

Project title: GATE - 2021-1-LT01-KA220-SCH-000027713

GOOD PRACTICES

1	Title	<i>"Talent Hunters" – program for working with children with academic talent</i>
2	Country	<i>Bulgaria</i>
3	How is/was it promoted?	- within the framework of a national project - a private initiative of Hestia Foundation
4	Context of implementation	<i>The context where the best practice was developed</i> X large city <input type="checkbox"/> small city <input type="checkbox"/> village
5	Goals of the activity	<i>To provide specially tailored programmes to teachers for the purpose of identifying children with academic talents and for carrying out activities for developing academic talent.</i>
6	Description	<p><i>A detailed description of the practice (500 words), describing:</i></p> <p>a. Content of the activities carried out This is a privately developed programme for identification of academic talents and provision of ideas for activities, which can be carried out by the teacher for the sake of nurturing these talents.</p> <p>b. Main Steps A teacher who works with a high-achieving student, who usually finishes all tasks before the rest of the classmates and/or questions the teaching methods used, approaches Hestia Foundation for an offer including a number of activities, which can be carried out for the purpose of clearly identifying the talent, understanding the needs of the child and creating a programme with talent development activities.</p> <p>According to the team of Hestia Foundation, specific cognitive and affective characteristics help educators to spot children with academic talent. Among these are: "They speak earlier and have a richer vocabulary than their peers. They process information faster, have better memory, and easily digest abstract ideas. Emotionally, they have intense emotions and often seem immature in the eyes of others. They are empathic and have an extremely developed sense of justice. In terms of learning, children with academic talent demonstrate tremendous curiosity and strong internal motivation. All this manifests itself in their daily behavior at school – they often criticize others, ask complex questions and discover lack of consistency in theories and ideas. The identification process focuses precisely on these characteristics. It covers analytical and emotional characteristics, as well as learning motivation, through specialized tests and monitoring by teachers and parents." (Hestia Foundation, 2020)</p>

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		<p>Following the identification of needs and talents, comes the proposal for the activities for developing academic talent.</p> <p>“Innate cognitive abilities alone are not enough to develop a child's potential in academic talent. Challenges, support and active interaction with the environment are needed to meet the specific needs and interests of the child. This can be achieved both through intra-class activities (differentiated instructions and tasks, and the assignment of individual projects) and through extracurricular activities (specially created courses in the field of natural and/or social sciences) that offer sufficient depth in the presentation of learning content, intra-/interdisciplinary links and inductive teaching methodology. An important step in building a program for working with children with academic talent is the development of learning skills such as systemic approach, planning and perseverance. This includes the construction of the so-called meta cognitive skills – the child's knowledge of his own strengths and weaknesses in learning and the ability to apply different strategies, to check and evaluate their effectiveness and, if necessary, to change his approach to the problem on which he is working.” (Hestia Foundation, 2020)</p> <p>c. Theories, on which the practice was based on</p> <p>Assessment of needs and potential based on cognitive and affective characteristics</p> <p>Differentiated instructions and tasks, assignment of individual projects</p>
7	Implementation choices	<p>Write a brief presentation of the best practice (max: 500 words) by referencing to:</p> <p>a. Target groups: children in kindergarten, primary and lower secondary school</p> <p>b. Other participants in the activity, besides the promoter and the target groups: the practice is carried out by Hestia Foundation only</p> <p>c. Duration of a standard session/activity: these are individualized programmes, supporting teachers with their long-term work with children, who have academic talents. Therefore the duration of the sessions/activities, which the teachers are provided with, match the duration</p> <p>d. Number of sessions/activities: As many classes as the teacher has during the year with the respective class.</p> <p>e. Teaching methodology, if applicable: Differentiated instructions and tasks, assignment of individual projects</p> <p>f. Type of assessment and tools used to identify the benefits/progress: Not reported.</p> <p>Due to covid19 the organization added the possibility for online courses for teachers.</p>
8	Materials	<p>The activity is provided as a training course for teachers with all materials necessary secured by the trainers/facilitators.</p>
9	Who runs the activity	<p><input type="checkbox"/> mentors <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> an organization/institution</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> a school <input type="checkbox"/> an informal group</p>

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		<input type="checkbox"/> an NGO <input type="checkbox"/> other
10	Benefits and results	<p><i>(max: 500 words)</i></p> <p>a. The benefits of this best practice for the target groups: Teachers are enabled to identify and work with students with academic talents (potential for exceptional achievement in one or more fields of science)</p> <p>b. Community/social impact</p> <p>Improved chances of sustainable development of students' academic talents, which would be beneficial for the community the students grow into and contribute to.</p>
11	Relevance for the GATE Project	<p><i>(max: 500 words) (see index of methodological material)</i></p> <p>a. Did the practice use Socio-Emotional Learning and/or the STEAM approach? STEM approach is used. No data about socio-emotional learning.</p> <p>b. Did the practice aim to increase the 21st Century Skills? The practice helps the teachers to encourage 21st century skills development – the individualized tasks and projects assigned to talented students develop their critical thinking, creativity, information literacy, technology literacy, initiative and productivity.</p> <p>c. Was the practice following certain inclusive principles, such as Universal design for learning for example? The practice enables teachers to provide students with opportunities to express the results of their learning.</p>
12	Website/E-mail /Other contact info + References, if any	<p>References should be cited by using the APA referencing style (https://libguides.murdoch.edu.au/APA#:~:text=The%20APA%20referencing%20style%20is,and%20the%20year%20of%20publication.)</p> <p>Hestia Foundation (2020). "Talent Hunters" – program for working with children with academic talent https://hestiabg.com/bg/programi/lovtsi-na-talanti/</p>