



**EURONEWS ON SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION
ISSUE 19**

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Readers,

In this issue of EuroNews we bring you some interesting examples of new initiatives in our member countries, as well as the latest news from the Agency.

I hope you will find the information interesting and useful!

If you want to know more, I hope you will take the time to visit our new website where you can keep up to date with country data and recent legislation and policy initiatives across Europe, or explore the outcomes of the investigations we are conducting on behalf of our 27 member countries.

Right now, so many exiting things are happening that I cannot describe all of them here, but I would like to share some of the highlights with you:

We have just completed a major thematic project on one of the most challenging issues Europe is currently faced with: how to deal with 'Multicultural Diversity and Special Needs Education'. At the same time, two other projects are coming to an end - one examining the progress made by countries in the area of 'Early Childhood Intervention' and the other looking at how a set of 'Indicators for the Conditions of Inclusive Education' can be developed at a European level. We are currently finalising these projects and in the next issue of EuroNews, we will share more information with you.

This year we began projects that look into two new priority areas for our member countries. One of these focuses upon 'Teacher Education for Inclusion' and involves representatives from the European Commission and UNESCO International Bureau for Education as participant observers. The other project we are conducting, with the involvement of Cedefop and the OECD is concerned with 'Vocational Education and Training'.

During 2010, we will collaborate with the UNESCO Education for All Secretariat to develop a resource base that presents innovative examples of policy and practice for inclusive education. These examples will illustrate the policy actions advocated in the UNESCO 'Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education' document.

Another of next year's highlights will be an international conference that the Agency and the Spanish Ministry of Education are organising in March under the Spanish Presidency of the EU. The conference will be a reflection upon current improvements in inclusive education within the scope of the Lisbon 2010 objectives. At the same time, the aim is to exchange experiences in this field with Latin American countries.

We hope you find this issue of EuroNews on Special Needs Education informative. As ever, we would be interested to receive your feedback. Please use the information at the end of this issue if you would like to contact us.

We wish you pleasant reading!

Cor Meijer

Director



NEWS FROM THE EUROPEAN AGENCY FOR DEVELOPMENT IN SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION

1. NEW AGENCY WEBSITE

During the last year, the Agency has developed a completely new website that was launched in the spring of 2009!

This development work was conducted together with the Institute for Learning and Research Technology (ILRT) at Bristol University, United Kingdom (England) <http://www.ilrt.bris.ac.uk/>. A user analysis survey was conducted online and further input was collected through the Agency country representatives. All the results were used in the development of the structure and design of the new website.

Based on our users' suggestions we now have the following new features available:

- The News section has been expanded to include our EuroNews magazine, press releases and our Electronic Bulletin. The most recent posts in the news section are also available on the homepage, from where users may subscribe to be notified of Agency news;
- All of our member countries' information is now also accessible directly from the homepage or via an interactive map;
- On each dedicated country page, all publications available in the national language are listed with relevant links;
- The website now also has a search function, which allows users to find specific information (relevant for them) more quickly;
- The accessibility of the website has been increased, complying with W3C usability recommendations.

We would like to invite all readers to explore our new website: www.european-agency.org

2. HIGHER EDUCATION ACCESSIBILITY GUIDE

<http://www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/HEAG>

The Higher Education Accessibility Guide (HEAG) web area is a unique guide to disability support services in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across Europe.

HEAG provides different types of information relevant for students with disabilities who are thinking about studying abroad. The intention is that this information will help students and the professionals that support them to make decisions about possible study programmes and exchange activities.

Project experts from 26 Agency member countries plus Croatia and Slovakia have collaborated to collect focused information, which can be accessed:

- Via country pages, offering country specific information on higher education;
- Via the HEAG database that allows users to search specialist services and accessibility support for students in higher education in each of the countries.

From the country pages you can access information regarding support for students with disabilities, the national approach to higher education and disability, as well as contact



information of key people – including the HEAG project experts – in the country you have selected.

In addition, you can search for specific institutions and the availability of disability support services using the direct links to the searchable database. All information is available in English and the language of the country the information refers to.

The information in the database will be updated every two years.

For more information, please contact: heag@european-agency.org

3. ASSESSMENT IN INCLUSIVE SETTINGS

More than 150 participants representing 27 countries met during the Conference ‘Assessment in Inclusive Settings’ organised jointly by the Cypriot Ministry of Education and Culture and the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, Limassol, Cyprus, 23-24 October 2008. The conference was the end point of three years work examining assessment policy and practice that supports inclusion in mainstream settings.

The project ‘Assessment in Inclusive Settings’ started in 2004 when the Representative Board members of the Agency met and identified ‘assessment’ as an area of concern for the development of inclusion. The Agency project was divided into two main phases: Phase 1 (2005-2006) and Phase 2 (2006-2008). The first phase involved 23 countries and focused on primary education. In the second phase of the project, 26 countries were involved and the focus was expanded to also consider assessment in secondary education.

During Phase 1, project participants attempted to clarify the meaning of the term ‘inclusive assessment’, and after a thorough analysis of policy documents and a discussion of current practice, they finally agreed on a common definition:

An approach to assessment in mainstream settings where policy and practice are designed to promote the learning of all pupils as far as possible. The overall goal of inclusive assessment is that all assessment policies and procedures should support and enhance the successful inclusion and participation of all pupils vulnerable to exclusion, including those with SEN.

Phase 2 involved visits to five educational sites with innovative inclusive assessment practice: Reutte District Resource Centre in the province of Tirol, Austria; Peder Lykke School in co-operation with the educational-psychological advisory service (PPR) of Copenhagen, Denmark; schools in the Montluçon district, France; the State Outreach Centre for Visually Impaired, LFS-Schleswig, Germany and Cavendish School, Runcorn, UK (England) and their mainstream school partners. During the two visits to each site, country project experts had the opportunity to see school settings and discuss examples of assessment practice.

A crucial finding of the project was that inclusive assessment should be considered as an on-going process that involved mainstream teachers, parents and pupils themselves rather than just professionals from outside the mainstream classroom. The approaches, methods and tools, as well as the people involved should be in line with the view that inclusive assessment is a fundamental part of the process of teaching and learning.

Another important finding emerging from the project is related to the concept of Assessment *for* Learning and how this could be applied to the assessment of pupils with SEN. Evidence showed that Assessment *for* Learning for pupils with and without SEN was



based on the same principles and that the only difference in Assessment *for Learning* is essentially in the type of tools and assessment/communication methods used by teachers.

Overall, the project reached the conclusion that assessment is an essential area for the development of inclusive education and that policy makers and practitioners need to consider their policies and practice in the light of inclusive assessment principles.

The information about the main findings from the project can be found in different Agency materials including the report *Assessment in Inclusive Settings – Key Issues for Policy and Practice*, which presents the main findings from the first phase of the project. It is based on information describing assessment policy and practice provided by 23 countries and it is accompanied by a summary flyer.

In addition, a number of short discussion papers are available for downloading from the Agency website:

Implementing Inclusive Assessment – uses the voices of policy makers and practitioners talking about their experiences and practice, to present a synthesis of key issues for implementing inclusive assessment.

Assessment for Learning and Pupils with Special Educational Needs – discusses the concept of Assessment for Learning and how it can be applied to the education of pupils with SEN.

Outline Indicators for Inclusive Assessment – presents a series of outline indicators and associated preconditions that can be used as a guide to address the nature and the development of inclusive assessment policies, procedures and practice.

Cyprus Recommendations on Inclusive Assessment – is the result of the debates and collective conclusions of the country representatives attending the Agency conference held in Limassol in October 2008. It presents their collective recommendations to European policy makers for developing assessment processes that support inclusion. The *Cyprus Recommendations* were circulated by the Cypriot Minister of Education to all of his Ministerial colleagues across Europe.

The Assessment in Inclusive Settings web area – (<http://www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/assessment-in-inclusive-settings>) presents all of the materials developed as a result of the 3-year project. It includes information about the nominated experts who participated in the project, and a collection of materials from Phase 1 and 2 of the project. In addition to the materials listed above, there are also:

- *Full Country Reports* that are indexed using agreed key terms from the project;
- *A Recommendations Matrix*, prepared as a tool to help readers to cross reference all the recommendations presented in the Phase 1 of the summary report, with the project Country Reports.
- *A non-European literature review*;
- *The Assessment Resource Guide*, which contains resources from across 25 countries that have been collected in the second phase of the project.

For more information, please go to www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/assessment-in-inclusive-settings or contact: secretariat@european-agency.org



NEWS FROM AGENCY MEMBER COUNTRIES

4. DENMARK – JOINT ACTION: A STIMULUS FOR EXPLORING INCLUSION

Together with the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education the staff of Peder Lykke School in co-operation with the educational-psychological advisory service (PPR) of Copenhagen have looked into new ways of welcoming parents into the school through the so-called Joint Action project.

Two of the professionals at the centre of developing this collaborative project – Kirsten Hansen, Development Consultant, and Jette Lentz, Leader of the Psychology Service – describe the project in this way:

‘We support local politicians in developing methods and strategies for inclusion within the field of special education in the Children and Youth Department in Copenhagen. The methods applied in our Joint Action project have been disseminated and introduced in, not only in our own district (Inner City), but in schools in other districts of Copenhagen as well. In addition, the psychologists working in the educational-psychological advisory service (PPR) in our district are now using a more holistic approach in their work.

The municipality of Copenhagen has decided to initiate special education reform to ensure that children with special needs are included in the Folkeskole. The reform has been introduced in parallel with the Joint Action project to allow us to obtain influence from and disseminate knowledge to various stakeholders in the Children and Youth Administration.

In September 2008 we held a conference at the Copenhagen City Hall. Representatives from the Agency Assessment in Inclusive Settings project together with a number of Danish researchers presented their views and attitudes to a number of professionals and decision-makers from the municipality. We have also produced a DVD about the project [please use the contact information below for more details].

Since then, things have developed quickly. From the 8 districts in Copenhagen, the Inner City District has been chosen as the pioneer district of the special education reform. The work in the district will make it possible for us to become a role model for the other districts in the municipality.

We were chosen because we were involved in Agency project work, which involved exploring developments in assessment across Europe. The project gave us a good opportunity to share international information, as well as influence politics and methods of inclusion in the municipality of Copenhagen.’

For more information, please contact: Kirsten Hansen, Development Consultant, e-mail: Kirsha@Buf.Kk.Dk, or Jette Lentz, Leader of Psychology Service at the Children and Youth Administration, e-mail: Jette.Lentz@Buf.Kk.Dk, both from Copenhagen City Department, Denmark.

5. GREECE – RECENT REFORMS IN THE HELLENIC EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

The Greek Government recently adopted a set of new strategic objectives focusing on tertiary education. The Government managed to promote initiatives legislated between 2004 and 2007, aimed at converging with European educational standards and benchmarks.



The objectives are targeted at revising the legislative framework concerning: a) Structure of educational institutions, b) A new agency for degree recognition (L 3328/2005), c) Quality assurance in higher education (HE), d) lifelong learning and joint post-graduate study programmes (L 3369 & 3404/2005), e) Establishment of the Hellenic International University (L3391/2005) and other laws concerning ICT in teaching, vocational education, equal treatment of men and women, entry requirements in higher education and eligibility criteria. Two key developments can be highlighted:

1. Reforms in the operation of inclusive schools – all pupils follow the mainstream state system, which considers their particular educational needs; for example intercultural education for pupils from ethnic minority groups and special education for pupils with special educational needs. However, schools have been established for Muslim minorities.

2. Reforms in the Teacher Training system – from 2005-2007, the Pedagogical Institute conducted a significant programme for Teacher Training. Training for teachers in meeting special educational needs is organised and conducted within the framework of the general system of training. The Law of Special Education clearly states that '*Teachers who teach in schools for special education and inclusive settings follow re-education programmes in the Regional Centres for Training*' together with all other teachers of primary and secondary education as defined in article 4 of the Law (i.e. all teachers follow training in special education). Since 2004 the following programmes have been implemented:

Use of ICT in teaching: a 100-hour programme provided in three phases: a) a scientific approach to using ICT in teaching, b) the process of designing and supplying ICT teaching in schools and c) problems that arise during teaching with ICT in schools as well as methods for solving them.

Training in the use of new technologies: a 96-hour programme with two actions, a) improving the use of PC's by teachers and b) use of new technologies in education.

Evaluation and exchange of opinions: Discussing problems encountered by teachers during the previous school year arising from using new books and evaluating their usability.

Training programme for the management of diverse needs: a 50-hour programme attended by teachers of primary and secondary education designed to enrich knowledge, improve practice and enhance competence in coping with learning disabilities and special abilities of pupils within an inclusive approach, behaviour problems (aggression, violence, emotional disorders) and cultural diversity.

For more information, please contact: Maria Palaska-Ioannidis, Agency National Co-ordinator: mpalask@sch.gr or Maria Michaelidou, Agency Representative Board member: smi@acm.org

6. SPAIN – 'TOTS MÚSICS, TOTS DIFERENTS' (ALL MUSICIANS, ALL DIFFERENT)

The region of Valencia is well known throughout Spain for its musical background; it is home to a large number of qualified musicians and many musical associations, who all contribute to musical education. The city of Torrent is a good example of this: it has an Auditorium and several musical associations that together with the Professional Conservatory of Music help to create an environment supportive of a musical education.

The Conservatory of Torrent is a centre that prepares music students for elementary and professional music grades. It has been running since 1971 and over the years it has increased and consolidated the wide range of educational activities on offer to the



students. At present, a total of 62 teachers, 8 personnel in administration and other services make up the staff that works with the 540 students enrolled at the Conservatory.

In 2003, coinciding with the European Year for People with Disabilities and a proposal by the members of the staff at the Conservatory, the Ministry of Education of the autonomous government of Valencia, authorised a project called 'Tots músics, tots diferents' (all musicians, all different) which allowed, for the first time in Spain, students with special educational needs to study elementary musical studies.

The slogan 'Tots músics, tots diferents' does not consider disability as something that should exclude a child from a musical education.

Five years later, 12 students who have taken part in this experimental project, are studying successfully and have achieved a high level of educational as well as social integration in their studies. This success would not have been possible without the tremendous effort and enthusiasm shown by the entire education community, as well as the support by all the public institutions (Ministry of Education, Torrent City Council) and some private companies (Mediterranean Savings Bank).

This educational project has received recognition by the Ministry of Education and has been awarded the second prize of the 'Marta Mata Award' for high educational quality in 2006 and the 'First prize in 2007 for centres developing new projects for students with special learning needs.'

Being such an innovative project, this experiment has changed the traditional concept of a Music Conservatory and as a consequence, a series of adaptations have had to be made in the centre such as reformed teacher training, a change in teachers' attitudes, restructuring of the centre and other changes to methodology and resources.

The project is seen as a genuine step forward in the search for social solidarity and justice and as an alternative to the exclusion of the most vulnerable young people in society from opportunities such as arts education.

For more information, please contact: Yolanda Jiménez Martínez, Agency National Coordinator: yolanda.jimenez@educacion.es, Manuel Tomás Ludeña, Headmaster at Conservatory of Torrent, manuel_tomas@conservatoritorrent.net

7. FRANCE – TWO NEW INNOVATIVE RESEARCH AND TRAINING INITIATIVES

The 'Olfaction, Memory, and Learning' symposium, the first event organised by the 'Handicap and Sensory Research Group', was held in Paris January 27-29, 2009.

Two questions emerging from scientific and pedagogical research, focused on the five senses were the starting point for the meeting: how can we use a sense, which exists even in the foetus, to communicate and how can we improve pedagogical activities for people with disabilities?

The symposium was the result of cooperation between the European Centre of the Science of Taste in Dijon and the INS-HEA in Suresnes (Higher National Institute for the Education of Young Disabled People and Adapted Teaching). It focused on the sense of smell, a sense which receives little attention, although it is significant in many cognitive experiences such as discrimination, memory and pleasure.

The objectives of this symposium were to: review current knowledge at the scientific and pedagogical level; show how the sense of smell can help learning, in particular for young disabled people; give new impetus to meetings and exchanges so as to share expertise in this field.



'Olfaction, Memory, and Learning' was attended by researchers from different countries, people working in the fields of health and education, experts in the sense of smell, and parents of disabled children. The question of olfaction was examined from the angle of different perceptions, sensibilities, and experiences including the links between the sense of smell, emotions and memory, the influence of smell on the learning process of young disabled people, and the applications of smell in improving the everyday life of disabled people.

Accommodating young disabled children – a 12 ½ day training programme attended by 120 people working with young children in a major city in the North of France.

The programme had two objectives: to develop an understanding of how disabled children can be accommodated in structures for young children and to enable different people in these structures to work together and exchange experiences.

The themes covered were:

- The legal and institutional framework for accommodating disabled children;
- The expertise of the partners in institutions and local associations with whom it is possible to network;
- A number of reference points in the field of disabilities, diseases and difficulties, related to the problems of accommodation, support and education of young children.

The Agency report *Early Childhood Intervention: Analysis of situations in Europe – Key Aspects and Recommendations* was given to all attendees as a reference document.

This training programme will be proposed on an experimental basis in two other towns before being offered more widely all over France.

For more information, please contact: Nel Saumont, Agency National Co-ordinator: international@inshea.fr

8. PORTUGAL – EDITORIAL LINE PROMOTES LITERACY SKILLS

In Portugal, CERCICA Publishing House has launched an editorial line of children's books accessible to all children. With the support of the Ministry of Education and Cascais Town Hall, it gathered a team of professionals who, through partnership work, have managed to fill a hitherto existing gap in the Portuguese market.

Two books were already launched in the market, *O Segredo do Sol e da Lua* and *O Gato Gatão Poeta de Profissão*. Each book is presented in four different formats: (i) written version with interactive DVD, which includes the audio version; (ii) adapted version in Pictographic Symbols for Communication; (iii) Portuguese Sign Language version and (iv) Braille version. The DVD also includes pedagogic content, presented in a playful way.

Regardless of the individual abilities of each reader, children and adults now have a tool that will contribute for the development of literacy.

For more information, please go to: <http://www.editoracercica.com/>

9. ICELAND – UNIVERSITY PROGRAMME FOR STUDENTS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

On 20 June 22 students graduated from the University of Iceland with a work related diploma specially designed for students with special educational needs.



The programme, which started in the autumn of 2007, offers for the first time in Iceland a university education for people with intellectual disabilities. The programme was organised as a two-year research development project within the Faculty of Social Studies and was in line with the official policy of an international organisation supporting people with special educational needs, the human rights convention and the policy of the University of Iceland.

The principal goal of the programme was to give students with intellectual disabilities an opportunity to fully participate in society. Taking courses with other university students was, therefore, an integral part, as was a mentor-system with other students providing support on an individual basis.

Both the teachers and the students in the programme expressed great satisfaction with the two-year experience. The administrators reported that the study had given the students increased self-esteem and improved skills in social interactions in addition to the academic knowledge and skills in the field of work that they had chosen. The students were especially pleased with the opportunity to study alongside non-intellectually disabled students, which in their opinion was a critical factor in this successful educational experience.

For more information, please contact: Bryndís Sigurjónsdóttir, Agency National Co-ordinator: bryndis@bhs.is

10. SWEDEN – EVERYDAY SCHOOL LIFE FOR PUPILS WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES: AN ETHNOLOGICAL STUDY

The social situations of pupils experiencing (teaching and) inclusion or exclusion are characteristic of everyday life in schools for pupils with physical disabilities. The school situation for these pupils is complex and requires efforts from all school personnel involved: teachers, assistants and principals to local and government authorities.

The key issue for this study is: what is everyday life in school like for these pupils? The study report has the following starting points and perspectives: constructivism; the child's perspective; the perspective of other children; ethnography and cultural analysis. It is explorative and takes an overall perspective of the everyday school life of the child.

A prominent area is the social situation of the pupils. The interaction between the pupil with a disability and their peers varies, as does the occurrence of pupils who are included and excluded. Their social situation is characterised by complexity. As an example, they are part of many different teaching situations. The school's organisational solutions and the cultures of the school and the pupils are of central importance.

Another area is the pupils' education and knowledge development. School staff and parents raise the issue of uncertainty about learning and ask for more information and knowledge. The study concludes that pupils have individual needs, for example for more time and different pedagogical solutions and that there is a need for organised in-service training and dialogue.

The study suggests there is predominant support for the principle of inclusion, but an uncertainty about how to transform practice. The pupils' complex disabilities place increased demands on the school's ability to be flexible and provide individualisation for pupils.

Other study conclusions focus upon: the importance of commitment; the recognition that excluding situations are often not evident and a hierarchy (system of power) where



disability and gender interact. These all show the need for self-reflection and inclusive strategies for *all* school personnel and authorities involved.

*For more information, please contact: Göran Nygren, Uppsala University:
goran.nygren@etnologi.uu.se*

*The report can be downloaded in Swedish from:
<http://publications.uu.se/abstract.xsql?dbid=9351>*

11. LUXEMBOURG – THE NEW ‘FUNDAMENTAL SCHOOL’

Three laws creating the framework for the new ‘fundamental school’ were voted on 21 January 2009. Together, these three laws reorganise the first nine years of education on the pedagogical and organisational level, in order to ensure better outcomes for all the pupils. They come into force in September 2009.

Each fundamental school will now be able to differentiate their education and to decide on and to implement their own initiatives to bring the pupils to and even beyond the competence levels required. The broad lines of implementation for the school year 2009-2010 are the following:

Learning cycles – from September 2009 on, all the pre-school and primary schools, now called fundamental schools, will be organised in four learning cycles. The learning cycles will replace the traditional organisation of school years.

Educational teams – in each school, all the people who teach and who take the children of the same learning cycle will consult each other and work in teams.

Multi-professional teams – each fundamental school will be able to call on a multi-professional team. Composed of different specialists, the multi-professional team will offer support to children with special needs.

Competence approach – education and learning based on competences are at the heart of the reform and a competence approach will be implemented progressively. Pedagogical teams will focus upon the competences outlined for the four education cycles and create learning situations that correspond to the competence approach.

New assessment tools – will be introduced in order to better illustrate the ways in which the pupil has developed towards the competences and in which areas she/he still has to make progress.

The school success plan – every school sets up a school success plan, which defines the particular goals fixed by the school in order to lead the pupils to success. In order to respond to the needs identified in their plan, the schools have a certain degree of autonomy. They can adjust the official schedules, choose the teaching aids, modify the grouping of the children, etc.

School committees – in Summer 2009, every school set up a school committee and appointed its chairman. From next year on, the mission of the committee will be to support school organisation, to set up the school success plan, to approve the choice of teaching aids and to work with the parents.

For more information, please go to: www.men.lu

12. BELGIUM (FLEMISH SPEAKING COMMUNITY) – PROPOSAL FOR A NEW LEARNING SUPPORT FRAMEWORK

In response to the need to have a more inclusive school system in accordance with international developments, the Minister of Education of Flanders has developed a



plan for a graded system of school learning support, including the right to choose between mainstream or special schools receiving the same level of assistance.

In accordance with the WHO (ICF) disability model, the new proposal suggests firstly ways to determine the level of curricular adaptation and assistance needed, taking into account the specific needs of the child. A classification matrix has been proposed whereby special needs are characterised by a pupil's level of required educational assistance and clusters of difficulties s/he experiences.

In order to determine the validity and reliability of this new system, a selected sample of 8,648 pupils (out of a total of 1,109,909, aged 2.5–18) from mainstream and special primary and secondary education, has been assigned to one of the matrix places. Psychologists of the 73 School Psychological Services (SPS) were asked to assign special needs, according to the new criteria. A manual and electronic web-based form have been designed, a helpdesk installed and a database opened where SPS collaborators could put in their remarks.

It has been found that about 20% of children of primary school age have some kind of special needs. Of this group, 12.5% have mild intellectual impairment and/or learning disability and 3.3% of all primary school age children have a diagnosed behavioural or autistic spectrum disorder. 16% of 12–18 year olds require higher levels of adaptation; of this group, 8.9% have mild intellectual impairment and/or learning disability; 3.4% of all secondary school age children have a diagnosed behavioural or autistic spectrum disorder.

The new matrix has proven to be a valid and reliable system. However, there are some concerns. School staff are not yet adequately prepared. A massive investment in (re)training teachers will be needed to make schools more competent in dealing with children with special needs in an inclusive way. This system will also require the School Psychological Services to be trained in the ICF-CY. This is necessary to help them to consider functioning in a bio-psycho-social way, as well as to carry out a more needs-based and dynamic assessment of potential (rather than the psychometric way which is currently widely used) and also take into account contextual factors such as family and school environment. The system is being discussed at the political level and, with the recent government change, is not yet in operation.

For more information, please contact:

Jo.lebeer@ua.ac.be & elke.struyf@ua.ac.be – University of Antwerp

marijke.wilssens@arteveldes.be – Artevelde Teacher Training College for Special Needs

theo.mardulier@ond.vlaanderen.be – Flemish Ministry of Education and Training and Agency Representative Board member

13. GERMANY – RATIFICATION OF THE UN CONVENTION FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

In March 2009 the UN convention was implemented. With its signature, Germany is obliged to enact the principle of inclusion. In the Land of Schleswig-Holstein, a year of inclusive education is being implemented under the motto: 'better together'.

In April 2009, the Schleswig-Holstein Minister of Education Ute Erdsiek-Rave stated: 'We need a change nationwide in the pedagogical direction. Because inclusive education does not mean the child has to adapt him/herself to the existing schools; it must be reversed. An inclusive mainstream school generally means every child is welcome, especially and even if she or he has health, social or educational and performance problems.'



The launch was held during an international symposium in Rendsburg, which focused on German and European participants – including Agency members – learning from each other. More events should help support this process of implementation with the aim being to develop an action plan for the next ten years, including aspects of modifying laws and regulations and the financing of a framework for an inclusive school system.

A National Conference focusing on article 24 of the UN convention on the rights of people with disabilities was held on 1st July 2009.

It featured Karin Evers-Meyer and representatives of the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs for the Needs of Disabled People, who presented the results of their campaign ‘All inclusive! The new UN-Convention’.

A brochure also presents the mandates relating to the field of education. It calls for an action plan for inclusive education; measures for free access and inclusive study conditions at universities and initiatives for financing of social aids that are more coherently organised. The campaign ‘All inclusive!’ took place between January to March with eight conferences organised by the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs for the Needs of Disabled People and 22 associations, looking at different areas of the UN Convention.

The booklet with the results of the campaign can be found at this link: <http://www.alle-inklusive.behindertenbeauftragte.de/>

14. UNITED KINGDOM (ENGLAND) – ACHIEVEMENT FOR ALL: IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES

Achievement for All is a pioneering project that will raise aspirations for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, with a focus on educational outcomes.

460 schools across 10 local authorities in England will deliver the project for two years from September 2009 through a personalised learning approach, rigorous academic assessment, tracking and intervention, engaging with parents and improving wider outcomes.

Schools and local authorities who take part in Achievement for All will be ‘trail-blazers’ for personalisation. By the end of the project, schools should have developed an ethos of high achievement for their pupils and know they have a range of evidence-based learning and teaching approaches to draw on. Local authorities participating in the projects should feel confident they are identifying and meeting the needs of children with special educational needs and disabilities and providing services that are ‘fit for purpose’.

Achievement for All is about raising the bar of ambition for all, including those with additional challenges. The project will enable children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities to feel more secure as learners, to feel positive about school life and to realise their potential.

It will engage parents, enabling them to have more confidence in the education system and play an active part in their child’s learning.

For more information, please go to: <http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/node/189431>



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