



IFHOHYP

International Federation of Hard of Hearing Young People

IFHOHYP STUDY SESSION

“Safeguarding Human Rights of youth with hearing disability - how to cope with violence and discrimination in education and employment?”

Strasbourg, European Youth Centre of the Council of Europe

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

We, the hard of hearing young people in Europe, gathered in Strasbourg on the occasion of the Study Session “Safeguarding Human Rights of young people with hearing disability: how to cope with violence and discrimination in education and employment”,

Emphasizing the inherent dignity and worth of all people,

Recognizing that disability results in isolation only when persons with impairments encounter barriers in environment and attitude,

Fully aware of the principles and values enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular, article 23 (1) which provides for the right to work, article 26 which states that everyone has a right to education and article 27 which provides for the right of full enjoyment of cultural life and scientific advancement.

Fully aware of the United Nations Standard Rules for the Equalization of Opportunity for Persons with Disabilities,

Fully aware of the Council of Europe Action Plan 2006-2015 to promote the rights and full participation of people with disabilities in society,

Considering the newly adopted United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,

Strongly supporting the 2006-2007 Council of Europe’s youth campaign for Diversity, Human Rights and Participation “All different – All equal”,

Considering the specific nature of hearing disabilities,

Highly concerned with the current condition of young people with hearing

disability, who face severe social isolation in their everyday lives,

Carrying the burden of our personal testimonies, life stories, having experienced great difficulties in finding a place in society,

Traumatized by facing prejudice and lack of awareness of hearing disabilities,

But armed with determination, ideals and hopes,

Keeping faith in solidarity and humanity,

Strongly convinced of a common future for all persons, with and without hearing disability,

Call the states to ratify and implement the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,

Adopt the following recommendations:

1. Access to higher education

~ I want to go to school but I can't understand the lectures ~

States should provide unhindered access to higher education to all hard of hearing and deaf people in order to allow their advancement, the improvement of their living conditions.

Namely, states should ensure that hard of hearing and deaf students in universities, colleges and other venues for post-secondary education enjoy full access at no additional cost to:

- (1) evaluation of their individual needs in regard to their full participation in the education process and the life of the education institution
- (2) professional sign language interpreters, transliterators and spoken language visualisators
- (3) trained note-takers and palantypists
- (4) assistive technology devices such as FM systems and induction loop systems
- (5) written language support
- (6) subtitling of visual and audio study materials

States should ensure that hard of hearing and deaf students who apply for admission to universities enjoy in full

- (1) accessible entrance exams including extended exam duration to suit the language skills of the applicant
- (2) accessible preparatory courses

In addition, states should ensure that universities, colleges and other venues for post-secondary education employ strategies to

(1) increase awareness of the needs, rights and capabilities of students and applicants with hearing loss among the teaching and administrative staff as well as the general student body

(2) combat negative stereotypes, prejudice and discriminatory practices within the institution

2. Access to employment

~ Everyone thinks I am stupid because I can't hear ~

States should ensure, through establishment of appropriate legal framework or by reinforcing existing laws, that all hard of hearing and deaf people enjoy equal opportunities on the job market and in employment, including equal opportunities in career choice, advancement and changes.

Namely, states should ensure that private and governmental employers utilize measures to provide

(1) accessible work sites through use of human and technological assistance, i.e. interpreters, amplification devices and visual information

(2) discrimination-free work-sites which includes freedom of prejudice and harassment

(3) safe and healthy working conditions

In addition, states should implement awareness raising campaigns in order to

(1) eliminate prejudice in employers in regard to hard of hearing and deaf employees and candidates

(2) promote full understanding among employers of the communication needs and abilities of people with hearing disability

(3) increase knowledge of local anti-discrimination laws among employers and people with hearing disability themselves

3. Access to information and communication

~ I can't go to the movie with you because it's not subtitled ~

States should provide accessibility for the hard of hearing and deaf by eliminating barriers in public spaces, services and mass technology.

Public services, health care facilities and services for safety (police, firefighters) should

(1) have quotas for hiring employees in good command of sign language and good lip articulation who can assist clients whose language is sign

(2) be equipped with induction loops and/or FM systems

(3) train staff to communicate with persons with hearing disability and to use assistive technology

States should establish a text telephone and relay service, accessible in all public spaces.

States should ensure that public transportation is safe and accessible to the deaf and hard of hearing by providing visual equivalents of auditory information.

States should ensure that all television broadcasting, shows in movie theaters and movies for sale are subtitled. Sign interpretation on television should appear in a bigger portion of the screen.

States should recognize sign language as an official national language.

4. Social advertising

~ Shouting in my ear doesn't help ~

States should work to create awareness of hearing disabilities among the hearing population which includes appropriate methods of communication with hard of hearing and deaf people.

States should challenge biased media coverage of people with hearing disability.

5. Rehabilitation and technical aids

~ My hearing aid gives me headaches and my doctor says I should just get used to them ~

States should ensure that all hard of hearing and deaf people have access to lifelong speech and hearing rehabilitation. Namely, states should provide

- (1) early identification services for every newborn
- (2) access to advanced hearing aids and assistive technology, including cochlear implants
- (3) access to rehabilitation specialists
- (4) the freedom to choose sign language as a preferred language

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