

On 24 April 2018, Ciné-ONU screened 'Deaf Child' to raise awareness of disability rights, and the [70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#). 'Deaf Child' tells the empowering and heartwarming story of Tobias De Ronde, born deaf, through the eyes of his father – and director – Alex De Ronde. The film addresses how Tobias managed to turn his disadvantage to his benefit; what it means to raise a deaf child; its effects on other family members; and the absurd consequences of having a disability status. 'Deaf Child' was shown in partnership with the [Embassy of The Netherlands in Belgium](#), [One World Human Rights Film Festival](#), and [OHCHR](#) at [Cinéma Galeries](#) in Brussels.



Before the screening, UNRIC organised a Facebook Live interview with 'Deaf Child' Director, [Alex De Ronde](#). You can visit our [Cine-ONU Facebook Page](#) to watch Alex discuss disability rights, the deaf community, and what it means to raise a deaf child.

The screening was followed by a conversation on the issues highlighted within the documentary. The guest speakers included: [Tobias De Ronde](#) (Protagonist); [Alex De Ronde](#) (Director); [Susanne Bosman](#) (OHCHR); and moderated by [Caroline Petit](#) (UNRIC). The discussion was also signed by a team of three interpreters for the deaf and hard

of hearing, in Dutch and International sign language.



The panel discussion opened with Alex De Ronde's observations on how 'Doctors tend to see children who are deaf and hard of hearing as "poor deaf children who must be repaired." Yes, of course it is a disability,' he continued, 'but it is also a culture, with a common language and experiences.' This set the theme for the conversation that followed, focusing on the importance of sign language, the limitations of Cochlear implants, and the power of the deaf community in establishing a sense of deaf identity and culture.

Tobias De Ronde continued that 'communication is just a way of getting information from one person to another. Sign language allows you to do that too, and to be proud of being deaf.' He also emphasised: 'I was very lucky with my family. My parents made sure I was able to understand both languages [Sign and Dutch].' Alex De Ronde added how: 'Brussels is also bi-lingual by nature. This is similar to us. It was natural to learn to sign, and to bring up my sons bi-lingual in Sign and Dutch.' 'However nowadays,' Tobias interjected, 'not so many people learn sign language which can cause communication problems.' This raised the issue of the integral importance of sign language. Susanne Bosman reiterated this notion, adding: 'I was lucky enough to learn some sign language in school. It is crucial that we involve human rights teaching across Europe.'



Ms. Petit concluded the discussion with asking how we can do more to encourage inclusivity, support the deaf and hard of hearing community, and represent disability rights. Ms. Bosman

reiterated this year's celebration of the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and suggested that we should try to facilitate more 'inclusive environments and raise awareness – by reaching out more and actively standing up for human rights.' Alex De Ronde emphasized that 'when you add all the right circumstances, disability becomes culture'; and Tobias powerfully concluded the discussion signing 'Deaf Power!'

- To watch the trailer, [click here](#) .
- For more information about the film, [click here](#) .
- To download the handout, [click here](#) .
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