

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

## GATE: Survey Research - Bulgaria

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### 1. Basic Report Information

**1.1. Partner Organization:** Zinev Art Technologies

**1.2. Research Period:** May-June 2022

**1.3. Number of questionnaires collected from teachers:** 18

**1.4. Reporting date:** 13.06.2022

### 2. Survey research methodology

The research has been conducted via distribution of the agreed upon questionnaire in a Google Form. The aforementioned was sent online to partner schools and teachers that were contacted directly by our organisation because of their current practices related to gifted children. We received responses from 18 teachers by the time this summary report was produced, although we expect more to share their experiences as we move forward with the project, due to expressed interest.

### 3. Survey research results

The respondents' age range is 26-50+, with almost 40% at 50+ and the same for 35-50, which suggests that most of the teachers have a lot of experience (most had over 15 years of experience). 94.4 % of the respondents were female. The teaching subjects and areas of expertise varied: Biology and chemistry, primary school teachers, primary school pedagogy and Emotional intelligence, psychology, programming, Entrepreneurship, Bulgarian language and literature, mathematics, IT and others.

The results in terms of grades of teaching, the answers were equally distributed, with a slight elevation for those teaching 1-4 grades. The same was applicable for the age range of the students.

Over 83% only teach at school. The remaining also teach either at a university or at educational centres.

Most teachers, approximately 78% consider themselves somewhat informed about gifted and talented students, as per the definition provided in the project, with only 1 person with no knowledge. In terms of the concept of STEAM and its applicability, 78% were somewhat informed, 16,7% just heard of the concept and only one respondents was very well informed.

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When asked about the importance of STEAM in teaching talented and gifted students, the ratings were predominantly high, with some key statements coming to the forefront:

- ☑ I believe that there must be a balance and different teaching methods. In the smaller settlements the material base does not allow for STEAM for teaching, in comparison with large schools with established STEAM classrooms. Curricula and school organization do not stimulate talented children, the discovery and development of their talents, which requires time and systematic work. Every child has a talent to develop.
- ☑ Talented students need development
- ☑ Because learning in a STEM environment predisposes students to creative and creative thinking. In such an environment and with such a methodology, every student, even those who do not belong to the category of "gifted students", has the opportunity to express their talents, creativity and abilities. Active participation and learning through practical application and experience of learning is motivating for gifted students

- ☑ Students who stand out as gifted need innovative methods to teach and develop their talents.
- ☑ It is very important because it gives students the opportunity to freely express their skills and show the best of themselves. They show creativity and solve non-standard problems.
- ☑ It's part of my job.
- ☑ One of the goals of education in general should be the development of the creative talents of children and adolescents, and not their suppression by the established conservative and rigid educational system.
- ☑ Any methodology that stimulates interest in learning is important. In this way, students express themselves and achieve results in different areas.
- ☑ Steam is a modern and important method of learning for all children. Gifted children develop and show their abilities in an environment where there is no access to the Steam system. But in any case, Steam helps make learning easier!

In terms of socio-emotional learning, 55.6% considered themselves somewhat informed, 11,1 very informed and 11,1- not informed at all. However, 38,9 % indicated that it is very important for talented and gifted students, with no or very low percentages as to "Not so important". The answers were underpinned by some of the following comments:

- ☑ Talented children have a high sense of empathy.
- ☑ develops the potential of students
- ☑ Emotional attitude to creativity is a cornerstone of success.
- ☑ In the dynamic times in which we live, it is extremely important to develop such skills both in ourselves and in children, given the influence of "social" networks and digitalization.
- ☑ It is observed that students need additional support for the development of emotional intelligence and social skills.
- ☑ It is very important for the all-round development of the mind and heart of gifted children, and not only for them to develop in the field in which they are especially good. In addition, self-knowledge and the ability to build healthy relationships with others is crucial so that gifted children do not fall into harmful pride that sabotages them.

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It was interesting to see, that over 80% of the respondents have not directly worked on SEL, STEAM or with gifted students. The rest have worked with: Socio-emotional intelligence in the initial stage STEM training organized at school, CEU training for the Smile project and the Together in class program; Developed and implemented project for STEM office and Innovative school with subject "In the world of emotions" M office, and have received training within project SMILE, trainings by the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences or other educational programs.

Only 27,8% of the respondents have said that they have officially recognised talented/gifted students in their class, with the biggest challenges being either lack of necessary training and the fact that the classes are mixed and is hard to balance.

In terms of school practices in relation to gifted students, the results were almost split in half. The listed practices/policies were as follows:

- ☑ Training from "Amalipe"
- ☑ Inclusive Education Support Project
- ☑ Interest activities, clubs, studios, etc.
- ☑ Participation of students in competitions and contests.
- ☑ Commission for Gifted Children
- ☑ Involvement of children in activities of interest and other extracurricular groups, participation in competitions and activities, rewarding outstanding students.

In terms of the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, the results were mixed, however all of the listed skills were scored relatively high in terms. This was in contrast to the respondents' perception of their own skill level, with decision making, digital literacy, research, innovations, stress management and self/individual learning received the lowest overall scores.

#### 4. Conclusions

There is a clear interest in working with the themes and target groups of project GATE. The results show that there is not sufficient knowledge and/or training when it comes to SEL and working with gifted /talented children. The lack of time and information as well as approaches that can be implemented undermines the interest and willingness of the teachers. STEAM is better integrated and the teachers have experience, thus acknowledge its importance and usefulness. The planned results of the GATE project align with the needs of the teachers involved in the survey in Bulgaria.