International Perspectives on Inclusive Education

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Focus

- The Agency's main focus is upon inclusive education as a systemic approach – that is dealing with learner difference and diversity in all educational settings as a quality issue

- The Agency's work is essentially concerned with how the achievement of all learners at all levels of inclusive lifelong learning can be improved in a meaningful way that enhances their life chances and opportunities for actively participating in society

Collaboration as a lever for change – ground rules

- All countries are at different starting points and have different 'histories' in terms of education generally and inclusive education specifically

- No-one has all the answers. Many countries have examples of good 'work in progress'

- Concepts, ideas and approaches cannot be 'transplanted' from one country context to another

- Learning from diversity must be a principle for collaborative work, as well as for inclusive education

International Policy Context

- At all times, the Agency works to guiding principles as outlined in:
  - Council Resolutions concerning inclusion of children and young people with disabilities into mainstream systems of education
  - UNESCO Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action in Special Needs Education (1994)
  - UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
  - UN Convention on Rights of People with Disabilities (2006)

EUROPEAN AGENCY
for Special Needs and Inclusive Education

UN Convention on Rights of People with Disabilities (2006)

- Article 24 - Education

- "States Parties recognise the right of persons with disabilities to education. With a view to realising this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, States Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels ..."

- "... The full development of human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth, and the strengthening of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and human diversity..."

Critical Issues

Resources, yes but ...

- Access and participation

- Identification and placement

- Assessment, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness

- Teacher professional development

- Policy and legislation

- Building capacity and sustainability

- *Whole system reform*

- *Attitudes*

Key Principles for Promoting Quality in Inclusive Education

- Reviews of Agency thematic projects and activities to highlight the key principles for policy and practice

- Key Principles for Policy published in 2003 and 2009

- Key Principles for Practice published in 2011

http://www.european-agency.org/agency-projects/key-principles

Key Principles - Policy

Seven inter-connected areas for policy can be highlighted:

1. Widening participation to increase educational opportunity for all learners
2. Education and training in inclusive education for all teachers
3. Organisational culture and ethos that promotes inclusive education
4. Support structures organised so as to support inclusive education
5. Flexible resource systems that promote inclusive education
6. Policies that promote inclusive education
7. Legislation that promotes inclusive education

Horizontal issues that impact on all phases of educational provision

- Educational assessment systems

- Teacher education and development

- Financing systems

- Coherence of provision for meeting a diversity of learners' need

Challenges for Inclusive Education

- Academic achievements (output) versus meeting individual needs
- Preparing all teachers for inclusive education
- Over 2% of pupils are being educated in separate settings (schools and classes) across Europe

Percentage of pupils with SEN in segregated settings

Up to 1.0%	1.01 %- 2.0%	2.01%- 4.0%	4.01% and above
Italy	Austria	Czech Rep.	Belgium (Fl)
Luxembourg	Cyprus	Finland	Belgium (Fr)
Malta	Iceland	France	Denmark
Norway	Ireland	Greece	Estonia
Portugal	Lithuania	Hungary	Germany
Spain	Poland	Netherlands	Latvia
UK (Wales)	Sweden	Slovenia	Slovakia
	UK (England)		Switzerland
	UK (N.I.)		
	UK (Scotland)		

Developments - Policies

- Increasing focus on the rights of learners with disabilities and their families – this relates to access to compulsory education; access to specialist support and services; access to mainstream, inclusive education

- Changes in concepts and language used in policies – SEN to SNE to inclusive education

- Flexibility within policies and systems that encourage innovation and change

- Devolution of responsibilities to local and/or regional level bodies and organisations

Developments - Infrastructure

- A re-focussing of the role of special schools as a resource for the mainstream sector

- Improving frameworks and structures of provision – all legislative changes aim towards improvements and capacity building for inclusive education within mainstream provision

- Promoting specific tools and approaches within provision – i.e. the implementation of Individual Education Plans and personalised learning approaches

- End user participation in local decision-making

- Active involvement of policy makers in the identification and mobilisation of resources

- 'Inter'-disciplinary support structures

Developments – Shared Value Systems

- Leadership at all levels with a clear vision of inclusive education as a quality approach for all learners

- All stakeholders hold the view that diversity in education is beneficial

- Reflective practice in teaching

- 'Formalising the informal'

Federal Center (BZ) for Inclusive and Special Needs Education

The need for the four Cs …

Commitment

Comprehensive approach

Courage to address difficult issues head on

Clarity of vision

Inclusive education as a means to…

… realise the right to an equitable high quality education without discrimination

… advance towards more democratic and fair societies

… learn to live together and build our shared identities

… improve the efficiency and cost-benefit relationship of education systems

More information

www.european-agency.org

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