

## Putting Inclusive Assessment into Practice

All member countries of the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education have highlighted the use of assessment in inclusive settings as a key area of concern for the development of inclusive education generally. It is clearly recognised that assessment policy and practice can impact upon the educational chances of all pupils and often influences their exclusion or inclusion in mainstream schools.

One of the main challenges facing European countries at the present time centres upon developing assessment systems and procedures that facilitate rather than act as a barrier to inclusion and all countries are working to ensure their assessment policies, procedures and practice are as inclusive as possible.

The aim of the materials in this pack is to provide practitioners and policy makers with materials and resource information exploring how assessment that supports inclusion can be implemented.

The materials in this pack have all been prepared as a result of the Agency project Assessment in Inclusive Settings involving experts from 25 countries – Austria, the Flemish and French speaking communities of Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, the German Bundesländer, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom (England and Wales).

Phase 1 of the project examined policy and practice for assessment in inclusive settings. The main findings of this phase of the project are available from: <http://www.european-agency.org/site/themes/assessment/index.shtml>

These include 23 Country Reports describing assessment policy and practice a web database of country information and a synthesis report of key findings in 19 languages.

The first phase of the project ultimately led to a consideration of what is meant by inclusive assessment. This is defined as:

*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.*

Inclusive assessment is considered to be an important aim for all educational policy makers and practitioners. A central argument is that inclusive assessment practice should give a lead to general assessment practice and that:

*The principles of inclusive assessment are principles that support teaching and learning with all pupils. Innovative inclusive assessment practice demonstrates good assessment practice for all pupils.*

Inclusive assessment explicitly aims to prevent segregation by avoiding (as far as possible) forms of labelling and by focussing on learning and teaching practice that promotes inclusion in a mainstream setting.

Inclusive assessment can only be realised within an appropriate policy framework and with the appropriate organisation of schools and support to teachers who have a positive attitude towards inclusion.

Phase two of the Agency project examined how inclusive assessment can be put into practice by exploring three inter-connected themes: supporting teachers; organising schools; methods and tools for involving different 'actors' in assessment processes.

Each of the papers in this pack presents a synthesis of information on different aspects of putting inclusive assessment into practice:

- Recommendations for policy that supports inclusive assessment;
- Outline indicators for policy and practice;
- Assessment *for* learning;
- Key issues for implementing inclusive assessment.

Full versions, background and extended materials for each of these papers are available from the project website.

All information on the Agency Assessment in Inclusive Settings project including the contact details of the National Experts who contributed to the project can be found at: <http://www.european-agency.org/site/themes/assessment/index.shtml>

Also available is an on-line database of resources for assessment with links, abstracts, as well as downloads of materials and tools for teachers, researchers and other professionals: <http://www.european-agency.org/assessment/resourceguide>

More information on the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education can be obtained from:

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