



**Joanna Łukasiewicz-Wieleba**

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2215-1208>

The Maria Grzegorzewska University, Warsaw, Poland

e-mail: [jlukasiewicz@aps.edu.pl](mailto:jlukasiewicz@aps.edu.pl)

**Marcin Gierczyk**

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6734-2521>

University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland

e-mail: [marcin.gierczyk@us.edu.pl](mailto:marcin.gierczyk@us.edu.pl)

**Edyta Jaromin**

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7785-423X>

Biuro Edukacji Urzędu m.st. Warszawy, Poland

e-mail: [ejaromin@um.warszawa.pl](mailto:ejaromin@um.warszawa.pl)

## Social Activity of Outstanding Youths: SAPERE AUSO Scholarship Recipients

---

### Abstract

In this article, the authors analyze the pro-societal activities of students who were awarded the SAPERE AUSO scholarship, which is given to students in Warsaw, Poland. The aim of this study was to investigate the scope of social activities undertaken by scholarship beneficiaries of the SAPERE AUSO Warsaw scholarship program. The analysis revealed that these students were socially active at school, in their local community and across the country. The research also showed that the students were willing to share their talents, trying to find a use for them in society. Another group of students was those with social skills: increased empathy, an aptitude for organizing work and events, and leadership skills. Such young people are socially active regardless of their educational achievements. This is particularly important for educators and local governments, as it guides thinking about the education of gifted students, not only in the context of academic achievement, but also social achievement.

---

*Keywords:* scholarship, gifted youth, SAPERE AUSO scholarship, social engagement, social skills

## **Introduction**

The competence and social engagement of gifted students are particularly relevant in the context of existing stereotypes about gifted people's social problems. The different social functioning of gifted individuals may be related to their asynchronous development. It is not uncommon for them to develop at an accelerated rate in the intellectual sphere, while developing more slowly in the social and emotional sphere (Limont, 2010). Over the years, the young person perceives that they are different from their peers, which can foster isolation and reinforce their lack of self-acceptance (Cross & Coleman, 1993). Behaviors can become entrenched, especially if there is an atmosphere at school that reinforces resentment and even hostility toward the gifted (Limont, 2013). This is especially true for those whose area of ability is perceived as selfish and not benefiting the wider community (Geake & Gross, 2008) and for those who are successful on their own and who enjoy demonstrating their superiority in competitions (Udvari, 2000). Another problem may be the specialised language they use, which is not understood by their schoolmates (Delzell, 1998; Pfeiffer & Stocking, 2000). Social difficulties stem from the gifted individual's focus on their passions, educational success, pursuit of a school career, or experiences and aspirations in the area of giftedness.

Over the years, gifted individuals must deal with mutually exclusive needs: the desire for human contact, the fear of being alone and the boredom of those who are not gifted enough to become attractive partners for them (Gross, 1998). Thus, for some gifted individuals, social functioning that would be consistent with their needs and values must involve the risk of going beyond the available groups (Neihart, 1999) and often takes place outside the peer group in the classroom or school (Kamińska, 2021).

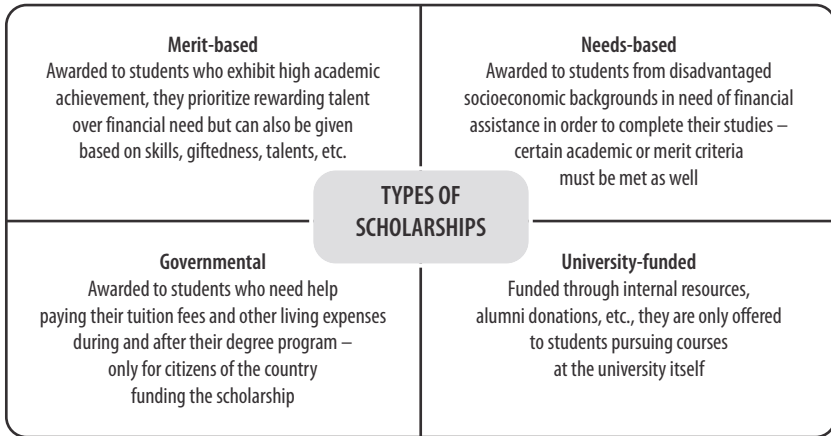
Referring to Kazimierz Dąbrowski's theory, which posits the existence of increased mental excitability of gifted people, we can characterize it as

having empathy, compassion, and sensitivity to the harm of others, as well as a sense of responsibility for others (Dąbrowski, 2021; Piechowski, 2015). Social skills are even recognized in children who efficiently plan and carry out various games and projects that involve others, lead groups in various activities, execute others' ideas well, and establish and maintain very good relationships with others (Łukasiewicz-Wieleba, 2018). Such attitudes persist throughout the developmental years. Social abilities may also be accompanied by talents in other areas. Social activities, particularly volunteering, contribute to young people's appreciation of work and commitment and foster an adequate sense of self-worth (Olszewski-Kubilius, 2008; Olszewski-Kubilius et al., 2015). Having highly developed social skills is a significant factor in building achievement, regardless of the ability domain (Olszewski-Kubilius et al., 2015).

### **Types of Scholarships Available Globally**

Scholarships are most often associated with the academic activities of gifted students and with the support of those who remain in poor social circumstances. One of the scholarships offered to students at Warsaw schools is SAPERE AUSO, whose rules appreciate both outstanding academic achievements and social and creative achievements. The scholarships are divided into four key types (see Fig. 1). Regardless of the type, scholarships are understood as a form of financial support that need not be repaid. They are offered to students at different stages of their education, from secondary to postgraduate, and are often based on academic excellence, giftedness, talent, and leadership qualities. It is worth mentioning that scholarships are different than grants, though the two are occasionally used interchangeably; scholarships, unlike grants, are awarded based on merit or need, and not financial need alone. They do not require a student to fall within a specific socioeconomic category in order to be eligible.

**Figure 1. Types of scholarships**



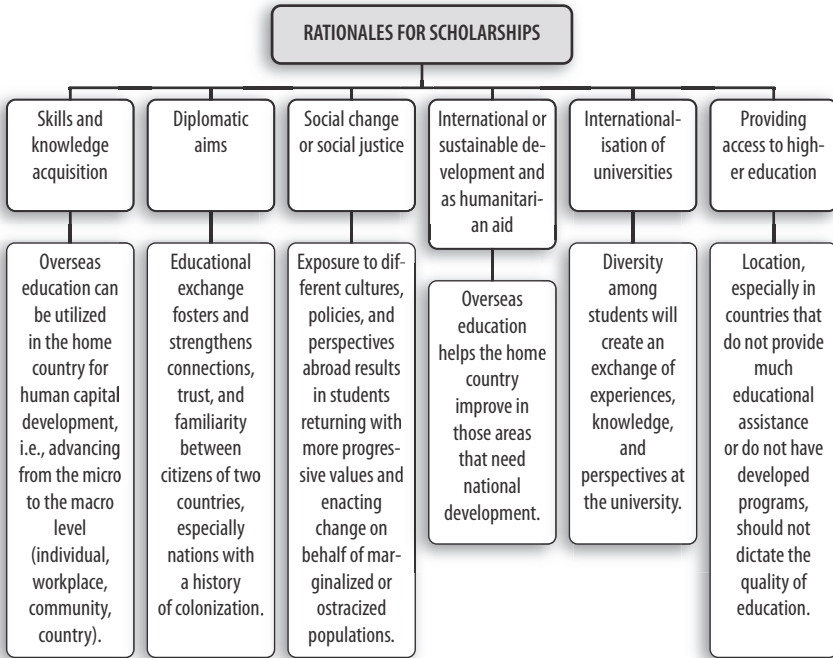
Source: Based on Santra (2022)

*International Scholarships*

The meta-analysis by Campbell & Neff (2020) yielded interesting and salient results: in their analysis of studies on international scholarships, they found six rationales for providing scholarships to students from the Global South (see Fig. 2). Despite the study only focusing on international scholarships, these rationales can be used to understand scholarships for gifted and talented students, as well as for the general population of students.

The logic of conducting research among different groups of students can be attributed to Perna (2004, 2010), who suggested that the financial support provided by a scholarship had varying effects on student performance after enrolment. A study by Cosentino et al. (2019) found that the vast majority of Mastercard Foundation Scholars were vulnerable, disadvantaged, and underserved youth and that the financial support effectively improved access to universities and higher levels of study, as well as to programs abroad. These findings overlap with studies conducted in Mexico regarding the effects of scholarships and conditional cash transfers (de Hoyos et al., 2019). One element almost entirely missing from current research is the environmental impact of scholarships, as noted by Anne C. Campbell and Emelye Neff (they noted one exception: Campbell & Mawer, 2019).

**Figure 2. Six primary and distinguishable rationales for international scholarships**



Source: Based on Campbell & Neff (2020)

### SAPERE AUSO Scholarship System

The SAPERE AUSO scholarship is part of the “Warszawski System Wspierania Uzdolnionych” (Warsaw System of Support for the Talented) and is addressed to gifted students attending secondary schools in Warsaw who have well-established passions and achievements. Because they may refer to one specific discipline, there is no requirement to have a certain high school grade point average. The name of the SAPERE AUSO scholarship is a quotation from Horace meaning “have the courage to be wise,” which is interpreted as a call to devote one’s time and effort to studying and learning. The monetary scholarship has been awarded since 2008.

---

The rules for granting the scholarship are regulated by Resolution No. XLVII/1463/2021 of the Council of the Capital City of Warsaw of April 15, 2021. The scholarship is addressed to students who had academic or social achievements in the year prior to applying. The main criteria for a scholarship to be granted are as follows: documented scientific research or creative achievements; outstanding international educational or creative achievements; winner or finalist of an *Olimpiada* competition or other tournament (regulated by a school); and community involvement and activity that benefits the school or local community. Supplemental criteria include following an individual program or course of study; participating in classes for gifted students at school; and winning an *Olimpiada* event or a nationwide competition. The criteria are formulated so as to give a chance to both students with advanced cognitive abilities and related achievements and those with creative or social achievements outside of school.

The headmaster of the school which the student attends or the student's parent or legal guardian may apply for the scholarship on the student's behalf, or the student themselves may apply if they are of age. The scholarships are awarded by the Mayor of the Capital City of Warsaw. The scholarships are very popular, as many students apply to the program each year.<sup>7</sup>

## Methods

The aim of the research is to investigate the scope of social activities undertaken by beneficiaries of the SAPERE AUSO Warsaw scholarship program. The research problem was formulated as follows: What social activities for the school and local community are undertaken by youths awarded the SAPERE AUSO scholarship? The research method was document analysis: 229 successful applications of secondary school students from 2020 and 2021 were analyzed. The applications, without

---

<sup>7</sup> For example, in the 2021–2022 period, 515 applications were accepted.

the applicants' personal data, were made available for research purposes by the Education Office of Warsaw City Hall. First, a quantitative analysis was performed to characterize the grantees. The findings were then subjected to qualitative analysis. An open coding strategy was used, in which the codes were extracted from the data instead of a ready-made list of codes (Gibbs, 2011). This led to the main categories of students' prosocial activities being identified.

### **Characteristics of Students Applying for SAPERE AUSO Scholarships**

The applications from 153 boys (66.81%) and 76 girls (33.19%) were analyzed. Of these applications, 208 (90.83%) attended a general secondary school and 21 (9.17%) a technical secondary school. A total of 219 students (95.63%) were from public schools, while 10 (4.37%) were from non-public schools. These students received a wide range of grades in school ( $M=4.86$ ;  $max=6.0$ ;  $min=3$ ).<sup>8</sup> In this group, 95 (41.48%) declared having documented academic achievements, 54 (23.58) international academic achievements (in competitions, *Olimpiada*, and other forms of competitions), and 21 (9.17%) had other documented international activities. A total of 127 students (55.46%) had documented academic achievements in Poland (in competitions, tournaments, and other forms of competition), 81 (35.27%) of whom were winners of *Olimpiada* competitions and other national tournaments. There were eight students (3.49%) who had completed individual learning programs or individual courses of study and four (1.75%) who were attending institutions of higher education. In the study group, 170 people (74.24%) volunteered at the school and in the local community.

---

<sup>8</sup> Students are graded on a scale from 1 to 6.

## Results

The analysis of the applications for SAPERE AUSO scholarships enabled us to conclude that the youths were engaged in social activities within their schools, for the local community, and further afield – even from all over Poland. The types of activities are presented according to this categorization (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Summary of Main Themes and Activities**

Themes	Activities
Activities related to the school community	School events; school promotion; cultural events; competitions; dissemination; conferences and scientific events; research and surveys; workshops and training programs; simulations; pro-citizenship; representing the school; volunteer activities; self-governance; school community; tutoring peers; pro-environmental; editorial; creative; recreational
Activities related to the local community	Cultural events; popularization; sports; workshops; civic; simulations; local government; educational; dissemination; volunteering
Activities related to society	Cultural events; simulations; civic; volunteering; informational; entrepreneurial; popularization; educational; cultural; patriotic

### Activities Related to the School Community

The main category of school-related activity was organizational: (co-)organizing or promoting events, managing, being an organiser or being responsible for certain activities.

**School events:** assemblies, anniversaries, alumni reunions, fairs, festivals, National Education Days, school ball

**School promotion:** education fairs, *Perspektywy* Ranking Gala,<sup>9</sup> photographic reports from school events, radio and TV appearances, virtual open days, guided tours of the school museum, drone footage of the school

**Cultural events:** festivals (e.g., Scenic Open Art Festival, Unique Off Festival, theater festival (“12 minutes”), “WIFI-Cherry Festival of Initiatives,”

<sup>9</sup> *Perspektywy* is a magazine that creates a yearly ranking of schools across all of Poland.



“Cool-TURA-Inne Dobro Young Talent Festival”), concerts, school cultural days, Amateur Art Events Café

**Competitions:** “Polmoot High School Moot Court Competition,” Science Slam, Inter-School Local Government Knowledge Tournament, Computer Science Competition, Polmoot 2021 (High School Moot Court) tournament, Constitutional Court Tournament

**Popularization:** “Entrepreneurship training ground,” Batory Talks (lectures by famous people and online broadcasts), Festival of Professions (presentation of professions by prominent people), presentation of research conducted by students (e.g., on mental crises)

**Conferences and scientific events:** “ImprovSzkole” (Educational Innovation Conference), Warsaw Model United Nations, Mind Your Mind (dedicated to mental health among youths), Constitutional Week “My Constitution”

**Research and surveys:** questionnaires for teachers and students on effective education, questionnaire for students who have experienced a mental crisis and their guardians

**Workshops and training programs:** film editing, sound and camera work, 3D printing, self-presentation, computer PREOI, chemical workshops and demonstrations, algorithms.

**Sports events:** running, bicycle trips popularizing the history of the region

**Simulations:** sessions of the United Nations, parliamentary and presidential elections

**Pro-citizenship:** the high school team of the Street Law Clinic (for spreading democracy among youths), establishing a Law Club, School Human Rights Group

In addition to organizational activities, students worked for the benefit of their school or on its premises. Categories of such activities and examples are listed below.

**Representing the school:** “Domeyko&Wagner – Legacy” international campaign (the Ignacy Domeyko and Wladyslaw Wagner Stage Expedition Around the World), representing the school as a member of the

---

delegation in the National Congress of Chile, appearing at competitions and *Olimpiada*, appearing at Oxford and sparring debates

**Volunteer activities:** activities in the school volunteer group, collecting money and goods, bazaars for charity (e.g., for foundations, for sick children, for the homeless, for orphanages, “Szlachetna Paczka,”<sup>10</sup> or “Góra Grosza”<sup>11</sup>), writing letters for Amnesty International, helping retired teachers, promoting school volunteer work through social networking sites

**Self-governance:** representative of the class or school council, member of the school government, member of the school election committee, Warsaw Academy of Young Leaders<sup>12</sup> projects, Ombudsman for Students

**School community:** informing about domestic and foreign scholarships and helping students apply for them, informing about competitions and *Olimpiada* events, presentations to students about the U.S. Department of State’s FLEX program,<sup>13</sup> hosting students and teachers from abroad (Erasmus+ program)

**Peer tutoring:** leading a “scientific circle” (philosophy, mathematics, or biology), leading a mechanical section in a robotics team, starting and leading a music band, leading a school football league, leading a school debating league, preparing a team for the Polish High School Debating Championships, peer tutoring in subjects (math, computer science, or physics), preparing a friend for a biology competition, translating texts from original sources (which were not available in Polish, for a philosophy competition)

**Pro-environmental:** dissemination of segregating recyclables, introducing paper cups and removing plastic cutlery from a store, raising

---

<sup>10</sup> This volunteer event involves creating holiday packages for a family according to their declared needs ([www.szlachetnapaczka.pl](http://www.szlachetnapaczka.pl)).

<sup>11</sup> Fundraiser for “Towarzystwo Nasz Dom,” whose purpose is directing households for children in difficult family situations.

<sup>12</sup> This program is dedicated to young, active Varsovians who want to take part in existing tools and mechanisms for youth participation.

<sup>13</sup> This cultural exchange program allows students to spend a year in the USA.

awareness about multi-use water bottles, setting up and running a website where students can exchange used textbooks

**Editorial:** editing the school newspaper (KoperlNK and Batorak), publishing a local government or school profile on the Internet, school TV (IгнаśTV) or radio station

**Creative:** directing performances (“Three Kings’ Night” and “Balladyna”), performing in plays, creating music performances or school events

**Recreational:** creating a recreation corner for students, running a cafeteria

### Activities related to the local community

The second category of activities reported by the students refers to the broader community, that is, to people, places, and institutions connected with their place of residence. Organizational activities also became evident within this category, including (co-)organizing, promoting, managing, performing, or being responsible for an activity.

**Cultural events:** music festivals, tournaments, film groups, meetings with cultural figures, discussion clubs, “12 Minutes” Inter-School Theater Festival, “All the Mazurkas of the World” Festival

**Dissemination:** “Bet on Entrepreneurship,” the project “Diplomacy Action,” Youth Forum of Geopolitics, Youth Forum of Young Lawyers

**Sports:** running in marathons

**Workshops:** mathematics

**Civic:** Forum of Young Social Democrats (a way for youths to work on local problems), Warsaw Volunteer Fair (allowing organizations and volunteers to connect)

**Simulations:** court proceedings of the Warsaw High School Moot Court

Other community activities for the local environment are listed below.

**Local government:** councilor or council chair, election committee member of the Youth District Council, or Youth Council of the City of Warsaw (or suburban towns), Youth ejmik of the Mazovia Province, participant in the Warsaw Academy of Young Leaders, member of the Warsaw

---

Educational Council,<sup>14</sup> participant in the Youth Council at the Józef Piłsudski Museum in Sulejówek

**Civic:** creating projects for the local community (e.g., workshops for seniors, reducing smog, planting trees/flowers in the city, improving infrastructure, creating “pocket parks”), participating in the Youth Marathon of Writing Projects for the Civic Budget, cooperating with MPs (social assistant), reporting irregularities in the city to the City Contact Center

**Educational:** nature education (nature walks and workshops), participating in the “Share Your Talent” campaign (conducting lessons and teaching various subjects to children from disadvantaged families and seniors), Math Clinic (helping children of medical workers during the pandemic with physics, mathematics, computer science, chemistry, or the humanities), the project “Antek and Pola in the land of Polish language” (a free book for foreign language children to learn Polish), “Knowledge to the Power” (tutoring immigrant children and making teaching aids for extra-curricular activities)

**Dissemination:** dissemination of research reports, lectures, and meetings on AIDS/HIV in Warsaw high schools, conducting information campaigns (e.g., the “I am” campaign on mental health, the “#cheatout” campaign on the negative aspects of unfair education and cheating, or taking up the issues of communication exclusion, the environment, discrimination of minorities, hate speech, or energy transition), “Revolt in Art” (dissemination and promotion of art created by teenagers), popularization of classical music and orchestras, urban games, “Reading is Cool” campaign, recording the film “Reading a Fairy Tale”.

**Volunteering:** 1) cash and in-kind collections for charity campaigns (Christmas Food Collection for the SOS Food Bank, Help the Children Survive the Winter, Resourceful Santa, and Christmas Eve Neighborly Aid) or for children from orphanages and animals from the shelter, 2) assistance to the homeless and disabled, preparing Christmas meals for the

---

<sup>14</sup> This commission is dedicated to giving opinions and advice to the mayor of Warsaw related to the development of education in the city.

needy, singing carols for a social welfare home, serving as an assistant to the disabled, cleaning shelters for the homeless, participating in the “Medics on the street” campaign (medical assistance and dressing the homeless as a member of the youth rescue team, 3) assisting students in accessing student exchanges, helping children with their homework, and reading books to children, 4) leading sports activities for children, supporting sports events (e.g., refereeing or organizing), and renovating sport club’s boats, 5) taking care of animals at the shelter, 6) cleaning books at the hospital, 7) repairing computer equipment, repairing bicycles at aid stations, and repairing and renovating old apartments, 8) during the pandemic, printing protective visors for medical workers, helping with the “Meal for a Medic” campaign or at vaccination centers, providing masks for hospitals, helping to prepare meals, and helping seniors through the District Support Team and “Visible Hand” campaign (distributing masks and delivering packages to seniors), 9) patriotic: cleaning up the graves of insurgents at the “Kiliński” battalion at Powązki Military Cemetery,<sup>15</sup> taking part in “Daffodils,” a social and educational campaign and part of the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, and representing the Polish Scouting Association at ceremonies, 10) ecological: cleaning up the local lake and collecting trash in the Warsaw woods, 11) creative: creating 3D models of buildings and streets, documenting regional wooden monuments, creating a repository of pre-war wooden architecture of the district, creating a blog about architecture and models, taking and processing photos of historical places in Warsaw, and photographing and reporting on local events, 12) recreational: participating in the events “Winter in the City” and “Summer in the City,” the “Neighborhood House” project (a network of people involved socially and artistically in the neighborhood), and camps for people with disabilities and creating a local youth internet television program, 13) being involved in Jewish community activities in Warsaw, 14) being a local representative of organizations such as Our Future Foundation, Youth Together, and Youth Climate Strike

<sup>15</sup> Cemetery where people who are honoured by the country are buried

It should be pointed out that 27 different foundations and associations<sup>16</sup> were listed in the applications, as well as a number of institutions<sup>17</sup> in which or through which the young people were socially active.

### Activities Related to Society

In their applications, the young people also submitted activities that went beyond their place of study and residence. This category of activities is addressed to recipients all across Poland, or even to the international community. Organizational activities were also part of this area, mostly participation in specific projects.

**Cultural events:** the National Christian Music Festival Hosanna Festival

**Simulations:** Polmoot (a simulation of court proceedings, in English, for high school students from Poland and abroad), the Ad Personam Initiative (political debates and interviews), the Public Speaking Club

**Civic:** “Young people vote” (a pre-election, pro-turnout campaign), the Ad Personam Initiative (political debates and interviews)

**Voluntary:** Little Brothers of the Poor (a campaign on the occasion of International Elderly Day), the Polish Red Cross, “No to Cancer in Children” (workshops and playing with patients), Penny Mountain

<sup>16</sup> The full list consists of Związek Harcerstwa Polskiego (ZHP), Związek Harcerstwa Rzeczypospolitej (ZHR), Uniwersytet Dzieci na terenie Warszawy, Centrum Aktywności Międzypokoleniowej, Towarzystwo Społeczno-Kulturalne Miasto Ogród Sadyba, Integracyjny Ośrodek Wsparcia dla Dzieci i Młodzieży “Stokrotka,” Fundacja “Świat na tak,” Our Future Foundation, Warszawska Akademia Młodych Liderów, Fundacja Promień Nadziei, Stowarzyszenie Anioły Wiedzy, Fundacja Ocalenie, grupa młodzieży żydowskiej Hultaj, Ognisko Pracy Pozaszkolnej, Fundacja Wolne Miejsce, stowarzyszenie CZTERY ŁAPY, stowarzyszenie Polka Potrafi.pl, stowarzyszenie Miasto Jest Nasze, Fundacja AFS, Stowarzyszenie Warszawskich Szkół Średnich, Fundacji na Rzecz Praw Ucznia, Studenckie Koło Naukowe Spraw Zagranicznych w Szkole Głównej Handlowej, Centrum Zintegrowanej Pomocy i Redukcji Szkód Drop in, Fundacja Joanny Radziwiłł Opiekuńcze Skrzydła, Wielka Orkiestra Świątecznej Pomocy, and fundacja Polska Gościnność.

<sup>17</sup> They included public libraries, religious groups, hospitals, the Children’s Health Centre, sports clubs, kindergartens, cultural centers, social care centers, upbringing and prevention centers, neighborhood clubs, cafeterias, the National Library, POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, the Concentus Viridis Orchestra, J. Pilsudski Museum, and the Youth Palace.

**Informational:** information in social media accounts of initiatives or organizations, the OFF Podcast initiative (regular meetings with activists), promotion of the platform [pogadajmyostudiach.pl](http://pogadajmyostudiach.pl) to help high school students choose their university degree program

**Scientific:** “Manufaktura Naukowców” (scientific workshops), TedexKids conferences, Oxford Economics Talks (a youth economic conference)

**Entrepreneurial:** “@WspieramPL” (campaign supporting small Polish companies in the clothing and decorative industry), assistance in creating startups

Apart from organizational activities, young people also carried out other social activities, including the following.

**Civic:** candidate or member of the Youth Parliament of the Republic of Poland (drafting articles, resolutions, and speeches that communicate youth demands to decision-makers), Ambassador of the EU Youth Dialogue for Mazowieckie Voivodeship (a scoping study on the implementation of the resolution “European Union Youth Strategy 2019–2027”), Delegate representing India at the Economic and Financial Affairs Council, Youth Advisor at the Office of the Member of the European Parliament, member of the All-Poland Youth Federation, ambassador of the EU Youth Dialogue at the youth organization PROM, participant in the Institute of Youth (a youth political think tank), the youth committee of the trade union OZZ Inicjatywa Pracownicza, or the Warsaw Autonomous High School Anti-Fascist Committee (anti-discrimination), collecting signatures for various civic projects, monitoring court hearings

**Volunteering:** volunteering abroad and helping local communities (the “Leadership in your own hands” program, funded by the Canadian government), collecting food for the S.O.S. Food Bank, collecting registration data from potential bone marrow donors, helping people with hand and forearm amputations (prototyping a bionic prosthesis and making instructions for 3D printing it), renovation work at the parish in Legnica (WorkCamp)

---

**Popularization:** social activities within the “Zwolnieni z teorii” *Olympiada* competition, the project “Szczęśliwa Krowa Smakuje lepiej” [“A Happy Cow Tastes Better”] (education on the fate of farm animals in the food industry), “Niusy Fusy” [“News Hits”] (raising awareness about misinformation in the media), BEEst world (popularizing knowledge about bees)

**Educational:** recording 30 biology lessons, including presentations for use in remote work with elementary school students

**Cultural:** member of the youth jury at the Up to 21 International Film Festival

**Patriotic:** participating in a reenactment group of soldiers and civilians from Polish history

**Editorial:** editing the magazine *Voice of Generations*

For these activities as well, the students repeatedly identified specific foundations, associations, and institutions that they worked with in their community activities.<sup>18</sup> It is also worth adding that the social activities of young people are noticed and even appreciated. Indicators of their popularity also include the number of visits to the websites/blogs/profiles run by the students, the high results in competitions/masters (e.g., in the competitions “Zwolnieni z teorii”<sup>19</sup> or “The Magnificent Eight”<sup>20</sup>), and the number of nominations to the Prize of Warsaw’s Cultural Education Program and distinctions at school.

---

<sup>18</sup> These include the Polish Centre for National Aid Foundation, Amnesty International, S.O.S. Food Bank, Studia na Horyzoncie, Stowarzyszenie Inicjatywa Perspektywa, Court Watch Polska Foundation, Extinction Rebellion Youth, Youth Climate Strike, Universal Reading Foundation, the Polish Centre for National Aid, Young Talent Management, the Polish Youth Federation Association, the Polish Red Cross, the Open University named after Karol Modzelewski, Young Democrats Association, DKMS Foundation, Foundation of Academy of Civic Knowledge, Youth Institute, PROM, and the Ronald McDonald Foundation.

<sup>19</sup> This is a method of engaging students with social activism that includes creating a team, brainstorming, and creating a project, which is later graded (<https://zvolnienizteorii.pl>).

<sup>20</sup> This competition is geared toward teenagers to promote positive behavior, actions, and attitudes, as well as volunteering among youths.



---

## Summary

The criteria for SAPERE AUSO scholarships, in the context of developing the social competences of youths, have a double function. On the one hand, they stimulate young people with high intellectual potential to not only achieve in education and science, but also to work for the benefit of their classmates and the wider community. On the other hand, these criteria motivate those students whose talents are more social than academic. In our schools, pro-social activities are not rewarded with grades; potential appreciation may only come in the form of an exemplary grade in the behavior category. Thus, the SAPERE AUSO scholarship is one form of reinforcing the message that abilities and social activity are valuable.

The coping strategies of gifted students with social groups vary. Some intellectually gifted individuals understate their abilities and achievements or hide them to gain the approval of their peers (Kamińska, 2021). The gifted students may have trouble finding compatible peers or friends with whom to share interests and to spend time together (Robinson, 2008). Therefore, they either fit into a group at the expense of their own development or isolate themselves so that they can maintain their values. Meanwhile, the analysis of pro-social activities of SAPERE AUSO grantees shows that gifted students with measurable success not only focus on their academic achievements and intellectual development, but also undertake selfless actions for the benefit of their fellow students.<sup>21</sup> Thus, rather than hiding in the shadows or understating their achievements to please the group, they turn their talents into tools for social support.

Research has shown that even students with “egoistic” abilities (Geake & Gross, 2008) – for example, in mathematics, physics, or foreign languages – engage in pro-social activities. They use their abilities to selflessly help others, by tutoring, translating texts, disseminating knowledge, or repairing equipment. It can be thought that these are students

---

<sup>21</sup> As is suggested in the name, the category of behaviour includes behaviour in school and lessons, as well as pro-social activities in school. This category doesn't need to include societal activities.

---

who are more likely to focus on similarities with their peers (Delzell, 1998) and are consequently able to see their problems and remedy them to the best of their ability.

It also became apparent that for some of the grantees social activity is the main area of personal development. The information in the applications shows that these students believe that voluntary activities, helping other people, and being active in various institutions and organizations – including local government – allows them to contribute to various social groups' functioning, even of the country and the world. Thus, patriotic, self-government, civic, pro-ecological activities are described. Among these activities, it is also apparent that young people, through their actions, build their own social support network, which they will be able to reach in case of need. Such a network is based on interests, values, cooperation, and achievements.

This research leads to the development of specific pedagogical conclusions related to a reflection on the scope of educational and motivational interventions aimed at gifted youths. Young, gifted people seek a space to be able to externalize their social needs, are willing to share their talents, and engage in voluntary, cultural, creative, and other types of action. In this way, they change the world in which they live, beautifying it or making it better. Thus, distinctions in the form of scholarships, which also take into account the criterion of social achievements, seem to be appropriate to the needs of gifted students.

---

## References

- Campbell, A. C., & Mawer, M. (2019). Clarifying mixed messages: International scholarship programmes in the sustainable development agenda. *Higher Education Policy*, 32(2), 167–184. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41307-017-0077-1>
- Campbell A. C., & Neff, E. (2020). A systematic review of international higher education scholarships for students from the Global South. *Review of Educational Research*, 90(6), 824–861. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654320947783>
- Cosentino, C., Fortson, J., Liuzzi, S., Harris, A., & Blair, R. (2019). Can scholarships provide equitable access to high-quality university education? Evidence from the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 71, 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2019.102089>
- Cross, T. L., & Coleman, L. J. (1993). The social cognition of gifted adolescents: An exploration of the stigma of giftedness paradigm. *Roeper Review*, 16(1), 37–41. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02783199309553532>
- Dąbrowski, K. (2021). *Dezintegracja pozytywna*. [Positive disintegration]. Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy.
- de Hoyos, R., Attanasio, O., & Meghir, C. (2019). *Can scholarships increase high school graduation rates? Evidence from a randomized control trial in Mexico* [Policy Research Working Paper No. 8826]. World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/31581>
- Delzell, H. J. (1998). Giftedness: Infancy to adolescence – A developmental perspective. *Roeper Review*, 20(4), 259–264. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02783199809553903>
- Geake, J. G., & Gross, U. M. (2008). Teachers' negative affect toward academically gifted students: An evolutionary psychological study. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 52(3), 217–231. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0016986208319704>
- Gibbs, G. (2011) *Analizowanie danych jakościowych*. [Analyzing Qualitative Data]. PWN.
- Gross, M. U. M. (1998). The “me” behind the mask: Intellectually gifted students and the search for identity. *Roeper Review*, 20(3), 167–174.
- Kamińska, A. (2021). *Matura na 100%. Doświadczenia edukacyjne uczniów zdolnych w polskiej szkole publicznej*. [Matura 100%: Educational experiences of gifted students in a Polish public school]. Wydawnictwo Naukowe Akademii Ignatianum.

- Limont, W. (2010). *Uczeń zdolny. Jak z nim rozpoznać i jak z nim pracować*. [The gifted student: How to recognize and work with one]. Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne.
- Limont, W. (2013). „Stań na ramionach gigantów” czyli uczeń zdolny jako problem wychowawczy. [“Stand on the shoulders of giants,” or a gifted student as an educational problem]. *Psychologia wychowawcza*, 3, 125–138.
- Łukasiewicz-Wieleba, J. (2018). *Rozpoznawanie potencjału oraz wzmocnienia i ograniczenia rozwoju zdolności dzieci w narracjach rodziców* [Identifying the potential, strengths, and restrictions of the development of children’s abilities in parents’ narratives]. Wydawnictwo APS.
- Neihart, M. (1999). Systematic risk-taking. *Roeper Review*, 21(4), 289–292.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02783199909553977>
- Olszewski-Kubilius, P. (2008). The role of the family in talent development. In S. I. Pfeiffer, *Handbook of giftedness in children* (pp. 53–70). Springer.
- Olszewski-Kubilius, P., Subotnik, R. F., & Worrell, F. C. (2015). Conceptualizations of giftedness and the development of talent: Implications for counselors. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 93, 143–152.  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6676.2015.00190.x>
- Perna, L. W. (2004). Understanding the decision to enroll in graduate school: Sex and racial/ethnic group difference. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 75, 487–527. doi:10.1353/jhe.2004.0032
- Perna, L. W. (2010). Toward a more complete understanding of the role of financial aid in promoting college enrollment: The importance of context. In J. C. Smart (Ed.), *Higher education: Handbook of theory and research* (Vol. 25, pp. 129–180). Springer.
- Pfeiffer, S. I., & Stocking, V. B. (2000). Vulnerabilities of academically gifted students. *Special Services in the Schools*, 16, 83–93. [https://doi.org/10.1300/J008v16n01\\_06](https://doi.org/10.1300/J008v16n01_06)
- Piechowski, M. M. (2015). „Jak ptak, wysokim lotem”: wzmożone pobudliwości psychiczne u osób zdolnych. [“Like a bird, flying high”: Increased mental excitability in gifted people]. *Psychologia Wychowawcza*, 8, 122–137.  
<https://doi.org/10.5604/00332860.1178712>
- Robinson, N. M. (2008). The social world of gifted children and youth. In S. I. Pfeiffer (Ed.), *Handbook of giftedness in children: Psychoeducational theory, research, and best practices* (pp. 33–51). Springer Science Business Media.

---

Santra, S. (2022, March 29). *Funding to study abroad: How do you fund your study abroad program?* <https://blog.iefap.org/author/sagniksantra/page/2/>

Uchwała nr XLVII/1463/2021 Rady Miasta Stołecznego Warszawy z dnia 15 kwietnia 2021r. w sprawie stypendiów m.st. Warszawy SAPERE AUSO. [Resolution of the Council of the Capital City of Warsaw of April 15, 2021. on scholarships for the Capital City of Warsaw SAPERE AUSO.]

Udvari, S. J. (2000). Competition and the adjustment of gifted children: A matter of motivation. *Roeper Review*, 22(4), 212–216.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/02783190009554040>