

Talents and empathy as the new power engine towards the EU world

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Talents have always been in the center of attention with their impressive intellectual abilities and emotional intelligence. Unfortunately, it cannot be said that the interest for them is academically visible, considering that, they are still living under stigmatization in micro and macro contexts. Thus, we are getting to the main sensible substance of our living or to the rival superior-inferior relation between mind and emotions. To use the necessary cooperation, we will start from two general assumptions. One of them is that the talents are the creators of the progress. The other refers to the emergence of emotional intelligence, which is used only as with an encyclopedic notion. Regarding these assumptions, we have to agree with the premise that “The world must restore the power of empathy.”

The first assumption is supported by the well-known statement that the Balkans are branding their “invention” and that is the brain drain, in which the EU is currently losing the race for talent, as other OECD countries such as the United States, Canada and Australia attract more talents. In order to get a clearer picture of the social treatment and attitude towards talents worldwide, we will use IMD – the global talent scale 2020.

The Lausanne Institute for Business Development (IMD) has released a report called the 2020 World Talent Scale, which includes 63 countries. The report assesses the ability of countries to build, attract and retain talents in order to create a base of talented people needed to increase the country’s competitiveness, growth and development. The

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report is based on three key factors that contain 31 indicators, namely investment and development, attractiveness factors, willingness factors that implicitly indicate raising the quality of talent education, the country's ability to retain talent and attract outsiders and build skills and competencies available among the talents of individual countries. The analysis of the talent scale for 2020 shows that Switzerland is in first place, followed by Denmark, Luxembourg, Iceland, Sweden, Austria, Norway, Canada, Singapore and the Netherlands. Among the new EU member states from 2004, Estonia (19), Slovenia (30), Latvia (33), Poland (33) are best ranked. When it comes to institutional treatment, especially educational institutions towards talents, we will cite the research of the World Health Organization, which was realized in 41 countries of a total of 204,534 students from 11 to 15 years old "love the school" a total of 38% eleven years old, 25% thirteen and 20% of fifteen-year-olds (WHO, 2008). It speaks of a decline in the emotional connection of students with the school in which there seems to be less and less room for children's emotions. In order to present even more clearly the meaning of this segment, we will list the generally valid virtues/advantages of the institutions according to Peterson (2006), which are purpose, security, justice, humanity, dignity that answer the question whether today's school is only "school for learning" or it is also "school for life". Unfortunately, our conclusion is that in today's schools there does not seem to be enough room for emotions.

We will operationalize the second assumption through the symbiotic relationship of the main postulates. In this section we focus on "talent and empathy" by elaborating the latest academic views on empathy as a commonly used term during the Covid 19 pandemic. There are many reasons to focus on the functioning of our emotional life especially empathy as "the ability to recognize what another person thinks and feels and to respond adequately emotionally to the perceived emotional state" (Koen Baron, S., 2011), understanding it as very necessary today. Nowadays, many people agree that we live in a world where there is a "zero degree of empathy", people have reduced their "psychological capacity for empathy", and today it is rather a world of reasoning than a world of emotions. Therefore, we are witnessing "the erosion of empathy", or we are on the edge of "disappearing empathy" (Koen Baron, S., 2011). Goleman's attributes of emotional intelligence (self-awareness, self-motivation, self-control, empathy, and social skills) are a futuristic landmark for where the world should go in the years to come.

That is why it is necessary to show more care for emotional intelligence. Namely, our emotions become fundamental features in a crisis in which each emotion has its place and its own individual “genetic” and “social” history. These facts are in line with the statement of Mark Brackett Mission, Director of the Center for Emotional Intelligence at Yale University, which states that “The world must be educated about the values of emotions and the skills to use them wisely”, claiming that: “I would like all of us to become scientists for emotions.” He continues: “We need to be analysts of our own and others’ emotions as they have helped to achieve goals and improve lives.”

Upon exploring the question and the topic from many different views, we come to a few general recommendations that should be strong motivational impulses for all of us, especially in our regional context regarding talents and emotional intelligence.

Talents are no longer just a statistical indicator of intellectual power with a psychometric pattern, but are a special quality of interaction of cognitive and non-cognitive factors and influences. They are the product of (unknown) interaction creation of genetic determination, social stimulation and individual activation for a human being.

For the gifted and talented, we need a long-term strategy to develop their potential, but even more diverse daily activists with them. Talents and quality should get a cult place in our daily and professional life. It is very important what we have done for the gifted and talented and what we will do, but even more important is what we do TODAY. “They are the most valuable common convertible currency between countries in the world.” The most famous representatives of the concept of emotional intelligence Goleman, Meyer, Saloway, Baron and others promoted a new “invention” and identity of our civilization. It is a high time to change our perception and redefine the attitude towards a number of phenomena in our lives. Recent studies in the United States show that total energy = physical emotional energy comes up to 70% as the work of emotional energy. Individuals need to develop their emotional potential to the level of talent.

The general assumption of the countries of the Western Balkans when it comes to respecting the moral-ethical norms, principles, and standards is that there is a need for their consistent respect and giving appropriate respect to the spiritual values. In addition to this

assumption, nowadays more and more people confirm the fact that these values, norms, principles, and standards are being disturbed and neglected, what already becomes an unwritten norm. In such conditions, the devaluation of the individual values presents a huge obstacle for creating a solid social and institutional climate that will lead us to (faster) integration of the Western Balkan countries in the desired European family.

In that sense, the countries of the Western Balkans need to strengthen their capacities that will successfully cope with the new challenges in the processes of social and institutional transformation that will lead to compliance with all regulations that are compatible with those in the European living space. Each individual should be more responsible for building more quality institutions that will be representative and indicators of positive change in the social climate in which individuals would find their material and spiritual well-being.

With this theoretical elaboration on talented young people and the need for their all-encompassing support, I come to the presentation of a case that, to my strong belief, leads to improvement of circumstances on that area in our broader region.

Hence, an example of a positive practice that will lead to a change in our mental and socio-emotional patterns of thinking and behavior is the recent establishment of the *International Center for Emotional Intelligence* (ICEI) in Ohrid, which strives to reform individual, institutional and social actions as well as contemplation. In that direction head the efforts of the management board of the ICEI: Prof. Dr. Ljupcho Kevereski, President, Prof. Dr. Milan Jazbec, Vice President (former Ambassador of Slovenia to North Macedonia), Nina Momirovska, MA, Vice President, Aleš Breznikar (member) and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vesna Stojanoska (member).

Ohrid as the seat of the ICEI was chosen for various reasons. Of course it has practicality for the founding team. But in the forefront is its unique and vibrant atmosphere, emotions in the air that are a result of historical, geographical and human capital. In addition, there exists a rare natural energy (the western downhill of the mountain Galičica boosts with an extremely high quality of the air, among the best in the world), the southeast exit from the Ohrid valley is embraced by a small, living volcano which gasses heal by themselves a set of diseases,

i.e. the whole surrounding breathes with an unprecedented mixture of geography, society and mystical notions. Ohrid is the place, the brand, the past and future in a one drop of human sensitivity.

The ICEI was founded in August 2020 with an ambition and a mission to spread the awareness of developing the emotional aspects of our lives with a special emphasis on both organizing events and workshops as well as on further contemplating this topic. The Centre also serves as a platform and venue for deepening the understanding of emotional intelligence and its development in collective actions (organizations of various types) and in individuals. Our mission is to detect, encourage and develop individuals, and to motivate organizations to focus on universal spreading and implementing of this noble human virtue. Our not only target audience, but also primary partners are all aspects of contemporary societies, from individuals to formal and informal structures, employment organizations, NGOs, networks and similar.

The founding session of the ICEI, via online meeting, was joined by Prof. Dr. John Peliteri, President of the International Association for Emotional Intelligence, New York, USA. The ICEI, established in coordination with this Association, thus became part of a global networking system, following and fostering the same goal and idea. In the subsequent period, the ICEI held several international webinars with the following titles: Empathy in times of crisis, Crisis in empathy, Women's leadership – balance between profession and family, The magic of positive energy, Psychology of success in their own way, Everything can be postponed only the care for talents NO, and Emotional intelligence from myth to science.

A careful selection of topics was done prior to the launching of the Institute to show the scope of its activities, policy outreach and practical implementability of expertise and knowledge. Participants, around thirty at each event, as well as representatives of various companies, including panelists and moderators, invested their effort in raising broader regional attention to work with talented and upgrading emotional their skills. All those events proved the necessity paying bigger attention to emotional intelligence in daily life and behavior, as a part of communication, cooperation and synergy among us.

The above listed activities are supporting the new individual and institutional profiling and quality of social climate in the Western

Balkan countries. Our aim is to be free from the traditional and other clichés of behavior, wherever they are only a burden in building a new future and not its stimulus. The world must establish a harmonious relationship between mind and emotions. The world must promote a new psychological energy that will have greater impact on the needs of all. This is a futuristic imperative and challenge for all of us. It has already started, we are part of it and should do our best to promote and implement it. Support us in this honorable mission, stay with us and offer your successors what is the most precious aspect of you.