

Author/Autoras: Kouppanou, Anna (akouppanou@hotmail.com) and Phtiaka, Helen. University of Cyprus, Cyprus

Title/ Título: Factors of configuration on educational policy for the deaf in Cyprus between 1980 and 2003

Factores que configuran la política educativa para sordos en Chipre entre 1980 y 2003

Topic: Educating exceptional children. The influence of family, school and social contexts

Educación de niños con necesidades específicas. Influencia de la familia, el centro docente y el contexto social

Presentation time/Día de presentación: Session in English. Friday 16, 10:15-11:45 a.m. Room 4, Third Floor

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Abstract

The current paper aims to locate the main factors (historical circumstances, legislation, reports, interest groups) which contributed to the configuration of the educational policy for the Deaf within the frames of the Cyprus Education System in the period from 1980 until today. An attempt will be made to represent the climate which prevailed in the crucial period after the legislation of 1979 and up to the passing of new legislation 113 (J)/99 in 1999. The conflicting and complementary interests of all institutions and bodies concerned (Ministry of Education, organizations of the disabled, parental organizations, special schools, e.t.c.) about the integration of deaf children will be discussed in an effort to show how education policy is formulated, often distinctly divided from educational principles. The results of the research suggest that it was the Pancyprian Parents Association of the Deaf –where hearing parents held the majority- which was demanding integration of their children in mainstream classes without delay. On the contrary the Cyprus Special School for the deaf, as well as the Pancyprian Association for the Deaf, insisted on separatism and the important role of special schooling for the deaf. However the effort of the Pancyprian Parents Association was later supported by schools and teachers and the local ‘Friends of the Deaf’ associations. This fact along with the positive attitude of the Ministry led to the acceptance of integration and its general implementation in Cyprus’s educational settings.