



Qu'ran in ASL Project

2014

Quran in American Sign Language Project

Global Deaf Muslim

ABSTRACT:

Global Deaf Muslim's largest ongoing project is translating the Holy Quran into American Sign Language to open the access to the corestone of Islam to all Deaf who use American Sign Language (ASL). This project, Quran in American Sign Language Project (QASL), is part of GDM's mission to help Deaf to understand Islam in the language they can comprehend. There are many different translation versions for the Holy Quran but there is no translation for ASL. GDM seek to redress that absence.

The QASL will require a significant financial commitments from donors and grantors to cover the expenses of financing the project. The QASL include the costs of employees, administration, video production, interpreters, and supplies to make the project possible. To avoid interruption in the progress of translating the Holy Quran, GDM is seeking steadfast and firm commitments from donors and grantors. The annual cost of QASL is \$493,200 US Dollar. The breakdown of the cost is attached to this letter. GDM is seeking a non-interrupt steadfast ongoing financial support form donors and grantors. That will ensure the QASL will not fail, be suspended, or put on hold due to finance. At the end of 5th year, the QASL project will be evaluated for a new budget for funding and what are the remaining surahs to translate.

By completing the QASL project, GDM will be able to serve millions of Deaf who use ASL by open the door to Islam to them. The Holy Quran is not only for Deaf Muslims but Deaf nonbelievers to invite them to Islam in the language they can understand. Once QASL project is done, GDM can move to translating the Holy Quran into another sign language for Deaf in different countries, using the first project as a model.

GDM wish to reach out to all Deaf because of what Allah, praise to Him, informed us through Prophet Muhammad, peace be on him:

*"Invite (all) to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching;
and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious."*

Qur'an [16:125]

Rationale for Qu'ran in ASL Project

There are about at least 60 writing translations of Qu'ran, Quran in at least 5 Braille translations, and at least 40 audio translations of Qur'an available for worldwide. There is no translation of Qu'ran in sign language, a mode of communication that is not covered by Qu'ran translation effort. Humans communicate each other in many modes: visual, audio, and recording. Audio communication is done by talking and listening. Recording communication is done by using physical materials to write, paint, shape, and create messages. Visual communication is done by using body to convey messages. Audio translation of Qu'ran is part of audio communication. Writing and Braille translation are part of recording communication. Sign language is part of visual communication and no Qu'ran translation has been done in that area.

Deaf people use visual communication as a primary mean of communication through hand signs to convey messages. Not all Deaf people can hear and speak. Not all Deaf people are fluent in read & write. Allah creates humans in many different images with many different abilities so we can all know each other. It is revealed that Allah said:

"And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth,
and the difference of your languages and colors.
Verily, in that are indeed signs for those who know"
[Quran 30:22])

Deaf Muslims have been relegated to be footnotes in the history of Islam. Even the blind Muslims are included in Islamic societies and get full access to Qu'ran through oral in old times and Braille in addition in modern time such as Ibn Umm Maktum. Deaf Muslims are the final group in Islam that have not received a full access into Islam that are due to them.

Global Deaf Muslim decided to embark in 2012 to make Qu'ran accessible for Deaf Muslims and to Deaf who want to learn about Islam. By making Qu'ran available in sign languages, Deaf Muslims can take their first step toward understanding Islam. It is not enough to be Muslim by the virtue of testifying the *Shahada*. To be a Muslim is to learn and live the ways Allah commands the believers to know.

Deaf Christians already made the translations of Bible in sign languages since 1984. New Testament in sign language was completed in 2010 and Old Testament in sign language is almost done. That was undertaken primarily by an organization called Deaf Missions and Jehovah's Witnesses, both having different interpretations. The Deaf Christians have vast superior access to their religion than Deaf Muslims have for Islam. There are deaf pastors, deaf priests, deaf theologians, deaf churches, deaf christian conferences, international deaf christian missionaries, and deaf christian evangelicalism. All of these are unified with one mission: convert all Deaf in the world into Christianity, even converting Deaf Muslims into Christianity as well. Compare to these, Global Deaf Muslim and Deaf Muslims are underfunded, neglected, and lacked the resources to develop a strong unity among themselves.

There are no deaf imams, no dedicated masjid service for Deaf Muslims, no Qu'ran in sign language, no islamic conferences for Deaf Muslims, and no dedicated learning islamic resources for Deaf Muslims. If Deaf Muslims can not be reached and given the tools to learn about Islam, they will feel insignificant and be drawn to Deaf Christians with full resources available for learning. GDM already witnessed the loss of several Deaf brothers and sisters to Christianity, which GDM is nearly powerless to prevent due to lack of resources.

By developing and presenting Qu'ran in sign language, Deaf Muslims will know that Islam have not abandon them and they are still part of an ummrah. GDM is committed to make Islam accessible for Deaf. That kind of commitment requires steadfast donors and sponsors to finance the projects to make Islam accessible for Deaf. Qu'ran in ASL Project is one of commitments GDM is undertaking to help Deaf Muslims to know and understand the love Allah has for them as Allah told the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh):

"If ye do love Allah, follow me:
Allah will love you and forgive you your sins:
For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."
[Quran 3:31]

Components of the Project

Component is a piece that is required to make something into wholeness. The Quran in ASL Project (QASL) has several components that are necessary to make the project to happen. All of the components for QASL are indispensable. The components are: Deaf Signers, Project Manager, Scholars, Interpreters, Video Production, and Administration.

DEAF SIGNERS

The Deaf Signers are the major component of QASL project. The Deaf Signers have the duties to:

- Study the verses in the Quran with scholars to gain understanding and context
- Develop appropriate sign language translation of the verses
- Create videos of verses in sign language
- Make revisions to the videos based on feedback from scholars and test viewers
- Communicate with the project manager about progress

The Deaf Signers are divided into two groups: full time and part time. The full time Deaf Signers will be no more than 4 persons. The part time Deaf Signers will be no more than 2 persons. The full time Deaf Signers will work at 5 days a week on the project. The part time Deaf Signers will work up to 2 or 3 days a week.

The full time Deaf Signers will be responsible for translating the Quran into sign language and perform all the duties listed in above. They will be paid a monthly salary and be provided with lodge in order to accommodate their relocation from their homes to GDM main office in Virginia, USA. All full time Deaf Signers will be evaluated every 3 months for performance, progress, and teamwork.

The role of the part time Deaf Signers is to give feedback & advice to the full time Deaf Signers for developing appropriate sign language translation for the verses. They will be paid a part time salary and no lodge will be provided to them.

The qualifications for a Deaf Signer are:

- Fluent in sign language
- Has a good reading comprehension skill
- Possess a good character and no tainted reputation
- Male
- Be able to present a clear meaning of verse in sign language
- Be able to provide a commitment to the time and effort requested for QASL project

GDM will evaluate the candidates based on the qualifications and hire when a suitable candidate is found.

SCHOLARS

The scholars are a key component to make sure the translation of Quran into ASL is the most accurate as possible while allow Deaf viewers to understand the meanings. The scholars will be chosen for their expertise in Arabic to English translation. The scholars will be evaluated by their interpretations of the core issues in Islam to ensure their interpretations are within the consensus of majority world scholars instead of radicalized ideology. There will be 2 scholars at resident in GDM main office in Virginia, USA. The 2 scholars are sufficient to permit flexibility in schedules for meetings.

The scholars must have a doctorate or theological degree in Islamic study from an esteemed and recognized university. The scholars must be recommended by imams and Muslim community in USA. The scholars must be known and have attended public functions in USA Muslim community. A proficiency in Arabic & English is required.

The scholars will work with Deaf Signers to review verses. With the aid of scholars, the Deaf Signers will be able to understand context and meaning of the verses to provide the most accurate translation in a sign language. The scholars will refer to historical context of verse revelation because many verses are given to respond to a specific event or circumstance during the life of Prophet Muhammad, peace be on him. The scholars will use accepted English translations of the Quran as reference.

INTERPRETERS

Due to the communication between a deaf person and a hearing person in QASL project, an interpreter is required to facilitate the message. The interpreter will interpret spoken English into American Sign Language and vice versa. There will be at least 2 interpreters assigned to QASL project.

The interpreters will be paid by hourly rate with reimbursement for mileage. It is the business practice in the United States of America to pay interpreters by hour of an actual performance. The interpreters will be hired to interpret the meetings of Deaf Signers and scholars. There will be at least 5 hours a week of interpreting time.

The interpreters will be hired based on their ability to understand Islamic vocabulary, proficiency in American Sign Language, good listening skill, and professional certification. There will be no fixed numbers of interpreters assigned to QASL project. The interpreters will be hired from Washington D.C. area based on schedule availability.

PROJECT MANAGER

The project manager will be hired to keep track of overall progress of QASL and deliver reports. The project manager for QASL is the main coordinator with these duties:

- Oversee the QASL project progress
- Make reports to Global Deaf Muslim Board on the project status
- Monitor the Deaf Signers to evaluate their progress, performance, and teamwork
- Monitor the scholars for their attendance, advice, and involvement
- Coordinate the schedules among Deaf Signers, interpreters, and scholars
- Supervise the budget for QASL expenditures
- Communicate with the public about the progress of QASL
- Monitor the video production

The project manager will be a primary contact person for QASL progress when requested by public, donors, grantors, and other GDM staffs. The project manager is a full time job with benefits in order to recruit the most suitable person. The project manager will work at GDM main office in Virginia, USA with other employees. The project manager will be hired based on the experience of past projects, ability to manage many people, and skill in coordinating.

ADVISERS

From time to time, QASL will have advisers for a short term or for a specific task to give information to enrich the understanding of converting Qu'ran into ASL. Persons who are expert in American Sign Language grammar structure, expert in subtle meaning of Qu'ran verses, expert in production of video, and expert in planning the translation will be hired for one time consultancy.

VIDEO PRODUCTION & DISTRIBUTION

After Deaf Signers worked with scholars to understand the verses and developed appropriate sign language translation, the video production will be the next step. The Deaf Signers will make a video of them signing verses into ASL. There will be a video for each surah in the Quran. The project manager will hire a contracted video editor to capture Deaf Signers through video equipment and edit the videos.

Once the first draft video is completed, the video will be sent to test viewers to gather feedback on comprehension, clarity, and visual appeal. Once the feedback is collected, the Deaf Signers will make revisions to the videos for final draft. After the final version of the video is edited, it will be published online and put in a DVD. The distribution will be free to all who asks for DVD in order to spread Islam to as many Deaf people as possible. The videos will be uploaded to popular online video website. GDM will pay the cost of uploading videos, showing videos online, and website hosting.

The equipments that are needed for the project are video camera, camcorder, video editing computer, video editing software, studio light, and accessories for machines.

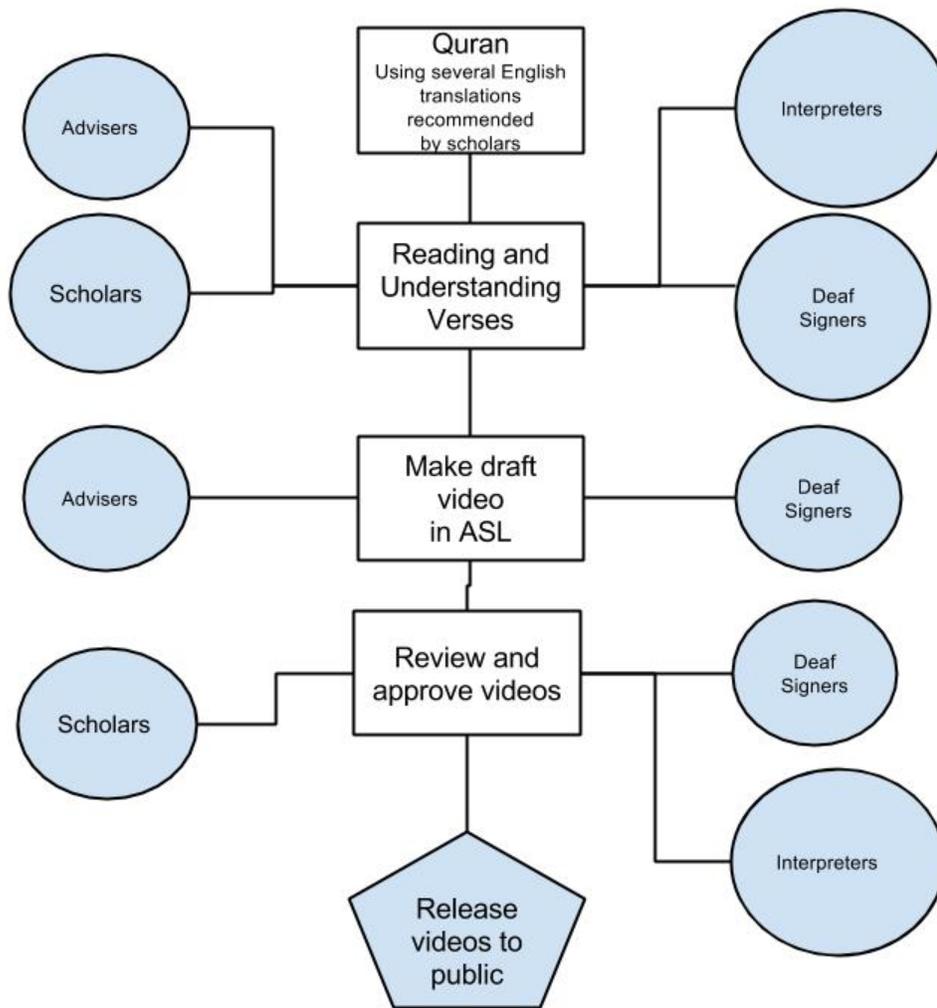
ADMINISTRATION

The QASL project will not be able to happen without an administration to oversee the continuity of project. The administration is made of office location, support staff, utilities, promotion, and supplies. The GDM main office in Virginia, USA will be the location where QASL project workplace is.

The utilities will be monthly Internet access fee, electricity bill, and office rent. They are necessary to provide a workplace for people that are involved with QASL project. The study materials are Quran books, reference books, manuals for video production, and supplies for meetings.

Promotion expense covers the cost of raising awareness of QASL by online, mail, publication, and event. The money allocated to promotion will increase the involvement from Muslim community in USA in the project and bring good news to Deaf Muslims that the Quran is being translated into ASL. The project is useless if no one knows about it.

Explanation of the process



The flowchart shows how the process of making Quran available in ASL looks like. That is the difficult process. The explanation of each step:

Research and Understand Verses

The scholars review several reputable English translations of the Holy Qu’ran. More than 20 authentic English translations of the Qur’an are used to develop verses to use for videos. The major classic and modern commentaries (Tafaseer) of the Qur’an are used to understand the meanings of verses. The scholars use the understanding based on the classic Arabic lexicon of the Qur’an. In order to make the translation in ASL understandable and smooth, the team has been repeatedly discussing all kinds of details of every single verse/word of the Surahs in the light of the above three sources. The scholars, deaf signers, and interpreters will work together to go over each verse to make sure the meanings are clear understood.

Translating into ASL draft video

After research and understanding is complete, Quran verses are then translated into ASL by Deaf Signers. Deaf Signers will study and develop appropriate sign language hand gestures for words in the verses.

Recording Drafts

Video is taken of the verses being signed in ASL to create a first draft by Deaf Signers and video producers.

Review and Approve videos

The draft videos are submitted to the scholars for final review. Scholars, Deaf Signers, and interpreters will meet to review the videos. The interpreters will watch the videos and repeat what the deaf signers say for scholars to listen. If the scholars are satisfied then the draft videos are approved. If changes needed to be made, the scholars will inform the deaf signers what corrections to make to the videos and meanings. After any necessary changes are made, final video recording of the finished translation takes place.

Editing

Chapter and verse indexes, graphics, maps and other helpful information is added to the final video by the video producers.

Releasing the Videos

Upon completion of the video, it is prepared for DVD and online video. Publication and announcement will be made to inform the world about the availability of videos.

Budget Explanation

The annual budget of \$493,200 US dollar is based on the information gathered from various sources. 5 years commitment will cost \$2.5 million US dollar. 5 years of financial commitment will allow all involved people to know that the project will continue without interruption and the goal of providing an accessibility to Quran for Deaf will not be abandoned. The figures are based on the living cost and average wage in Virginia, USA.

The salary of \$35,000 USD for a full time Deaf Signer is based on the median salary for a similar job of translating a book to a different language. That salary amount is sufficient to cover the cost of living in Virginia, to pay for basic necessities, and for family needs. That salary is taxable by the U.S. government. There will be four Deaf Signers, which bring the total salary expense to \$140,000 USD a year.

The salary of \$15,000 USD for a part time Deaf Signer is based on the median salary for a similar job of translating a book to a different language. That salary amount is a reflection of limited hours per week the part time Deaf Signer will be made available to the QASL project. That salary is taxable by the U.S. government. There will be 2 part time Deaf Signers, which bring the total salary expense to \$30,000 USD a year.

The salary of \$40,000 for a project manager takes into consideration the duties that position requires. That job is a full time weekly job that requires an ongoing attention on the Quran in ASL project. The project manager will work at GDM main office in Virginia, USA. The project manager is required to give a full attention to the project without a distraction due to financial issue. That salary is taxable by U.S. government. That salary amount is sufficient to cover the cost of living in Virginia, to pay for basic necessities, and for family needs.

The salary of \$30,000 for a scholar takes into consideration the knowledge that position requires. That job requires an extensive understanding of Arabic to English translation and the correct meaning of the verses. The scholar will be recruited from the region where GDM office is at. That salary is taxable by U.S. government. Oftentime scholars already have other commitments. In order to make them to be available for QASL project, a reasonable salary is necessary to provide them the time for the Deaf Signers and the preparation of advice on verses' meaning.

In order to recruit the most qualified Deaf Signers to GDM main office in Virginia, USA, a lodge needed to be provided. The average rent for 1 or 2 bedroom in Virginia is about \$2,000 a month. GDM will make the arrangement to find an office near the main office to allow the Deaf Signers to have a good transportation. The cost of rent near Washington D.C. is one of the highest in USA therefore \$2,000 a month is reflection of that market rate. The annual cost of lodge is \$24,000 maximum per year paid from GDM treasury to apartment management company.

The interpreting service is paid by hourly rate and mileage reimbursement, which are standard practices of interpreting industry in USA. The interpreter will be paid \$55 an hour for actual performance and \$0.55 cent per mile reimbursement. The reimbursement covers the cost of getting to GDM main office from another place where interpreters are. The market rate around Washington D.C. area is \$85 a hour. However, a long term commitment contract does produce a discount on rate, which GDM is able to obtained from various interpreters. The interpreters will bill GDM the hours and miles for compensation at the end of each month.

In US, GDM as an employer is responsible for payroll taxes and expenses for employees and contractors. All incomes from jobs are taxable. The employer is obliged to send taxes to US government on behalf of employees. The average tax on pay is about 20% which GDM must pay for employees. That is about \$51,600 a year. That amount will be used to pay federal, state, medical, and social security taxes. Also there are annual fees for filings with the government offices about employment.

Transportation expense of \$5,000 is used to bring Deaf Signers to GDM main office to take reside at. The transportation expense covers the cost of airfare, cab, and bus in Washington D.C. from departure cities.

The video production cost of \$30,000 will be used to pay a team of editors to do the video editing. GDM will make contracts with various video editors in US to work with Deaf Signers to produce high quality videos. The amount is based on average hourly rate and past contracts GDM have with other video editors.

Video distribution cost of \$5,000 will be used to pay the expense spreading the videos to Deaf. There are several methods GDM will use to spread the videos. GDM will produce DVD with videos that show Quran in ASL and mail to who requests it. GDM will pay for the cost of dvd and shipping. GDM will pay to online video providers such as YOUTUBE and VIMEO to show Quran in ASL videos for world to see.

\$10,000 budget for equipment will cover the cost of acquiring machines that are needed for a high quality video editing. 2 video cameras will be purchased and 2 camcorders will be purchased. 2 Mac desktop will be purchased for video editing. Wires, lens, and video accessories will be purchased to provide various options for video shooting. As more Deaf Signers are added to the team, more equipment will be needed to do several video shootings at once.

\$500 a month for online video hosting is to cover the expense of storing lot of videos online at cloud storage for distribution and backup.

The office rent at GDM main office is \$1,500 a month. The office is where GDM main activities are at, headquarter is at, and QASL workplace is at. The office is located at a city named Falls Church in Virginia, USA.

\$300 a month utilities will cover \$200 a month for Internet connection and \$100 for electricity bill at the GDM main office where QASL project is at.

\$500 supplies for each month will cover papers, pens, stationery, snacks for Deaf Signers and scholars, postages, mails, and things that an office needs.

\$2,000 study material expense is allocated to buy Quran books, reference books published by recognized scholars to improve the understanding of verses, study assistance tools, and furniture for studying room.

The budget of \$1,000 per month to promotion of project will cover all activities to raise awareness about QASL. The money will be used to print banners, fliers, posters, stand up displays, advertisements, newsletters, and postcards to inform the world. The promotion will inform the world the progress in the QASL project. Also the promotional budget will be used to optimize the discovery of QASL videos online when someone is looking for a video of Quran in a sign language.

Information about Global Deaf Muslim

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GDM is 501(c)3 tax exempt organization
All donations to GDM are tax deductible for US taxpayers

Desired Quran in ASL Budget

| Expenditure | Year Cost | Quantity | Total |
|-----------------------|-----------|----------|------------|
| Full Time Deaf Signer | \$ 35,000 | 4 | \$ 140,000 |
| Part Time Deaf Signer | \$ 15,000 | 2 | \$ 30,000 |
| Project Manager | \$ 40,000 | 1 | \$ 40,000 |
| Lodge for signers | \$ 2,000 | 12 | \$ 24,000 |
| Scholars | \$ 30,000 | 2 | \$ 60,000 |
| Interpreting Service | \$ 50,000 | 1 | \$ 50,000 |
| Payroll Expense | \$ 51,600 | 1 | \$ 51,600 |
| Transportation | \$ 5,000 | 1 | \$ 5,000 |
| Video Production | \$ 30,000 | 1 | \$ 30,000 |
| Video Distribution | \$ 5,000 | 1 | \$ 5,000 |
| Video Equipment | \$ 10,000 | 1 | \$ 10,000 |
| Online Video Hosting | \$ 500 | 12 | \$ 6,000 |
| Office Rent | \$ 1,500 | 12 | \$ 18,000 |
| Utilities | \$ 300 | 12 | \$ 3,600 |
| Supplies | \$ 500 | 12 | \$ 6,000 |
| Study Materials | \$ 2,000 | 1 | \$ 2,000 |
| Project Promotional | \$ 1,000 | 12 | \$ 12,000 |

TOTAL \$ 493,200

