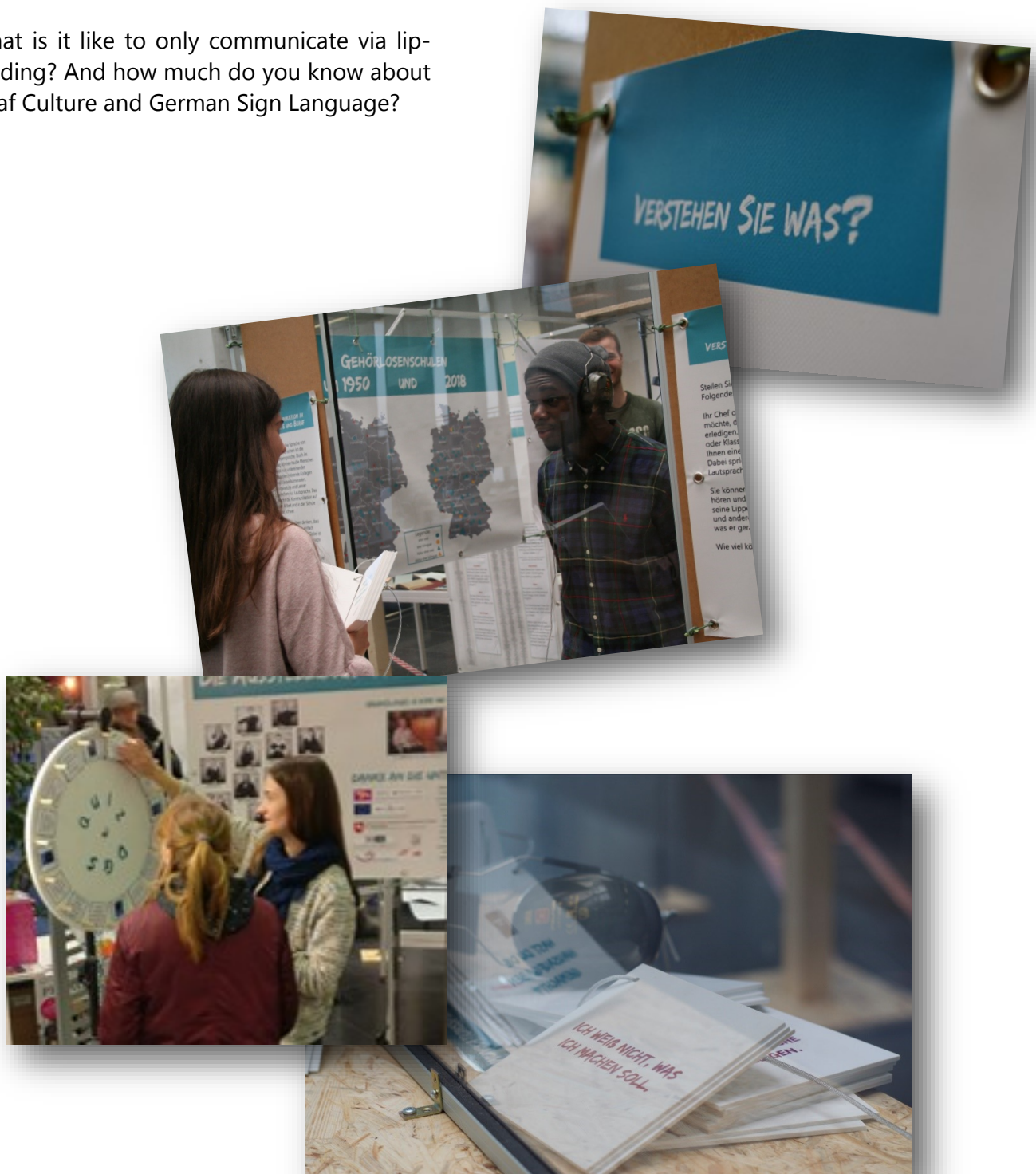


# THE EXHIBITION

## HANDS-ON!

With our hands-on displays, we encourage visitors to engage even more closely with the Deaf Community.

What is it like to only communicate via lip-reading? And how much do you know about Deaf Culture and German Sign Language?

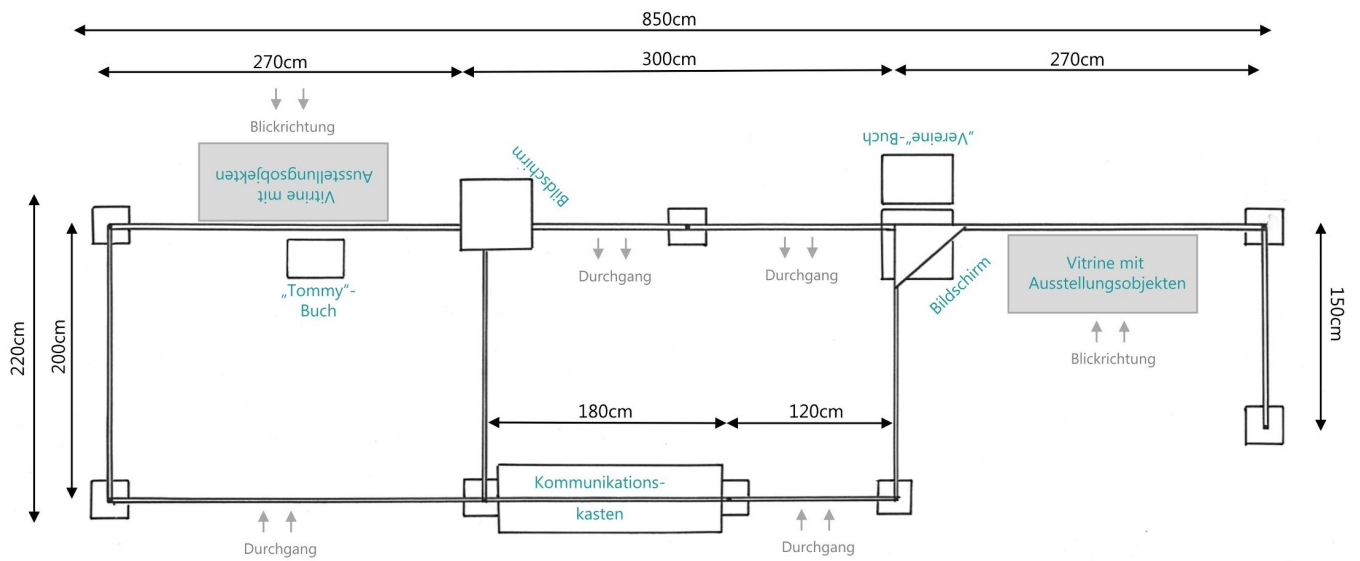




# DIMENSIONS

## AREA 1

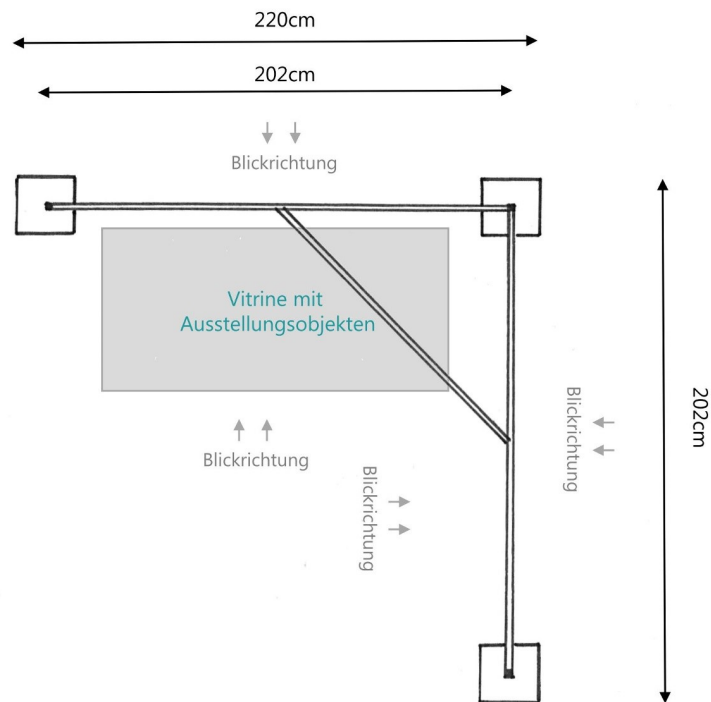
TOPICS: SCHOOL, EDUCATION AND OCCUPATIONS, FAMILY AND DEAF CLUBS



# DIMENSIONS

## AREA 2

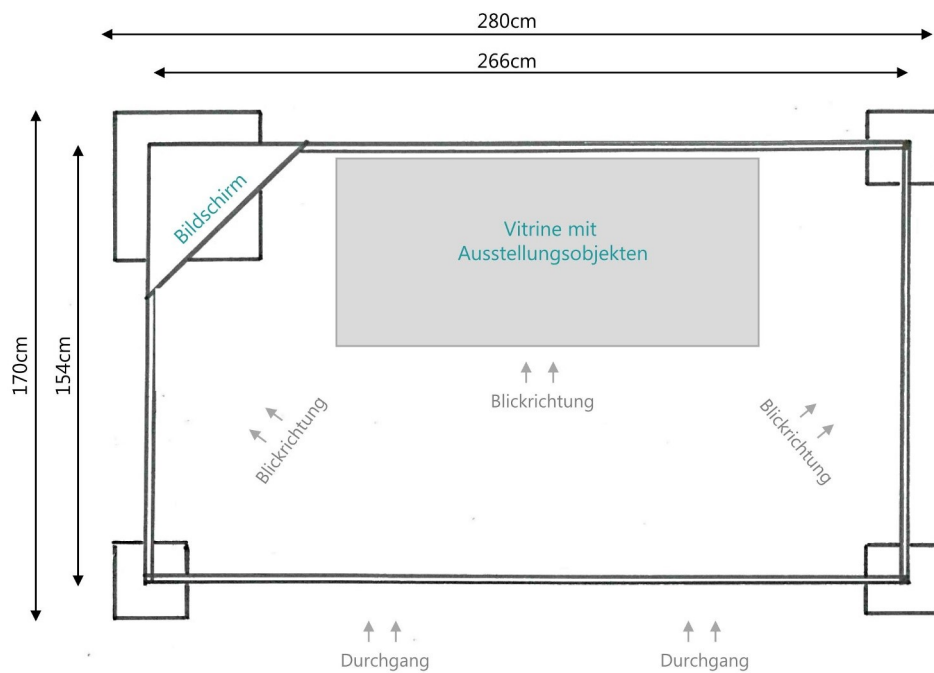
### TOPIC: SIGN LANGUAGE



# DIMENSIONS

## AREA 3

### TOPIC: NATIONAL SOCIALISM



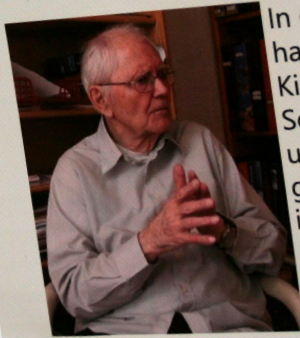
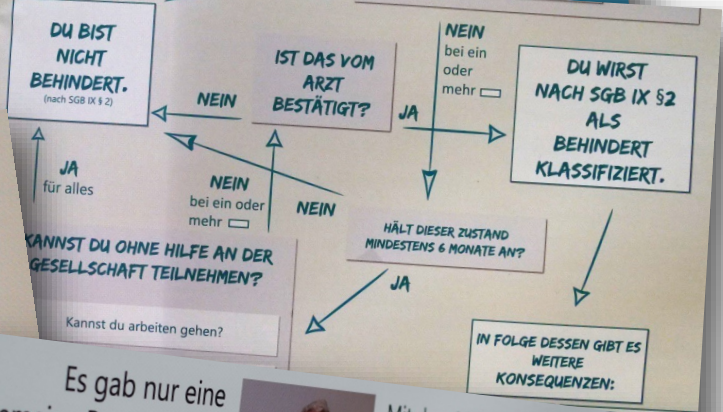


# IMPRESSIONS



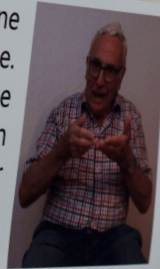
## Streiche

Da ich oft ein Lausbub war und mir gerne Streiche ausdachte, kam ich eines Tages auf folgende Idee: Ich öffnete das Tor zur Weide...



In der Schule haben die anderen Kinder auf dem Schulhof gebärdet und ich habe es gesehen. Dort hab ich die Gebärden aufgenommen und gelernt.

Es gab nur eine allgemeine Berufsschule. Früher gab es keine Fachbereiche. Alle waren zusammen auf einer Berufsschule. Schneider, Schuhmacher,...



Mit dem Meister habe ich nicht kommuniziert. Ich musste immer sprechen. Auch in der Prüfung. Oder schreiben. Das klappte gut. Damals hatte man keine Dolmetscher. Heute ist das anders. Früher nicht.

In Lehre und immer waren nur Hörende um mich herum. Gebärden gab es nicht.



WAS KÖNNEN WIR ÄNDERN

Stolz auf meinen

Meine Mutter wollte unbedingt, dass ich eine



Und was soll ich stattdessen machen?

## #wirbrauchenuntertitel

Wie eine Facebook-Aktion ProSieben zwang, Germany's Next Topmodel wieder zu Untertiteln

Zurück zum Text:  
Untertitel im Internet

Die Braven bewegen nichts.  
(Norbert Blüm)

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## TOPICS

3 areas featuring 6 topics: Deafness and National Socialism, Sign Languages, Deaf Schools, Occupations, Family and Deaf Clubs.

## ACCESSIBILITY

Interactive stations, texts in uncomplicated language, QR-codes with translations in German Sign Language and International Sign, visual aids alongside texts (pictures, pictograms, drawings, etc.).

## COST

€3500

Included:

- Transportation
- Setup
- Disassembly

Not included:

- Advertising
- Insurance (recommended)
- Event location

## DURATION

It is recommended to display the exhibition for 4 to 8 weeks.

## ELECTRICITY

3 power outlets for television sets; if required, power for additional lighting.

## SHOW CASES

3 to 4 lockable show cases are needed for displaying historical objects.

## SIZE

Total: ca. 110 m<sup>2</sup>

Area 1: ca. 77 m<sup>2</sup>

Area 2: ca. 17 m<sup>2</sup>

Area 3: ca. 12,6 m<sup>2</sup>

## OUR CONTRIBUTION

### SETUP AND DISASSEMBLY

Our team in Göttingen will organise transportation as well as setup and disassembly of the exhibition. Help at the event location is always appreciated. Setup takes 2 to 3 days before the event, and disassembly lasts 1 to 2 days after public access to the site.

### PUBLIC RELATIONS

We will gladly supply a variety of photos and texts for public relations and local advertisement. Unfortunately, our services do not include the expenses of print-media or other forms of advertisement.

### OPENING EVENT

We are happy to organise an opening event together with the responsible location organisers. This would also be a great opportunity for a guided tour through the exhibition.



# BEHIND THE SCENES

## STUDENTS



Hannah  
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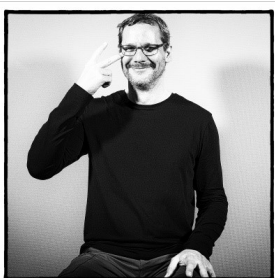
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## EDITOR'S IMPRINT

### PROJECT TITLE AND SPONSORSHIP



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**Niedersächsisches Ministerium für Wissenschaft und Kultur**  
**Pro\*Niedersachsen**  
– Forschungsprojekte der Geistes-, Kultur- und Sozialwissenschaften



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### WEBLINKS

Exhibition: <https://www.uni-goettingen.de/de/ausstellung/598123.html>

Video introduction in German Sign Language with German subtitles: <https://vimeo.com/322830322>

### VISUAL CREDITS

The team in Göttingen, Sven Grünwald, Cornelis Kater, Göttinger Tageblatt (<http://www.goettinger-tageblatt.de/Campus/Goettingen/Ausstellung-ueber-taube-Menschen-an-der-Universitaet-Goettingen> (16.01.2019, last cited 10.03.2019))

Göttingen, April 2019