



## THEMATIC SESSION

### POSSIBILITIES AND CHALLENGES OF INCLUDING LEARNERS WITH PROFOUND AND MULTIPLE LEARNING DISABILITIES (PMLD) IN MAINSTREAM EDUCATION

Thursday, 24 November 2011

#### 14.00 Introduction to the Session and Topic

***Who are learners with profound and multiple disabilities (PMLD)? What are the key challenges around curriculum, assessment, pedagogy, multi-disciplinary support, and family/community issues? (Verity Donnelly)***

Verity will present some key definitions for this group of learners and key issues highlighted in recent research and practice about curriculum and assessment, pedagogy, multi agency approaches and family support.

#### 14.15 Panel Session: Examples in practice

***Inclusion in practice: the Malta Experience – Josephine Mamo, Malta***

Josephine will describe the transformation from Special School to Resource Centre in Malta and how this supports mainstream schools to include pupils with PMLD.

***Steps to more inclusive practice – the development of resourced provision in a mainstream school – Wendy Jones, UK (Wales)***

Wendy will describe the move from special school to resourced provision within a mainstream primary school. She will focus on the challenges of organising provision and meeting the additional support needs of this group of learners.

***A school for all? The pedagogical challenge of including learners with complex needs – Daniel Östlund, Sweden***

Daniel will outline some key challenges from a Swedish point of view around including this group of learners in the classroom and ways in which staff can promote appropriate learning environments and support meaningful relationships between all pupils.

**Questions from the audience and responses from Panel**

**15.30-16.00 Break**

**16.00 Parental views – family/community issues (Malta)**

Two parents of young people with complex needs will speak about their experiences.

**Ms. Marchita Mangiofico** will speak about the services that her son received during his education at San Miguel Special School and discuss her role as a parent.

**Ms. Claudette Attard**, parent and former resource centre teacher, will speak about her son who attends a mainstream school, emphasising the crucial importance of effective early intervention and support services, such as those provided by the San Miguel Primary Education Resource Centre.

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### **16.30      *Reflection/discussions***

Verity will chair a final discussion and summarise key issues to be covered in the paper to be drafted following the meeting.

### **17.00 Close of meeting**

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#### **Contributions to the thematic session**

The audience will be invited to ask questions and contribute to discussions during and after presentations, but as the time available is short and a large number of people are involved, we will also give delegates the opportunity to provide comments and/or additional questions in writing.

The thematic session aims to address three key questions:

- Who are learners with profound and multiple disabilities?
- How can the additional support needs of this group of learners be met in inclusive settings (i.e. with involvement of multi-agency services and families)?
- What are the key challenges of ensuring that these learners' educational needs are met through full participation in the curriculum and activities within inclusive settings? How can these be overcome?

Participants are asked to consider these questions and, if they wish, to make notes on the proforma provided below during the session. The proformas will be collected at the end of the session and information will contribute to the paper to be drafted around the questions and key issues raised at the meeting.



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## THEMATIC SESSION – PROFORMA FOR NOTES

### **Who are learners with profound and multiple learning difficulties?**

Please note here what you understand by this term. What other terms are used in your country to describe learners with the most complex needs/working at very early levels of development?

### **How can the additional support needs of this group of learners be met in inclusive settings (i.e. with involvement of multi-agency services and families)?**

Please note your thoughts on ways to ensure effective collaboration between services (e.g. education, health, social services etc.) to meet the needs of learners and their families holistically



**What are the key challenges of ensuring that these learners' educational needs are met through full participation in the curriculum and activities within inclusive settings? How can these be overcome?**

What are the principles of a 'curriculum for all' that will meet the needs of all learners/  
What are the essential features of inclusive pedagogy that will enable learners with complex needs to fully participate in all school activities?

**What resources are used in your country in the assessment and teaching of learners with PMLD/complex needs?**

References and/or practice examples relevant to the above questions can be noted here or sent by e mail to [verity@european-agency.org](mailto:verity@european-agency.org) following the meeting.

**Thank you!**