

Electronic Bulletin December 2011

Dear Readers,

2011 has been an eventful year for the Agency.

Three large conferences were held this year, mobilising various stakeholders involved in inclusive education and inclusion: Mapping the Implementation of Policy for Inclusive Education (MIPIE) conference in Budapest, the Information Accessibility (i-access) conference held in Copenhagen and the third European Hearing for young people with and without special educational needs held in the European Parliament in Brussels.

We have also organised numerous country study visits to identify and analyse innovative practices within the framework of our ongoing thematic projects.

Agency projects have not only involved all of our member countries, but we have also been working in close co-operation with international organisations such as the World Bank (www.worldbank.org), UNESCO (www.unesco.org), UNESCO IBE (www.ibe.unesco.org) and UNESCO IITE (iite.unesco.org) OECD CERI (www.oecd.org/edu/ceri) and European SchoolNet (www.eun.org).

Before the holidays we would like to take the time to thank all of our country representatives and project experts for their contributions and active engagement in our activities. We would also like to thank our partner organisations for their co-operation, and for the interest of all those who follow and share our work via this bulletin, our website or the RSS feed.

I hope you all have a happy and relaxing holiday enjoying the end of a fulfilling year. On behalf of all the Agency staff I wish you a happy and prosperous 2012!

Sincerely,

Cor J.W. Meijer

Agency Director

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New Agency member country in 2012

As of January 2012 the Agency is happy to welcome the Slovak Republic as a new member country. Information such as National Contacts and data on developments in special needs and inclusive education within the Slovak Republic will be available next year on the Agency website:

<http://www.european-agency.org/country-information>

Agency Project Updates

Young Views on Inclusive Education – European Parliament Hearing 2011

On 6–7 November 2011, 90 young people from across Europe gathered together in Brussels for the opportunity to make their voices heard. In seven working groups dedicated to both secondary and vocational education settings, they discussed what inclusive education means to them, how it can be achieved, the benefits it brings and which challenges remain to be overcome. The active and animated participation of all delegates provided insightful and valuable messages, many of which they presented in the European Parliament to representatives from the European Commission, European Parliament, Polish Presidency of the EU and key European and international organisations. The young delegates' presentation can be found on the European Hearing 2011 web area: <http://www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/european-hearing-2011/results-files>

All of the young delegates' statements will be included in the final results of the Hearing, which the European Agency looks forward to publishing in the near future.

For more information and to view the photo gallery from the event visit the European Parliament Hearing web area: <http://www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/european-hearing-2011>

Teacher Education for Inclusion (TE4I)

The main objective of the Agency's Teacher Education for Inclusion priority project is to examine how all teachers are prepared via their initial training to be inclusive. Representatives from UNESCO-IBE and OECD CERI have participated as observers and the European Commission Schools Unit has also contributed.

The Teacher Education for Inclusion synthesis report is available in English on the Agency TE4I web area: <http://www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/teacher-education-for-inclusion>

The project end point dissemination conference will be held on 29 February – 2 March 2012 in Brussels. The conference is being organised in co-operation with the Ministries of Education from the Flemish and French speaking communities of Belgium. The profile of inclusive teachers will be launched at the conference along with project dissemination materials.

Vocational Education and Training (VET): Policy and Practice in the field of SNE

The main objective of the Agency's priority project on Vocational Education and Training is to identify and investigate key aspects of VET programmes for learners with special educational needs aged between 14 and 25 with a clear link to employment opportunities. The objective is not just to understand what works, but also to gain a deeper understanding of why it works. The project work builds on the findings of two earlier Agency studies on this topic. Collaborative relations have been formed with CEDEFOP and the OECD.

2011 VET project activities focus mainly on the analysis of VET country practices. The objective is to analyse one example of practice in each of the countries involved in the project. All practical analysis follows the same grid and comprises the two following inter-related parts: visits to the local VET and small working group meetings.

A total of 18 study visits have taken place in 2011. In 2012, the main project tasks will include completing the remaining nine study visits and holding a closing project conference scheduled for November 2012 in Nicosia, Cyprus where the project findings will be presented and discussed. This

event will be co-hosted with the Ministry of Education as an event under the Cypriot Presidency of the European Union.

For more information visit the project web area: <http://www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/vocational-education-and-training>

Mapping the Implementation of Policy for Inclusive Education (MIPIE)

Policy makers working in inclusive education suggest they need to know what qualitative and quantitative information to collect and the best methods of doing this in order to map the implementation of policies for inclusive education. They need to have agreed signposts to track progress towards educational inclusion.

The goal of this one-year project, which started in November 2010 has been to provide policy makers with clear proposals on mapping the implementation of policy for inclusive education.

The main project activities have focused upon two conferences – one in Belgium in December 2010 and one in Hungary in March 2011 – during the respective countries' hosting of the Presidency of the EU.

All materials as well as full reports from both conferences are now available from the MIPIE project area on the Agency website: <http://www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/mapping-the-implementation-of-policy-for-inclusive-education>

Accessible Information Provision for Lifelong Learning (i-access)

Accessible Information Provision for Lifelong Learning is a one year project co-financed by a European Community Grant under the Lifelong Learning Transversal Programme, Key Activity 1: Policy Co-operation and Innovation. The main project aims are:

- to use existing European and international policy and standards for information accessibility as a basis for discussing the implications as well as the practical implementation of accessible information provision within Lifelong Learning and
 - to produce clear recommendations agreed at the European level by key stakeholders for Lifelong Learning and accessible ICT that can be used by information providers across Europe to support the provision of accessible information for Lifelong Learning for all learners who need it.
- One of the key elements in the project work plan was an i-access conference held in Copenhagen on 23 – 24 June 2011 discussing the implications of accessible information for Lifelong Learning and identifying practical recommendations. The conference was hosted by the Agency and the Danish Ministry of Education and was attended by policy experts and multipliers from Agency member countries, representatives of European organisations such as European SchoolNet as well as representatives of stakeholder groups working with accessible ICT such as W3C, DAISY, Microsoft, Adobe and G3ICT.

The Conference Report is available on the project web area: <http://www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/i-access/i-access-conference>

New projects

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for Inclusion

The Agency is revisiting its Information Communication Technology project from 2001. The current 1-year project update builds on the initial 2001 Agency study, as well as the findings of the co-operative work between the Agency and UNESCO Institute of Information Technology in Education conducted in 2010, during which detailed case studies of the use of ICT with people with SEN were presented and discussed. A report presenting concrete examples of practice of the use of ICT with people with disabilities in different educational contexts and settings is available at this link: <http://www.european-agency.org/publications/ereports/ICTs-in-Education-for-People-With-Disabilities/Review-of-Innovative-Practice>

Further project activities will focus upon a review of policy information and research literature relating to the use of ICT in inclusive education as well as the collection of information on participating countries' policy and practice for ICT for Inclusion.

Raising Achievement for All Learners – Quality in Inclusive Education (RA4AL)

The 1-year project on raising achievement for all learners in inclusive education (RA4AL) project starts in December 2011 and aims to address a clear need expressed by policy makers for more information on quality education in inclusive settings as a strategy for raising achievement for all learners. Raising achievement for all learners is an imperative – quality education in inclusive settings is a strategy to accomplish this. However, there is a need to explore the factors that will support raising achievement for all learners: what does it mean for policy makers and practitioners? What are the implications, challenges and opportunities in relation to raising achievements in inclusive education settings? How are judgements made about 'quality' and how can progress and achievement of learners be meaningfully measured?

These and related issues will be the focus of inputs and debates during a European conference for country representatives as well as two key stakeholder groups: policy makers (for general and inclusive education) and educational researchers.

The conference is scheduled to take place 13–15 June 2012 during the Danish EU Presidency. It will be held in Odense and hosted in collaboration with the Odense municipality authorities.

Organisation of Provision to Support Inclusive Education

This new 3-year thematic priority project will focus upon the organisation of inclusive education within the public, compulsory school sector. The goal is to identify the factors within mainstream provision that are effective in directly supporting learners in inclusive settings. The project will explore the factors that support all learners but with a particular focus upon provision for learners who, using the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) are identified as having disabilities. The role of special schools and the special sector in supporting mainstream settings is a particular focus and this will be explored via a review of international and national research literature, as well as a country survey of all participating countries. Detailed information will be gathered on different project themes and seminars planned for 2012/2013 will enable participants to explore these in greater depth.

New publications available online

Participation in Inclusive Education – A Framework for Developing Indicators

<http://www.european-agency.org/publications/ereports/participation-in-inclusive-education-2013-a-framework-for-developing-indicators/participation-in-inclusive-education-2013-a-framework-for-developing-indicators>

Teacher Education for Inclusion Across Europe – Challenges and Opportunities

<http://www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/teacher-education-for-inclusion>

Key Principles for Promoting Quality in Inclusive Education – Recommendations for Practice

<http://www.european-agency.org/publications/ereports/key-principles-for-promoting-quality-in-inclusive-education-1/key-principles-for-promoting-quality-in-inclusive-education-recommendations-for-practice>

Contacts and Disclaimer

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