

# THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION ON GIFTED PUPILS AND THEIR DEVELOPMENT

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## Abstract [Style Subsection]

*This article explores the impact of social exclusion on the development of giftedness in students growing up in socially disadvantaged environments. The authors highlight the fact that these children often have limited access to educational opportunities and support measures that would allow them to fully develop their potential. Schools located in socially excluded areas typically face a number of challenges such as low student motivation, high absenteeism, risky behavior, and insufficient cooperation with families, all of which complicate the individual support of gifted students. The article presents theoretical concepts of giftedness, approaches to its development in education both in the Czech Republic and abroad, the specific conditions of schools in socially excluded localities, and a case study of a gifted girl whose development is hindered by a lack of family support. The authors draw from scholarly literature as well as their own practical experience. The article offers proposals for systemic measures and emphasizes the importance of early identification of giftedness, interdisciplinary collaboration, and support not only from educators but also from families, without which giftedness cannot be effectively nurtured. Supporting gifted students in socially excluded environments thus requires a comprehensive and sensitive approach that reflects the real conditions of these schools.*

**Keywords:** gifted pupils, socially excluded localities, basic education, support of talents, socially disadvantaged environment

## INTRODUCTION

Pupils with diagnosed giftedness are very specific. Each individual with giftedness has different developmental needs. Giftedness can occur in different areas and these carry their own specificities. It is often very challenging to diagnose them and also to find appropriate support measures within education to help them develop their giftedness, but not to put pressure on them and, on the contrary, not to overload them. Pupils who live in socially excluded localities have different conditions not only for their own development but also for their educational needs. Excluded localities themselves bring specific living conditions, they also bring issues that people and educational institutions in other localities do not address. These localities are specific because families in these areas often deal with limited access to education and social services, a limited labour market, and difficulty in dealing with personal problems such as illness or debt. Socially excluded areas are often associated with a higher incidence of risky behaviour. These issues are naturally reflected in the educational process. Teachers in primary schools often address topics related to social exclusion outside the pupils' education itself. We can mention low motivation to learn, truancy, high school failure rates and risky behaviour, among others. In such conditions, teachers often do not have the capacity to pay special attention to pupils with gifts or talents and to differentiate teaching properly.

Schools can use various support measures, such as differentiated education, individual support and special education plans, to respond effectively to the needs and abilities of each child with a giftedness (Decree No. 27/2016 Coll.), but each giftedness and each personality has its own specificities. Sometimes it is not enough to set up support measures, the teacher then has to find strategies that work within the education of a particular pupil. This requires an individual approach and this takes time. Given the facts and the issues they face, it is the lack of time that does not allow them to respond individually. In addition, there are other pupils in the classes with special educational needs or support needs. Teachers often talk about the difficulty of differentiating instruction and the workload involved in dealing with problem situations. If they have a pupil with a diagnosed giftedness in their classroom, it is problematic for them to find an appropriate support or strategy to develop

his/her needs. This article we will primarily deal with the definition of a gifted pupil, the possibilities of his/her development in the educational process and the limits that may occur in this development due to social exclusion. The article is a description of the experience of the authors, who encounter the reality of today's education system in the educational process of pupils from excluded localities.

## Theoretical background

### Definition of Giftedness

First, it is important to clarify who gifted children are. These are students who demonstrate—or have the potential to demonstrate—a higher level of performance compared to their peers of the same age, experience, and environment, in one or more areas. In order to develop their potential and learn effectively, they require adjustments in the educational process (NAGC, 2018).

According to the German Institute for Gifted Children, the term "giftedness" primarily refers to intellectual abilities, as opposed to the term "talent," which may also include areas such as art or sports. Gifted children are characterized by exceptionally high intelligence, reflected in their ability to think logically, solve problems efficiently, and learn quickly. They often excel in memory and in the rapid comprehension of new information. These children are usually several years ahead of their peers in terms of intellectual development (Institut für das begabte Kind, 2024).

A similar view is presented in Porter's (2005) definition. In her view, gifted or talented children show significantly greater progress in learning speed, pace, and quality in a particular area compared to their peer group—both in terms of quality and quantity. The giftedness of a child results in performance that is exceptional and stands in sharp contrast to the average achievements of their peers (Foberová, 2025).

Giftedness can also be understood as a set of certain aptitudes that form the basis for the successful development of abilities. The term most often refers to individuals who demonstrate truly above-average performance across a variety of domains—both mental and physical (Hartl & Hartlová, 2000).

From the perspective of the educational system, in the Czech Republic, the term "exceptionally gifted student" is defined by Decree No. 27/2016 Coll.: A gifted student, for the purposes of this decree, is a student who, with adequate support, shows a high level of performance in comparison with peers in one or more areas of cognitive ability, motor, manual, artistic, or social skills.

An exceptionally gifted student is a student whose distribution of abilities reaches an extraordinary level combined with high creativity across a range of activities or in specific areas such as cognitive ability, motor, manual, artistic, or social skills.

According to the Davidson Institute, giftedness can be seen through the lens of neurodiversity—a concept also often associated with children with ADHD. Neurodiversity provides a framework for understanding how the human brain works and how mental states differ. It is based on the idea that differences in human thinking and cognition are natural, and that some conditions often labeled as mental disorders should not necessarily be viewed as pathological (Rosqvist et al., 2020). From this perspective, giftedness is understood as a brain-based difference that contributes to a diverse and neurodiverse world. This neurological difference means that profoundly gifted students experience a different trajectory in their intellectual, academic, and socio-emotional development compared to neurotypical individuals.

Giftedness can be viewed from many angles, and there is no universally accepted and specific definition established worldwide. For the purposes of this article, we base our perspective on the fact that, in diagnostic contexts, gifted individuals demonstrate above-average performance.

However, we would also like to highlight a Finnish perspective, which downplays the need for strict definitions and instead emphasizes the concept of humanity.

Giftedness/talent refers to the ability and performance in a certain area of life. The factors of giftedness/talent vary among individuals, meaning that all people can be considered more or less gifted. Giftedness is also a highly cultural phenomenon, with a society's values and goals at a given time determining what is considered gifted (Sabater, 2022).

It is important to note that giftedness does not exist in isolation. It is often accompanied by behavioral or attention disorders such as ADHD. This phenomenon is known as twice exceptionality (Čírová & Krahulcová,

2023). A gifted child may, in certain situations, develop behavioral difficulties. It is common that the people around them fail to understand the underlying causes of such behavior (Center for the Development of Giftedness, n.d.). Skolnick (2017) describes shared traits of giftedness and ADHD as creativity, high energy, divergent thinking, empathy, enthusiasm, unique problem-solving approaches, anxiety, social issues, perfectionism, and intense emotionality. Therefore, when supporting giftedness, we must not only nurture the child's abilities but also address potential challenges such as behavioral difficulties, emotional instability, fatigue, or social issues.

It is essential to view each child as a unique individual. It is not appropriate to search for specific behavioral patterns to "prove" that a child is either profoundly gifted or has ADHD (Skolnick, 2017).

Finally, it is important to mention that gifted children come from a variety of racial, ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds. To realize their full potential, they need equitable access to educational opportunities. Some may also experience specific learning or processing difficulties, requiring professional support and accommodations. In addition to cultivating their abilities, they also need support in their social and emotional development.

### **Support for Gifted Students in the Educational Process**

The system of support for gifted and exceptionally gifted students in schools should motivate individual teachers to effectively stimulate and develop the talents of each student in all dimensions. The functionality of this system is reflected in the systematic work with gifted students in the classroom. Deficiencies in the system would not necessarily pose a serious problem if most teachers were able to ensure the stimulation and development of talent without additional support. However, this is unfortunately not often the case. As it is very challenging to identify these students and foster their talents, it is extremely important that teachers engage in continuous professional development in this area so they can respond to the specific needs of these students.

For the development of these students, the first and fundamental step is the stimulation of talent, whereby the teacher offers activities in which emerging talent can manifest. Specific measures adopted by schools to improve work with gifted and exceptionally gifted students include, in addition to specialized instruction for certain students (e.g., the opportunity to study a subject in which the student excels together with an older grade), the most frequently mentioned by educational counselors are the acquisition of additional special tools and materials for gifted students and the establishment of appropriate extracurricular clubs. At the same time, they often emphasize the need for teacher training in the support of gifted and exceptionally gifted students.

Teacher education is crucial, especially in areas such as the use of methods that stimulate talent and diagnostic methods for talent development, with the aim of educating the gifted student alongside their peers while also maximizing the development of their talents. Schools frequently organize various student competitions and olympiads in which gifted and exceptionally gifted students can demonstrate their above-average skills and abilities. However, competitions and olympiads alone do not guarantee the development or stimulation of talent (Czech School Inspectorate – ČŠI, 2022).

- Curriculum Enrichment and Tools for Talent Development - A common form of support in the education of gifted students includes the use of various additional tasks for these students and the use of different tools, which are either prescribed as part of support measures or are owned by the school and used for individual development. These may include microscopes, dissection kits, maps, globes, electronic and technical kits, etc. (Decree No. 27/2016 Coll.)
- Schools, Classes, and Groups for Gifted Students - In the Czech Republic, there are classes and groups established under Section 16(9) of the Education Act specifically for gifted students. Many schools also collaborate with the international organization Mensa, which brings together individuals with high intellectual abilities (Mensa Children, 2024).
- Adaptation of Teaching Organization - Gifted students may have adapted organization of their learning – for example, they may take additional subjects in which they excel and which support their talent development, or they may attend certain subjects with higher grade levels. In some cases, a student may be moved to a higher grade or enrolled earlier into primary education based on differential examinations (ČŠI, 2022).

- **Extracurricular Activities** - Within art schools, children's and youth centers, or sports organizations, gifted individuals can develop their abilities and skills outside the regular school environment (Ministry of Education – MŠMT, 2014). There are also clubs for gifted children organized under Mensa, which connect children with giftedness (Mensa, 2024).
- **Support from Pedagogical-Psychological Counseling Centers (PPP)** - If a child's giftedness is being adequately developed at school and the child is content, cooperation with PPP or SPC (Special Educational Centers) is not necessary. However, if difficulties arise that the school cannot manage, visiting these institutions is recommended for the legal guardian. In addition to diagnostics, a recommended approach for the teacher is provided, and the child is included in a particular level of support measures depending on their difficulties (Valentová, 2023).
- **Non-Profit Organizations** - In the context of giftedness, parents can seek family counseling, or there are various associations and non-profit organizations that specialize in gifted children and provide counseling and activities for these individuals (RJS, 2023 online).

Early identification and subsequent methodological support is most important in the development of gifted pupils (CSI, 2022). As mentioned above, it is often the teacher who needs to be aware of how to recognise giftedness and what form of support to subsequently provide. It takes pedagogical sensitivity, time and the opportunity to observe pupils, which is often not possible in schools in excluded localities.

### **Educating gifted pupils abroad**

The ways in which gifted pupils are educated vary considerably from country to country. The emphasis is not only on identifying cognitive potential, but also on ensuring equality of opportunity, particularly for children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds.

In the United States, support for gifted pupils is well developed. Large-scale programmes such as Gifted and Talented Education (GATE), complemented by initiatives from private institutions and universities, play a key role. Some of the most prominent include the Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth (CTY) and the Davidson Institute, which offer online courses, summer schools, and one-on-one support to gifted children across the country.

The United States is also home to the Dalton Plan, an alternative teaching method created by Helen Parkhurst. This approach is based on three basic principles: freedom, responsibility and collaboration. It emphasises the individualisation of learning, with the pupil planning the pace of work and how it is to be completed, and learning to work with others. There is an agreement between the teacher and the pupil on the work schedule for a certain period. The Dalton Plan is not used in school practice as a stand-alone system, but as a complementary element to the traditional educational model (Dalton International, n.d., online). It is used by some primary schools in the Czech Republic and abroad (e.g. in the Netherlands, Austria or Germany), often as part of differentiating teaching and supporting gifted pupils. Research shows that this approach increases teachers' sensitivity to pupils' individual needs and helps to develop their potential more effectively through accessible individualised learning (De Boer et al., 2013).

In the UK, non-profit organisations that focus on supporting gifted pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds play an important role. The Sutton Trust, one of the most prominent organisations in this field, analyses the impact of socio-economic status on the academic achievement of gifted children in its report *Subject to Background*. The findings show that many highly able pupils from poorer backgrounds are not achieving their potential due to a lack of support and limited access to development programmes (Sutton Trust, 2015). Additional support is provided by organisations such as Potential Plus UK, which offers advice, testing and support materials for schools and parents of gifted children, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds (Potential Plus UK, online, n.d.). As already noted, it is the early identification of gifted pupils that can make a significant contribution to better quality education and the development of their potential.

Finland takes a different approach to the education of gifted children. The principle of equality and inclusion is at the heart of Finnish education. Gifted pupils are educated in mainstream classes, with an emphasis on differentiation of teaching and broad teacher autonomy. Thus, support for the gifted is often dependent on the initiative and professional competence of individual teachers, as Finland does not have a specific national

programme aimed exclusively at gifted pupils (Tirri, 2021). It can be said that the Finnish approach is based on the belief that quality and equal education should naturally support the development of all pupils, regardless of their specific learning needs.

### **Socially Excluded Localities and Their Specifics in Education**

As the title of the article suggests, the authors address the issue of giftedness in the context of educating children from socially excluded localities. The following section defines this issue.

Social exclusion means that a person gradually loses the opportunity to fully participate in the normal life of society. They lack access to things, services, or opportunities that others take for granted for a good life, organizing daily routines, and influencing important decisions. Navrátil (2003) describes social exclusion as a process or state in which individuals, families, groups, or even entire communities have limited access to the resources needed to fully engage in social, economic, political, and civic life.

The international PISA survey (2003) highlighted that the Czech Republic is among the countries where students' educational outcomes are strongly dependent on the socio-economic and cultural status of their families.

Experts have long pointed out that low levels of education are one of the key characteristics of socially excluded areas. The attitude of parents toward education and their level of education influence the impact of the family on the child's education. However, the roots of school failure among children living in socially excluded conditions cannot be attributed solely to parents' attitudes toward education (Svoboda, 2017).

The foundations for educational success are laid during the earliest phases of a child's socialization, even within a socially excluded environment. School readiness and subsequent success depend primarily on the overall development of the child's personality, which is influenced by three key factors: heredity (innate predispositions), environment, and upbringing (Svoboda, 2017).

Compared to mainstream schools, no significant differences were found in teaching quality. However, teachers in schools located in socially excluded localities (SEL) more frequently apply competency-based learning and rely more heavily on inclusive principles, reflecting the specific conditions of these schools and the educational potential of the local population. Teaching in these schools is very demanding and places high demands on teachers (ČŠI, 2015).

### **Challenges in Schools in Socially Excluded Localities**

Despite some strengths, the quality of education is limited by issues such as absenteeism, truancy, and frequent late arrivals. Studies show that there is little parental involvement in school life and a weak emphasis by parents on students' academic performance. Parents in excluded areas are less likely to initiate discussions about their children's academic progress and rarely demand improved performance from schools. More than half of school counselors in these areas report that their main focus is resolving behavioral problems (ČŠI, 2015).

Teachers often work with students who are poorly motivated to learn and face communication challenges with families. They frequently deal with problems not typically encountered in regular schools and are often exposed to psychologically demanding situations (Solovovová, 2019).

#### **Difficult situations faced by teachers in SEL schools include:**

- **Family attitudes and low motivation to learn:** In SEL, low education levels and lack of motivation are common. Children often do not inherit educational aspirations from their families. Teachers must work harder to motivate students, often facing apathy and needing to repeatedly engage students.
- **High absenteeism and truancy:** Teachers must frequently address high levels of absenteeism, which is linked to academic failure. Teachers spend time meeting parents, consulting with students, or resolving issues with local authorities or social services.
- **Lack of financial resources:** Families often lack money for transport, school supplies, trips, or activities, which can lead to exclusion from the peer group. Teachers must monitor these situations and foster inclusive classroom relationships.
- **Behavioral and emotional issues:** Students from disadvantaged backgrounds often present significant behavioral and emotional difficulties, such as aggression, passivity, low self-esteem, or resistance to

authority. Teachers must apply strategies to manage these behaviors and often collaborate with school psychologists and specialists.

- **Risky behaviors:** Students may encounter truancy, substance abuse, vandalism, or conflicts with peers or teachers. These behaviors disrupt education and school climate, requiring teachers to engage in preventive measures and work with social workers or police.
- **Lack of family cooperation:** Cooperation with families is often problematic. Some parents do not view education as a priority, do not attend meetings, or avoid addressing issues. Teachers must dedicate significant time and effort to reach out, often with help from child welfare services. Without family involvement, improving student outcomes is significantly more difficult.

## The Issue of Educating and Developing Gifted Students in Socially Excluded Localities: A Practical Perspective

The issue of educating and developing gifted students in socially excluded localities (SEL) can be viewed from several perspectives. The first is the resources and capacities of schools and teachers.

Within the school environment, a range of support measures can be offered to gifted students to help develop their talents. In SEL schools, the most commonly used forms of support are additional tasks and learning aids recommended by educational counseling services. In some cases, schools also allow gifted students to attend lessons in subjects like mathematics in higher grades or create special groups for selected subjects where students work on more advanced tasks or progress at a faster pace.

However, teachers in these localities note that if a child's giftedness consists of a high IQ and faster processing compared to peers, enrichment through extra assignments is usually sufficient. In such cases, they feel capable of supporting and developing the student's abilities. But when a student is gifted in a different area or does not work at an above-average pace, it becomes more difficult to provide adequate support. Such support requires more time, a more individualized approach, and greater expertise on the teacher's part in the field of gifted education.

Looking at class composition in SEL schools, we typically find at least three students receiving some form of support, and in some classes this number may approach half of all students. Additionally, at least two students usually have an individualized support plan, and each class typically includes at least one student with behavioral issues. There are also socially disadvantaged students and students with high absenteeism. Teachers in these schools agree that the actual teaching time within a 45-minute lesson is reduced due to the need to manage discipline and student motivation. They also agree that more attention is drawn to negative behavior and challenges than to positive student traits. As a result, they often spend more time addressing poor academic performance and behavioral problems than supporting motivated, fast-learning, or gifted students.

The problem does not lie in the motivation or efforts of the teachers, but rather in class sizes, the lack of teaching assistants, and the absence of co-teaching arrangements. These conditions make it impossible for teachers to focus sufficient energy on the development of gifted students.

Another critical factor is the family environment. In SEL, many families have a low level of education. As Svoboda (2017) notes, the problem is that these parents often fail to understand the link between education and life success, and thus do not sufficiently motivate their children to attend school or achieve academically. There is also a significant proportion of Roma families in these areas. According to Šejblová (2021), Roma parenting often lacks structure and allows children considerable freedom. Education is generally not seen as a high priority or a path to success.

For the development of gifted children, active parental involvement and support at home are crucial. Parents need to notice where their child excels or struggles and engage accordingly. Gifted children also need to be supported outside school—through enrollment in extracurricular clubs, art schools, or access to museums and educational centers. If parents do not value education, fail to understand their child's needs, or even prevent them from attending school because the child is needed at home, the gifted child cannot realize their potential or succeed academically.



Raising and supporting a gifted child, just like supporting a child with a learning or behavioral disability, requires time—and sometimes a significant amount. For parents working in shifts or commuting long distances for work, this is especially challenging. In these localities, extracurricular opportunities, museums, theaters, or developmental activities are usually located elsewhere and require commuting. The same applies to access to social services, counseling, or psychotherapy. This general inaccessibility demands both time and financial resources from families—resources many of them lack. It is common for parents to say they cannot fully support their child due to a lack of time or money, as they are focused on meeting basic needs.

From this, it is clear that talent alone is not enough. Without sufficient conditions for development, a gifted child may not be able to succeed. It is also important to note that gifted children in SEL do not start from the same position as children living in more privileged areas or cities with better access to services and professionals.

### **Kazuistics**

A girl aged 11 attends the fifth year of a mainstream primary school. She comes from Roma ethnicity and grows up in a large family. She has two sisters and two half-siblings. The father is not present in the family life and the girl has never been in contact with him. The mother, who is long-term unemployed, lives with a partner with whom she has two other children.

The family applies the rule that the older children take care of the younger siblings. This arrangement severely limits the children's free time, their opportunities for individual development and participation in school and extracurricular activities. Children are not allowed to participate in school trips and are expected to return home immediately after school. The family does not give importance to education, which is reflected in the mother's decisions, for example, not allowing her older daughter to extend her compulsory schooling or to apply for secondary school. The prohibition of school attendance is sometimes applied as a form of punishment.

Despite these disadvantaging conditions, the girl shows above average intellectual and emotional abilities. Although she has not yet been examined in the educational-psychological counselling centre, her potential has been identified by teachers and the school special education teacher. Based on these observations, she was recommended by the school to apply for a multi-year grammar school as a way to further develop her abilities.

The school the girl attends is located in an excluded area. In the class she attends there is a high representation of pupils with special educational needs, with four pupils having been awarded level 2 or higher support measures, one pupil being treated for a mental illness and there is also a pupil with a different mother tongue. Teaching here is supported by a teaching assistant, but the challenging composition of the class makes effective differentiation very difficult. For this reason, too, a change of environment and a move to a multi-year grammar school was seen as an appropriate step to further develop the girl's talents. The mother was consulted in the presence of the class teacher, and the social pedagogue tried to contact her, but to no avail.

However, the mother rejected the school's recommendation because she did not consider further education important. This attitude reflects a wider family context in which learning is neither encouraged nor valued. Children are not motivated to continue their education beyond compulsory schooling.

During the fifth year, the girl herself requested placement in a facility for children in need of immediate assistance (CIEA). After placement, her school performance deteriorated slightly and she began to show signs of risky behaviour. It is not yet clear what direction her development will take, but it is already clear that despite her talents, a child's school performance can be fundamentally compromised if there is not adequate support from her family and wider social environment. Lack of stimulating background and prolonged exposure to psychological stress can lead to a decline in the development of skills and the development of risk behaviour. At the same time, if a girl is in a challenging life situation such as the loss of her home and an uncertain future, providing for her basic needs is more important than developing her talents.

### **Opportunities for support and development of potential:**

- In order to develop this girl's potential despite her disadvantaged family background, it is essential to actively engage multiple components of the child's support system. Specific interventions could include:

- Psychological and educational assessment in PPP to confirm giftedness and formally identify educational needs.
- Individual education plan with emphasis on developing strengths, talents and prevention of risky behaviour.
- Intensive cooperation between the school and the Social and Legal Protection of Children (OSPOD), which could ensure greater monitoring of the family situation and possible intervention in case of neglect or threats to the child's development.
- Mentoring or tutoring through organisations aimed at supporting gifted children from disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. People in Need, Romea, Talnet, etc.). At the same time, in socially excluded localities, cooperation with these organisations is more challenging because they are not within a commuting distance that is feasible for families.
- Involvement in after-school programmes or community centres that support talent development, for example through scholarships, tutoring or access to leisure activities. At the same time, the school or community must have these programs; if it does not, it is then up to the individual educators to work with.

The development of the potential of gifted pupils is fundamentally dependent on a stable and stimulating environment. If this function is not fulfilled by the family, it is essential that other institutions, such as schools, educational and psychological counselling centres, social services or non-profit organisations, which can offer alternative paths to the development of abilities and personal growth, actively step in to support the child. Early intervention is crucial in such cases and can significantly influence the child's future direction. At the same time, however, it must be stressed that the role of the family remains absolutely crucial. If the family refuses to cooperate with and support the child's education, it can significantly hinder or even completely frustrate all efforts to realise and develop the child's potential.

## Conclusions

The issue of developing gifted children in socially excluded localities reveals significant inequalities in educational opportunities, which have a profound impact on the future success of these children. Gifted children from SEL face not only limited school-based opportunities but also a lack of support from their families. SEL schools often do not have the capacity to provide individual support for gifted students. Teachers face high numbers of students with special educational needs, frequent behavioral issues, and limited teaching time. These factors prevent systematic development of gifted children's potential.

The family background often fails to contribute to the development of these children, as many parents lack sufficient education, do not see education as a priority, or cannot provide the financial or time resources needed for extracurricular activities. This severely limits access to clubs, art schools, or educational programs essential for nurturing talent. Moreover, opportunities for these activities in SEL are limited and often require commuting, which is inaccessible for many families.

Thus, children in SEL do not have the same starting line as their peers from areas with better access to services and professionals. It is therefore essential to implement measures that improve this situation. Key steps include increasing teacher support through the use of teaching assistants, co-teaching, and specialized training in working with gifted children. Schools should offer enriched educational programs and form groups to develop specific abilities of gifted students.

Support for families is also crucial. Schools should actively collaborate with parents, emphasize the importance of education, and help them find ways to support their children's talents at home. Community centers should offer accessible leisure and educational activities. It is also important to expand the availability of extracurricular activities directly within SEL or introduce subsidy programs to financially support the participation of gifted children from low-income families.

Finally, the education of gifted children needs to be systematically supported at the national or regional level. Programs should include funding for activities, teacher training, and support for collaboration between schools,



families, and communities. Only a comprehensive approach can bridge the gap in opportunities between gifted children in SEL and their peers from better-equipped environments and ensure their development and future success.

To achieve these goals, it is appropriate to design and implement specific systemic measures that reflect the needs of children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. These include, for example:

- **Expanding the availability of free tutoring and mentoring** through schools, non-profit organizations, or university programs. An individual approach will help children consolidate their knowledge and prepare for entrance exams or talent assessments.
- **Scholarship programs for gifted pupils from low-income families**, which would cover education-related expenses (textbooks, school supplies, transportation, participation in competitions and camps).
- **Targeted interventions by school counseling departments**, which would actively identify and monitor gifted children in at-risk environments and propose appropriate forms of support. The school psychologist or special education teacher should be actively involved in identifying talent and creating individualized development plans. At the same time, the amendment to the Education Act, which regulates the funding of school psychologists, special education teachers, and social educators, offers hope for better support in education and in meeting specific educational needs. This amendment will also formally establish the position of social educator within the educational system, which could lead to improved support for pupils from socially disadvantaged families. Furthermore, if interdisciplinary cooperation between the school special education teacher and the social educator is carried out effectively, it could have a positive impact on gifted pupils from socially disadvantaged environments.
- **Establishing specialized regional centers for supporting gifted children**, which would coordinate assistance for schools in working with gifted pupils and also offer consultations for families from marginalized backgrounds. These centers already exist in the Czech Republic, but in some regions, the staff of these centers are not very visible in the field and the role is more of a political function.
- **Support for community projects and networking of local actors** – cooperation between schools, social workers, cultural institutions, and leisure organizations can create a functional network that keeps the gifted child in a supportive environment.
- **Taking social context into account when admitting students to multi-year grammar schools or art schools**, for example through state- or municipality-funded preparatory courses that would help children from disadvantaged families overcome barriers to accessing quality education.

These measures should be part of a long-term strategy that strives for equal opportunities and fair access to education. Gifted children from socially excluded localities possess abilities that can benefit not only themselves but also society as a whole—if we offer them timely and targeted opportunities to develop these abilities.

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