Organisation of Provision to Support Inclusive Education

European Agency

- 1996 - established as an initiative of the Danish Ministry of education following the end of the EU HELIOS programme

- 1999 - the original member countries (15 EU member states, Iceland and Norway) 'took ownership' of the Agency

- 2003 - the Agency obtained a legal basis at the European level that was approved by the European Parliament

- Main secretariat in Odense, Denmark and European Liaison office in Brussels, Belgium

Mission

- The Agency is a permanent network of ministerial representatives acting as the member countries' platform for collaboration regarding the promotion of quality and equity in education as a means to achieving social cohesion

- The Agency activities are aligned with European Council priorities and objectives for education

- All projects and activities are identified via Agency representatives as being priority for their countries

Organisation of Provision to support Inclusive Education

- Looks at how systems of provision are organised to meet the needs of learners identified as having disabilities
  - UNCRPD definition of disability
  - learners in mainstream - compulsory school sector
- Provides information on how countries organise and evaluate provision; explores key issues and challenges and includes information on possible ways forward and change management

Methodology

- RBs/networks gathered country information and examples of practice

- Agency staff, Project Advisory Group, External Consultants undertook analysis and activities

- Agency work and recent literature reviewed

  – Research on UNCRPD implementation and monitoring

  – Analysis of country information

  – Investigation of 5 case study sites –, Essunga, Flensburg, Ljubljana, Valetta, Vienna

- 5 seminars held at these sites to explore key themes

Outputs

- Literature Review
- Country reports and examples of practice – updated national overviews
- Reports from 5 selected case study sites
- Notes from 5 thematic seminars
- Project final overview report
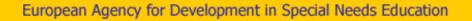- Practical tool to support decision makers

Summary of issues raised by country information

- Legislation

  – part of the general system?

  – should recognise rights of children with disabilities to (early) support, quality education (without discrimination), access to and full participation in all educational activities, inclusion in community

- Increasing the capacity of all schools:

  – developing role of specialist settings in providing support

  – supporting initial teacher education and on going professional development though collaboration and networking

  – providing training for LSAs to support all learners

Summary of issues cont'd

- Curriculum

  - increasing flexibility, 'transferable' skills

- Assessment of needs

  - reducing 'labels' and focusing on support needed to access educational opportunities (participation – autonomy, belonging, competence)

  - co-ordinating inter-agency approaches and a move away from a 'medical' model (with learner/family involvement)

- Assessment for/of learning

  - designing national tests etc to allow access to all

  - developing on-going assessment and feedback to support further learning

Summary of issues cont'd

- Leadership for inclusion

  - is distributed or shared

  - develops an ethos of inclusion, supports teachers and focuses on learning for all

  - engages in self-review, using data/information for improvement

  - collaborates/networks with range of stakeholders, parents, community

- Funding

  - delegated, responsive – rewards early intervention and success, increases capacity (proactive not reactive)

  - supports inclusive accountability

Inclusive accountability

Accountability systems e.g. inspection are a powerful driver.....

- How can 'softer' skills be taken into account in a more holistic view of progress?

- How can schools be recognised for building capacity to succeed with learners who may need additional support – as evidenced by a reduction in support (rather than a race for resources)?

Findings from country visits

- Collaboration at all levels – in classroom, school, local community with good co-ordination, communication and correspondence

- Community/area wide school transformation – with support. Change in response to crisis?

- Strong and trusting relationships

- Shared values that put the learner at the centre of services and take longer term view of benefits

- Leadership – strong, visionary, distributed - with regard for democratic principles, creating an open 'no blame' culture

Findings cont'd

- High regard/respect for learners (and families) and listening to their views – engagement and motivation

- Positive attitudes and acceptance of responsibility for all learners – support as part of the 'regular' system

- Inclusive pedagogy – use of special educators and subject teacher together

- On-going professional development: use of research, co-teaching, regular meetings/ support, links to initial teacher education institutions

Findings cont'd

- Flexibility in school/class organisation, timetabling, learner grouping

- Curriculum - cross curricular competences, study skills – coherence and relevance

- Assessment – 'can do', assessment for learning with active involvement of learners, recognition of wide range of achievement

- Different use of resources – not more

Common challenges

- The language of inclusion and 'inclusive thinking'

- Allocating support without 'labels' – acceptance of different forms of support as part of the 'regular' system

- Including learners with learning disabilities (curriculum issues) – particularly in secondary education

- Professional development of school leaders, teachers, support staff

- Providing services 'close to home' for low incidence disabilities

- Cooperation between different adminstrations (national, local) and different agencies

- Flexible (delegated) funding models – incentives for success

Further Information

The Agency offers information and resources, which can be accessed via the website:

www.european-agency.org

- – Project web areas
- – Reports, literature reviews, policy flyers
- – News section, newsletter and the eBulletin

Agency publications can be downloaded in up to 22 European languages