

**The Finnish Deafblind Association (FDBA)**  
**Suomen Kuurosokeat ry**  
**Risto Hoikkanen**  
**May 2025**

## **COUNTRY REPORT OF THE FINNISH DEAFBLIND ASSOCIATION (FDBA) for The Nordic Leadership Forum on Deafblindness in Tampere, 2025**

### **The Truth and Reconciliation Process**

The Finnish Deafblind Association is actively involved in the Truth and Reconciliation Process concerning the Deaf and Sign Language Communities in Finland. The process

- operates 1 August 2025 until 31 December 2027
- under the Ministry of Justice
- functionally independent
- secretariat: Secretary General, Senior Specialist, Planner.
- collaborates with steering group, including representatives from:
  - Finnish Association of the Deaf
  - Finlandssvenska teckenspråkiga rf
  - Finnish Deafblind Association
  - Finnish Deaf History Society – Finlands dövhistoriska sällskap rf)
  - CodaFinland
  - government ministry officials

### **The Objectives**

The main goal is to promote reconciliation between the sign language community and the Finnish State. The State of Finland will acknowledge its responsibility and, together with the deaf and sign language communities, work to strengthen the implementation of their rights to benefit the entire deafblind community in Finland.

The process will also support the development of a multi-tiered psychosocial support system that is culturally and linguistically aware of the needs of both sign language users and deafblind individuals.

In practice, the process will

- documentate and inform of past wrongdoings
- identify current structural issues
- propose long-term measures actions that combat discrimination
- compile a comprehensive report

### **The Economic Situation**

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To beat the economic challenges the Finnish Government has set significant savings targets affecting nearly all society sectors but with particularly pronounced impact on special groups heavily dependent on services, such as deafblind individuals. Thus the fulfilment of rights and raising awareness of the situation of deafblind people has become an enhanced part of FDBA's mission.

**Positive Visibility on Deafblindness**

Frans Leijon (1878–1947), a remarkable Finnish deafblind pioneer, has received significant attention in 2024–25:

- Theater Totti & Riksteatern Crea jointly produced play “Frans” on tour in Finland and Sweden
- Anita Hellöre's Swedish novel “Mästare Frans” published in Finnish
- Professor Hannu Salmi's non-fiction book “Frans Leijon – The Remarkable Life of a Deafblind Man” published in Finland

**Education and Workshops**

To improve all kinds of services for the deafblind people FDBA has tried to increase the personnel's understanding of deafblindness by training professionals and also students of educational institutions. E.g. taxi drivers have been trained to effectively communicate with and serve deafblind passengers.