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**20 YEAR INFORMATION PROGRAM
BROADCASTING WITH SIGN LANGUAGE
ON MACEDONIAN TELEVISION**

Deafness, to which science, humanity, media work have been devoted with a lot of pain, is a condition which appears and most frequently stays as a lifelong companion. It puts you in a smaller and different world in which birds do not sing, noise does not reach the soul. It offers a new language where hands become main weapons for expression and the battle in the silence is cruel and endless, unfolding the secrets and wonders of the universe of silence.

Having in mind the need for broader information of the public about people with impaired hearing and speech, the Macedonian Television within its program included information program of various contents on this issues 20 years ago.

It was initiated by "Association of Deaf and Hard-of-hearing of Yugoslavia, which put pressure on the basic media houses to start preparing necessary conditions for introducing and developing of the unique program called "**The World of Silence**". At the beginning it was broadcasted as a joint program, in which eight TV houses participated with their own program of 40 min once a month.

The first editor of the Macedonian program was Menduh Ajdini, who was in charge of the program contents, and the first steps/attempts in translating the Macedonian spoken and the Macedonian sign language, were done by **Violeta Apostolovska** and **Marija Basheska**, as external associates. They, together with the people in charge of the technique, throughout directing and editing, created the first frames of everyday life and work of both deaf people and their families.

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If we recall our memories in regard to the reactions of the employees and the television audience to that type of specialized program which requires not only personnel, material and technical conditions, but a lot of love and patience towards the expected obstacles from different sides, our emotional memories tell us that we should neither judge time nor destiny and ignorance because there are not any obstacle which can not be overcome. With special effort of many people the foundations were built of something that would later become a pride of production and public service program.

After the recognition of the Republic of Macedonia as an independent state, with the social and the political changes in the country, especially with the new editor Nikola Momirovski together with his associate Marija Basheska, the program started severely to enter the society, knocking at the door of registered problems, issues pointed out by the Association of Deaf and Hard-of-hearing People of Macedonia. The program built up the path towards the audience through documentary materials, portraits, reports and supplements for the activities, trying to awake human consciousness of people who are lucky to be able to hear.

On MTV documentary program initiative in 1994, other categories of people with disabilities were included in the program schedule through the program "New perspectives" and the cooperation with the Association of disabled people was strengthened on all levels. In the meantime, i.e. in 1999, Baseska became **the editor of the program "The World of Silence"**, thus it was not possible for one person to do everything for such a subtle and responsible task. The attention was focused towards deaf, discovering topics and conversationalists with the MTV authority, and the recorded materials corresponded to the its high technological needs. This program attracted the Macedonian public attention with the sign language during the **presidential elections 2000**, when

1994

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2000,

on MTV second program translated **for the deaf** the presentations of the presidential candidates and the **TV-duel with the leaders of the two biggest political parties**. After this attempt to bring closer the programs and the promises of the political parties, enabling deaf people to bring their own decision who to vote for a lot of gratitude and recognitions were addressed to the house both by the deaf and people with normal hearing and speech. The translation with the sign language was unusual and highly professional.

The communication barrier was slowly being ruined, so people with impaired hearing became challenging for many journalist of cultural, documentary, entertaining and informative editorial programs of MTV and other private electronic or press media. **Daily news with sign language started broadcasting in April 2003**, with the engagement of three activists of ADHM. The standards of equal access to information were reached with the gesture of sense and good will, gathering knowledge and achievements of the world media. The Department for International Cooperation continuously selects video materials which come with the exchange program and enable comparison of our own results with those of French, Italian, English, Canadian, Australian and other television companies.

The respect and recognitions received by the Association of Deaf and Hard-of-hearing people of Macedonia, Association of Special Teachers of Macedonia, Institute for Rehabilitation of children with impaired hearing "Koch Racin", the newspaper "Večer" and the MRTV collegiums for the occasion of the 60 jubilee, is obligation and pleasure to do the best in order to change the old concept and to establish new perspectives for life and development.

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