

## News Items

### Launch of the FaSMEd website

We are pleased to announce that the FaSMEd website is now live at: <http://research.ncl.ac.uk/fasmed>

This will be an important vehicle for dissemination of the project. As well as having general information about the research and a 'Meet the team' section with details of all the partner countries, strategic advisory committee, evaluation team and advisors, there are sections for news and events, newsletters and outputs which it will be important to keep up to date. Please send all news items and documents to Lucy Tiplady ([lucy.tiplady@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:lucy.tiplady@ncl.ac.uk)) for uploading to the website.

### South Africa appoint Dr Marie Joubert as Principal Investigator AIMS-



SEC has appointed Dr Marie Joubert as Principal Investigator for the FASMED Project. Barrie Bernard commented "We are exceptionally lucky as Marie is an experienced researcher who has been a member of work package leadership teams, and already fully involved in the FASMED Project. Marie is a South African who has been in the UK for about 30 years, so we are pleased to have drawn her back."

AIMSSEC is now advertising for a full time Research Assistant for 2 years and this is a good opportunity for someone. We would be grateful if the following link could be forwarded to anyone who might be qualified for the job, and interested:

<https://aimssec.aims.ac.za/en/vacancies/research-assistant>

### ProCoNet visit Newcastle University

Newcastle University were visited by Peter Grey from ProCoNet, an informal group of coordinators of current FP7 projects in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) Education and other similar projects from other funding sources across Europe. ProCoNet aims to promote collaboration between stakeholders, acts as a centre for collating knowledge and exchanging information, highlights common themes emerging across projects and actively communicates emerging themes to the EC and other policy circles.

### Upcoming events

- **4th and 5th April 2014** WP1 and WP3 Planning meeting in Nottingham, UK.
- **13th May 2014** FaSMEd Co-ordinator Jill Clark will attend the ProCoNet meeting in Brussels to establish relationships and identify connections with similar projects and in particular other Science in Society projects.

### For further information please see:

<http://research.ncl.ac.uk/fasmed>

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# FaSMEd NEWSLETTER

## Issue 1

### 31st March 2014

Welcome to our first issue of the FaSMEd newsletter. This issue focuses on introducing the project, its aims and objectives, and reports on some of the early events taking place across the partner countries.

This issue was produced by the Newcastle University, UK team. Future issues will be edited by the FaSMEd partner countries.

### About the project

**Improving Progress for Lower Achievers through Formative Assessment in Science and Mathematics Education (FaSMEd)**

A Science in Society Collaborative Project of the European Community

This three year, €1.9M project led by Newcastle University, UK will take lessons from around the world to help improve mathematics and science skills in Europe and South Africa.

Working with partners across eight countries, researchers will look at how technology can be used in formative assessment by teachers to help raise attainment levels among the lowest achieving students.

In each country this involves researchers working with a cluster of schools with a focus on the use of formative assessment and technology to improve interactions in the classroom and reduce the anxiety about performance which frequently limits learners' development in these subjects.

### This project aims to:

- foster high quality interactions in classrooms

that are instrumental in raising achievement for low achievers;

• expand our knowledge of technologically enhanced teaching and assessment methods addressing low achievement in mathematics and science

### Major objectives for the project are to:

• produce a toolkit for teachers to support the development of practice.

• produce a professional development resource that exemplifies use of the toolkit.

• offer approaches for the use of new technologies to support the formative assessment of lower achieving students.

• develop sustainable assessment and feedback practices that improve attainment in mathematics and science for the targeted students.

• challenge stereotyped attitudes and practices which raise anxiety on the part of teachers and students

• disseminate the outcomes of the project in the form of online resources, academic and professional publications, conference presentations as well as policy briefs to government agencies at a regional, National, European and international level.

## FASMed Launch Conference



**Partners from across Europe and South Africa met in Newcastle upon Tyne, UK for the launch of the project.** The conference was opened by Newcastle University Vice-Chancellor, Professor Chris Brink, who has close links with one of the project's partners, the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS), when he was Vice-Chancellor of Stellenbosch University in South Africa. "This is an opportunity to demonstrate how relatively small interventions can raise attainment in mathematics and sciences," he said. "I hope that this project can have a lasting positive effect on the long-term problem of under-achievement in these subjects."

Partners spent two and a half days discussing and planning the future direction of the project, with specialists sharing knowledge on the main focus areas of formative assessment, low attainment, professional learning and technology.

A conference dinner was held at The International Centre for Life at which Professor Justin Dillon and Professor Malcolm Swan spoke about the challenges of engaging a wide range of young people in science and mathematics.

On the afternoon of the third day partners had the opportunity to visit a local secondary school to see technology being enacted in the classroom. This was an excellent opportunity to experience first hand some of the cultural differences that will be addressed throughout the project.

One of the outcomes of the project will be a toolkit for teachers of activities, resources and pedagogies that will be applicable to a wide range of pupils across Europe and South Africa.

## Stakeholder meetings happen across Europe and South Africa

Throughout March 2014 stakeholder meetings have been happening across the Partner countries.

Newcastle University invited senior leaders and class teachers from the region to find out more about the project and participate in joint planning of the project with the University team. Jill Clark, FASMed Coordinator, commented "it's important to get our stakeholders involved as early as possible so that we can achieve maximum impact for all across the project".



In South Africa the team have started the process of negotiating with the Western Cape Education Department (WCED). Meetings have taken place to:

1. Explain how local schools would be involved in this research and to obtain approval to conduct the research in 3 schools in the Cape Flats Townships for grades 8 & 9 mathematics learners.
2. Discuss the selection of 3 schools in which the management team and at least 3 teachers from each school would be committed to FASMed for a 2 year period.
3. Outline what the WCED, participating schools and ultimately other schools can expect to gain from the project.

In Gap in the mountains of the south of France meetings have been taking place with teachers who plan to work within a connected classroom and are already working together on a project to address low achievers. We are very pleased that their objectives and ours match up so well and look forward to working with them.

Discussions have also begun with schools in the suburbs of Lyon who wish to bring together technology and formative assessment strategies in globalized approaches of scientific problems taking into account different glances from different topics.

We look forward to developing our relationships with schools and teachers as the project progresses.



## FASMed partners

- Newcastle University, UK (Coordinator)
- The University of Nottingham, UK
- Ecole Normale Supérieure De Lyon, France
- National University Of Ireland Maynooth
- University Of Duisburg-Essen, Germany
- University Of Turin, Italy
- University Of Utrecht, The Netherlands
- African Institute For Mathematical Sciences Schools Enrichment Centre, South Africa
- University College Of Trondheim, Norway



FASMed

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