

**16.00 – 16.30**

**Ulrike Zeshan: *Sign Language Endangerment***

The notion that sign languages also feature among endangered languages is very recent, and research into this area has only just started. I present results from in-progress work conducted at the International Institute for Sign Languages and Deaf Studies (iSLanDS) in conjunction with the Foundation for Endangered Languages and UNESCO.

This project has developed a systematic methodology for assessing the vitality and degree of endangerment of sign languages based on the criteria used in UNESCO's Atlas of Languages in Danger, but taking account of modifications needed specifically for sign languages. In addition to the methodology and the initial results, I also discuss the various causes of sign language endangerment, ranging from small-scale sign languages in rural communities with hereditary deafness to larger urban communities faced with pressures of community fragmentation and the effects of Cochlear Implants.