

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2025.

A year of new opportunities!



POTENTIAL AND SUPPORT

THE EXAMPLE OF AN INNOVATIVE HASTOR FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

Emina Hodžić, a seventeen-year-old student from Fojnica, is a talented scholarship recipient of the Hastor Foundation who is already excelling in numerous fields, particularly in economics and technology. She is a third-year high school student at the United World College in Mostar and has made a name for herself through her work, even being recognized at international competitions.

Emina has participated in the International Economics Olympiad twice—first last year in Bratislava and then this year in Olympia, Greece. The competition was a significant experience for her, as it not only deepened her understanding of economic topics, but also helped her develop skills such as solving problems under pressure and maintaining focus. Additionally, the opportunity to connect with peers from other countries and work on challenging tasks served as a strong motivation for her further growth. This year, Emina won a silver medal, which she saw as both a special recognition of her efforts and an encouragement to continue working on socially beneficial projects.

Economics is a field Emina sees as a powerful tool for addressing global challenges such as inequality and climate change. Besides, her interest in IT and artificial intelligence has led her to develop several projects. The most notable is “SafeTrack,” an application that uses AI to enhance traffic safety, which has earned her multiple medals at international competitions, including the Grand Gold at BOSEPO. She is currently working on “MyndSyte,” an application designed to help ALS patients communicate using eye-tracking technology.

For Emina, the Hastor Foundation scholarship is much more than financial support. As she highlights, the Foundation’s scholarship program has enabled her to further develop her skills and acquire new knowledge. In addition, the scholarship provides her with a broader perspective and better preparation for future professional challenges.



The change in society lies in young people like Emina. Their perseverance and desire to learn represent a potential that, with the right support, can bring significant advancements in various sectors, from technology to social sciences. Therefore, investing in the education of talented young individuals is essential for building a better future for the entire community.

*Prepared by: Lamija Sejdić
Translated by: Sara Kuduzović*

THE SENSE OF BELONGING IS THE FOUNDATION OF STABLE MENTAL HEALTH

The modern way of life has also brought numerous challenges related to mental health that are becoming more and more visible, especially among young people. We talked with **Vedina Ajanović**, psychologist and our alumni, about the prevention, treatment and support necessary for building healthy and stable generations.

With her rich experience and dedication to this field, Vedina provides invaluable insight into better understanding and providing support to those who need it most.

What are the most common causes of anxiety and depression in children and adolescents today?

Symptoms of depression and anxiety occur in response to stressful events but may also occur without external influences. Family heredity, i.e. if a child has one parent who has depression, makes them more likely to react to stress with depressive symptoms. Then, the influence of hormones (the stress hormone-cortisol-and sex hormones during puberty) on biological changes in the brain can lead to various symptoms. Dysfunctional family relationships: poor relationships between parents and children, marital problems, divorce, domestic violence or bereavement can significantly affect mental health of children. Peer bullying, lack of acceptance within peer groups, and difficulties adjusting at school can also be indicative of low socioeconomic status. At the first signs of symptoms, it is crucial to seek professional help and support.

How do the family dynamic affect children's mental health?

In addition to inheriting temperament from their parents, as a foundation for emotional development, the child also learns to model their behavior and how to deal with almost everything that is awaiting at every stage of development. If parents are affected by external stresses such as unemployment, unfavorable economic conditions, natural disasters or illnesses affecting family members, this can negatively influence the child's mental health. However, the extent of this impact largely depends on the parents' ability to cope with these challenges. Their responses to stressful situations and their problem-solving approaches affect children's mental well-being, whether positively or negatively. Issues within the family-poor marital relations between the parents and instances of psychological or physical violence-can undermine the child's self-confidence, self-esteem, and overall self-image, as the child identifies with and sees themselves in their parents.

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How does mental health view social media and the viral world?

Social media, along with technological advancements in general, has become an integral part of the lives of both young people and adults. In many ways, it facilitates access to information and communication, but we cannot ignore its negative impact on mental health. The need to present an “ideal self” through social media can distort one's real self-image.

The positive effect lies in the sense of belonging that users feel within peer communities based on shared interests, which helps build collective self-esteem. However, problems arise when an adolescent becomes overly focused on and preoccupied with “likes.” If the number of likes is not satisfactory, they may feel unaccepted or inadequate. As a result, they might spend excessive time trying to create content that will receive positive peer feedback, neglecting other aspects of life such as education, hobbies, and family time—or even developing an unhealthy self-obsession. In severe cases, this can lead to a loss of awareness of reality and one’s own identity.



a safe space and learn that it is not their fault that they have experienced peer violence. When it comes to cyberbullying, the aggravating factor is the speed of information dissemination and the existence of a written record of the abuse. In the case of cyberbullying, support for the child is provided in the same way.

How to deal with peer pressure and bullying at school, especially when it comes to online bullying?

First of all, it is necessary to build a relationship with the child so that they feel free to share information about any form of peer violence; a relationship in which the child knows that you will support them, that you will not judge them and that you will help them to solve a problem; a relationship in which the child feels safe. Trauma arises not only because of the disturbing experience we experienced, but also because there was no one to help us at that moment. The most important thing is to give the child permission to defend themselves, to teach them to distinguish an attack from a defense. When the child knows and believes they can defend and stand up for themselves, they will not feel powerless. Thus, they will have greater self-esteem and confidence. The child needs to be provided with professional psychological support, where they will work on unpleasant or traumatic experiences in

How important is it to create a safe and supportive environment for the mental health of children and adolescents? How can we all together, inspired by the example of the Hastor Foundation, contribute to strengthening the sense of belonging, self-confidence and emotional stability among young people in our communities?

Since its establishment, the Hastor Foundation has been an example of building healthy personalities in many children throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. It teaches us how to overcome differences, strengthen community, accept and support each other, learn, grow and progress. Each scholar feels belonging and acceptance in the large community of the Hastor Foundation, and this is one of the foundations on which the mental health of the individual and the community is built.

*Interviewed by: Lamija Sejdić
Translated by: Maida Avdić*

WE CONDUCTED A RESEARCH...

STUDIES AND SCHOLARSHIP

A scholarship represents a significant form of support for students, especially in times when financial challenges often become obstacles for young people who wish to continue their education. Countries around the world and various organizations offer numerous opportunities for students, aware of how much financial support can mean to a young and promising individual.

As mentioned, one of the key factors regarding the impact of a scholarship on studies is the reduction of financial pressure. Whether a scholarship fully or partially covers the costs of education, it provides students with security, allowing them to focus entirely on their studies and, of course, personal development.

It is very common for students without scholarships to take on additional jobs to cover their living expenses, which can push their academic work into the background. A scholarship helps them avoid this dilemma, enabling them to dedicate themselves fully to learning, projects, and research that are crucial for their studies.

Another extremely important aspect is the opportunities presented to students in the form of additional experiences that can contribute to their education, such as volunteer work. Furthermore, some scholarships come with certain conditions, such as maintaining a high GPA. These requirements provide students with additional motivation to work hard and invest in their academic journey. This form of positive encouragement not only improves their performance, but also helps them develop discipline and time management skills, which are of vital importance in professional life.

A scholarship often brings a sense of achievement and recognition of student's efforts, which can positively impact their confidence and motivation. The feeling that their dedication is acknowledged and rewarded can further inspire them to continue investing in their academic growth. When discussing mental health, it is essential to mention that scholarships can reduce anxiety about the future and give students the security to focus on their academic goals.

The statements of scholarship recipients from the Hastor Foundation confirm these points:

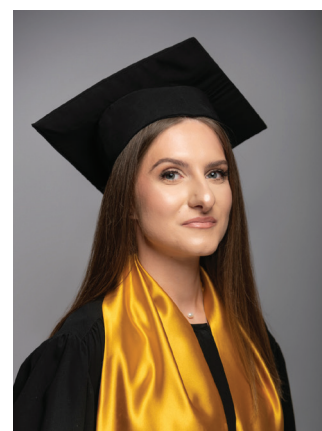


I see my scholarship as something extraordinary in my life because it allows me to fully dedicate myself to my academic and athletic goals without additional financial burdens. Scholarships encourage students to achieve better results and help them grow into socially responsible and successful individuals, which also contributes to the progress of the community. - Hamza Turulija (Faculty of Sports and Physical Education)



I have been receiving a scholarship for 13 years, and that is exactly how long its impact on my education has lasted. I was an excellent student in elementary school, but when I received the scholarship, it gave me an additional sense of responsibility toward myself and extra motivation to achieve the best possible grades. By maintaining the scholarship, I also eased the burden on my parents, which was the most important thing for me. – Neđada Ramić (Fakultet zdravstvenih studija)

A scholarship can play a crucial role in a student's academic development as it allows them to be worry-free and focus more easily on their studies and professional advancement. Financial support primarily serves as an incentive for achieving better results, while the mere realization that someone believes in your effort and potential provides additional motivation for success. – Venesa Karić (Faculty of Education and Humanities)

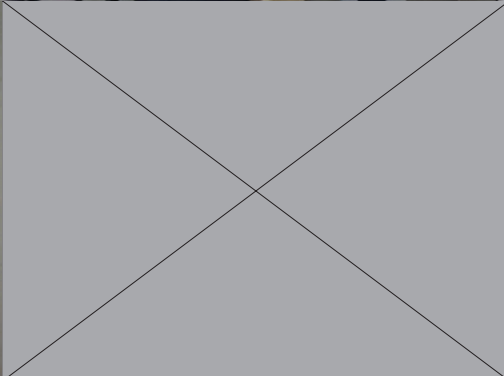
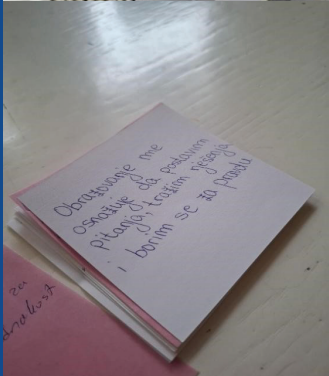
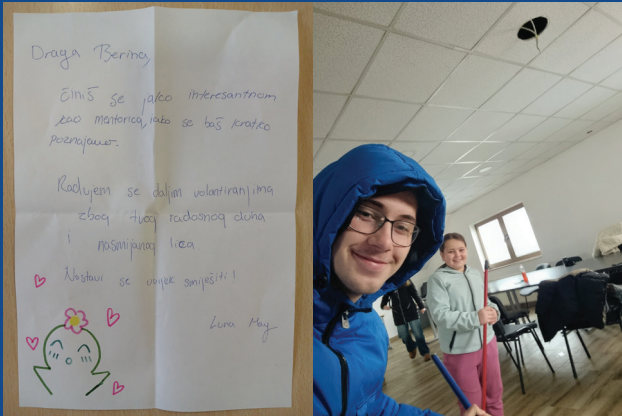


I believe scholarships are crucial for academic success. Take my example: moving to an unfamiliar city for studies was challenging, but thanks to my scholarship, I could fully focus on my education without worrying about financial issues. It gave me the peace of mind and focus necessary for achieving academic goals. When we talk about the Hastor Foundation, besides financial support, this scholarship also offers volunteer work opportunities that open up a new world of possibilities for growth. – Asmir Omerdić (Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences)

One of the most significant factors influencing my education is my scholarship. First and foremost, it provides financial support, allowing me as a student to focus on my studies without having to constantly worry about tuition fees, books, and other educational materials that can be costly. Additionally, the scholarship comes with positive aspects such as mentorship, panels, and, most importantly, networking opportunities with professionals from various business sectors. – Sevla Kopic (Faculty of Pedagogy)

PHOTO GALLERY

January at the Hastor Foundation





We invite you
*you to join our mission
and contribute to fulfilling
the dreams of promising
students and young people
who need our support.*



If you would like to support the work of the Hastor Foundation, you can make a donation to one of the following bank accounts:

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