

Stories of SA's deaf will be 'heard' online

As more broadcasters look at online television as an alternative option, a whole new group of viewers previously left out of television is being targeted.



With more than 600,000 deaf people in South Africa, a Johannesburg company is hoping to provide web-based sign language programming to the deaf, that will include interviews, news, sport and human interest stories about the deaf.

Although they are more than a year away from their target of 1,000 hours of viewing content, DeafAfrica is training aspiring young deaf filmmakers.

Alex Nyawo, 21, who was born hearing impaired but became deaf, is one such filmmaker.

He said sign language-only content was a good idea, adding it was easier to understand if it was filmed and created by deaf people.

Nyawo, currently studying filmmaking at the Creative Arts College in Durban, said as an aspiring documentary filmmaker, this was "a dream come true".

They might be deaf - but that doesn't mean they lack talents

"Most of those who can speak never take us seriously. Some deaf [people] have talents. It's time to prove to the world that we deaf have got talent," Nyawo said.

He said he wanted "to show the world the lives, thoughts and stories of the deaf through film".

Nyawo will join the DeafAfrica team once he has finished his studies.

The website's executive producer, Gui Steyn, said they want to produce programmes in the style of documentaries, but hope to cover everything that traditional television covers.

He said they are training independent deaf filmmakers to go into their own communities to film deaf-related stories.

"They have better access and knowledge of the regions and have different ways to tell their stories," he said.

Source: The Times, via I-Net Bridge

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