



**"INTERNATIONAL DAY  
OF DEAF PEOPLE 2012"  
FIAPAS MANIFESTO**



**FROM EXPENDITURE TO INVESTMENT**  
**The current economic adjustments must not diminish  
the fundamental rights of deaf people**

*On the occasion of the International Day of the Deaf, the Confederación Española de Familias de Personas Sordas<sup>1</sup> (FIAPAS – Spanish Confederation of Families of Deaf People) wishes to alert to the fact that the measures for the rationalisation of public expenditure and the sustainability of Healthcare, Education and Social Services must not diminish the fundamental rights of people with disabilities, in our case, with hearing disabilities.*

The current scientific, medical and technological progress enables deaf people, -through communication in oral language- to attain goals which were unthinkable two decades ago in terms of a self-sufficient and independent, productive and participative life. This undoubtedly translates into a significant social benefit and should thus be understood when designing current and future budgets.

For this reason, FIAPAS **demands that the achievements attained to date be maintained**, considering that the response to the needs of deaf people today to enable them to become full-fledged citizens is -in terms of economic analysis- not only profitable, but also intelligent, whereby such response should be understood as an investment and never as an expense.

- THE ISSUE IS NOT TO ASK FOR MORE, BUT NEITHER IS IT TO SETTLE FOR LESS THAN WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED TO DATE AND CONSTITUTES A GUARANTEE FOR THE FUTURE
- THE ISSUE IS NOT TO INCREASE PUBLIC EXPENDITURE, BUT RATHER TO OBTAIN A SOCIAL BENEFIT IN THE MEDIUM TERM

**HEALTHCARE, EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT, A GUARANTEE OF WELLBEING**

**HEALTHCARE**

The advances achieved in the healthcare environment -early diagnosis, hearing aids (traditional hearing aids and implants), early speech-therapy care and treatment- enable deaf people today to have access to oral language and to hearing input information, which is fundamental to their full development and, consequently, for reaching standard levels of academic and vocational education, which will contribute to guaranteeing the enjoyment of a self-sufficient and independent life, on equal terms with the rest of citizens.

**EDUCATION**

In addition, it must be noted that the measures adopted for the rationalisation of public expenditure on education have affected issues, as yet to be duly resolved, in relation to school children with disabilities, including children with hearing disabilities. We are referring particularly to the **training of teachers, the staffing of speech therapists, ratios, hours of class and making provision for substitute teachers to cover absences, in addition to scholarships and study grants.**

The implementation of these measures must not overlook the specific needs of these children as, if they do, they will create new barriers to their education and, as a result, for their subsequent incorporation into the ordinary labour market.

**EMPLOYMENT**

It is precisely in the working environment where the consequences of the economic cutbacks are already being felt, with a significant reduction in the **lines of support to the employment services specialised in the integration of people with disabilities into the ordinary labour market.** The possible elimination of this channel of integration would reduce the right of deaf people to work on an equal basis and enjoy equal opportunities like everyone else.

To sum up, aware that these years of crisis and of precariousness call for an in-depth analysis of the investments to be made in order to estimate the returns to be obtained from them, **those of us at FIAPAS remind society that:**

**THE PROVISION OF THE MEANS WHICH MAKE IT POSSIBLE TO RENDER THE BASIC RIGHTS OF DEAF PEOPLE EFFECTIVE, IN RELATION TO THEIR COMMUNICATION THROUGH ORAL LANGUAGE, BRINGS WITH IT evident returns from the investment made, thanks to the generation of wellbeing and of wealth, obtained from their independent and active participation in society.**

An outcome which in personal and social terms -and also in economic terms- means **MAXIMISING THE INVESTMENT.**

<sup>1</sup> FIAPAS, a national-wide organisation, is the biggest platform of representation of the families of deaf people in Spain. It has been working to improve quality of life of deaf people and their families for more than 34 years. [fiapas@fiapas.es](mailto:fiapas@fiapas.es) [www.fiapas.es](http://www.fiapas.es)