

PRESS RELEASE

WeTalent provides teachers in European higher education with tools to stimulate their talented students

Hanze UAS leads new EU-supported Erasmus+ project

Europe simply cannot afford to waste talent. Therefore, nine organisations strongly committed to talent development in higher education have now joined forces to develop tools that can help teachers spot and stimulate talents. Their WeTalent project has received EU funding under the Strategic Partnerships program within Erasmus+ Key Action 2, allowing it to run from September 2017 to August 2020.

Hanze University of Applied Sciences (UAS) Groningen from the Netherlands will lead the consortium. 'We are proud and excited that this grant allows us to work intensively with a group of committed institutions to stimulate talent development', says Rob Verhofstad, Member of the Executive Board at Hanze UAS. 'The project fits really well with Hanze's vision of "Share your talent, move the world".'

WeTalent Wizard

The project WeTalent (Working in Europe to connect Talent development in higher education) addresses the problem that talented students in European higher education are not sufficiently challenged. As a consequence, young people do not fully develop their talents and the skills they need to have an excellent start in society. They might even drop out of education.

One way to handle this problem is to better equip teachers. Therefore, nine organisations will work together to develop tools which help talented young people reach their full potential. These tools are integrated into the WeTalent Wizard, an e-learning environment helping teachers to foster talent. It is developed in an international process of co-creation and consists of three parts:

1. an instrument for teachers to self-evaluate their views towards talent development (MeTalent Mirror)
2. an instrument to spot talented students (YouTalent Spotter)
3. an integrated e-library consisting of texts, images and minimovies enabling teachers to implement a research-based talent development program (WeTalent e-Library).

International co-creation

WeTalent was one of the eight projects selected for EU support out of 31 full applications in this round. The reviewers see a lot of potential: 'this project could put talent development on the agenda of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) throughout Europe and could potentially lead to an increase in the quality and quantity of talent development programs in European HEIs resulting in less talent getting lost.'

The WeTalent project will be led by Professor Marca Wolfensberger, who leads the Research Centre for Talent Development in Higher Education and Society at Hanze University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands. She is also honours coordinator at the Faculty of Geosciences at Utrecht University and President of the European Honors Council. Wolfensberger: 'The process of teaching and learning is a delicate travel of teacher and student together. It's an enormous challenge for the teacher to cope with a diverse student population and find a way to facilitate each talent. In the WeTalent project, we produce tools to facilitate this process in cocreation with teachers and students. By spreading these tools, we encourage higher education institutions around Europe to develop talents to the max.'

Partners

The nine partners in the WeTalent project are:

1. Hanze University of Applied Sciences (the Netherlands)

2. The International Centre for the Study of Giftedness (ICBF) at the University of Muenster (Germany)
3. Metropolitan University College (Denmark)
4. The Austrian Research and Support Centre for the Gifted and Talented (Austria)
5. The University of Antwerp (Belgium)
6. The University Alexandru Ioan Cuza of Iasi (Romania)
7. Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences (the Netherlands)
8. Utrecht University (the Netherlands)
9. The European Honors Council, a new Europe-wide network uniting people involved in talent development in higher education, is involved as associate partner.

The strong presence of Dutch institutions in the consortium can be explained by the fact that the Netherlands are considered front runner within Europe in the development of talent development programs in higher education, which are usually called honors programs.

Leading role for Hanze UAS

For Hanze UAS, the WeTalent project is a new milestone in its leading position in talent development in education and its internationalization strategy. It is the first time Hanze will act as lead partner of an international consortium in an EU-granted project in the Strategic Partnerships program within Erasmus+ Key Action 2 (aimed at Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices). WeTalent is also the only project led from a university of applied sciences ('hogeschool') that was granted a subsidy in this round.

It will be led from the Hanze Research Centre for Talent Development in Higher Education and Society, in close cooperation with Hanze Honours College.

The WeTalent project provides Hanze teachers, researchers and students with a platform to participate in an innovative international co-creation process, as well as new opportunities for international cooperation and exchange at honours level. In October, Hanze will welcome all partner organisations in Groningen. In June 2018, Hanze UAS will host a week-long workshop in which teachers and talented students will work together to develop tools that help teachers evaluate their own views on talent and help them to spot talented students. The final seminar presenting the complete WeTalent Wizard will also be held in Groningen in June 2020.

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Note to editors:

More information can be obtained from Pieter Veenstra (p.f.veenstra@pl.hanze.nl)

Interview requests for Prof. Marca Wolfensberger can also be made [here](#).