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Brian A. GALLAGHER

Chittaranjan, I am going to come to you in a second, but to this point we all in our countries spend a lot of money to build sports stadiums. Depending on our sport of choice, we spend literally billions and billions of dollars to build these things. I was in a ballroom once in Minneapolis in the US with a thousand business leaders and they were about to spend USD 1 billion to build a new American Football and baseball stadium. The speaker with us was the Chief Economist at the Federal Reserve and he got up and he said to this group of one thousand business leaders, if you instead would take that USD 1 billion and put it in a foundation that would ensure quality, early childhood development for every new child born in the State of Minnesota, your economic returns will be much greater than those stadiums you are going to build. I asked the question, because they built the stadiums and did not set up the endowment, but your argument around financial as well as human returns is compelling.

Chittaranjan, talk to us a bit about your work in learning generally, learning styles, the systems of learning. How well are today's education and training systems matched for where we are trying to get people to go, where they need to go in the economy in terms of skills? Whether they are hard skills or hard skills, how they learn, how well it is working and where it is not working. Just talk to us about that if you would.

Chittaranjan KAUL

Thank you. I think it would be interesting to start the answer to that question with looking at the topic we have here for this particular session. We are asking what it takes to prepare our young for jobs. I am sure that many people in this room are familiar with an annual Gallup study that measures employee engagement. It is a pretty big study, involving something like 200 000 respondents, in about 142 countries and over 7 400 employers. It is a fairly good way of looking at what people are doing with whatever it is that they are doing. What does it say? For the last seven or eight years I have followed that survey, the number of employees engaged with their work, with their jobs, has not been higher than 18%. Engaged employees number less than 18% in this very large sample of the working populations of our world. The others which is between 82% and 85% are either not engaged, which basically means that they do not care what happens with the stuff they do, or are actively disengaged, which means that they hate what happens with the stuff they do. I do not know if it scares you, but it scares me. 82-85% of people who are working today, do not care about their work, do not care about their jobs. If someone asked me what they should do to get their children ready for jobs, I would say, do nothing. The job market is a problem. If we begin to prepare our children, (and all of us are doing that, educational systems are doing that, not very well, but still trying to do that, trying to get young people ready for the jobs that are available), we condemn them to a life of meaninglessness, to a life of frustration, to meaningless work to which they find no connection. I think that is where we are at this time and this has been done every year for the last seven or eight years. I am sure it goes back much longer. I am sure as we continue going in the future, we will see something similar going on.

Brian A. GALLAGHER

What should we be preparing young people for?

Chittaranjan KAUL

As I look this, I see essentially two things we should be doing. One is, of course, we would today like to talk to the people who create, design, manage and maintain these jobs to see if they would do something differently that would actually engage young people with the work they do, which would make it more meaningful for them. We try to do that quite a lot in my work, but I must admit I am not holding my breath for that to change anytime soon. We have gotten to a strange place in the last 30 or 40 years, where we seem to have forgotten a whole lot of stuff that we learnt over the



twentieth century about what gets people interested, excited about their work, etc. That is one area that we could work in, but I do not know how effective it is going to be in the short-run.

In the long-run it seems to me that we could work with our education systems so that the people who are now children, when they become 40 years old, they create a world in which it is actually a joy to work. I think that would be interesting. That would be worth doing. If I look at it like that, I say, okay what is worth learning for the children today and how do we get there? Those are the two key questions that I would look at. To me, it seems that when we think of what is worth learning today for young people, one of the first things we immediately notice is that this is a period of dramatic and rapid change. It is this continuous change all the time. We have seen business models going out of contention in a decade or less. We have seen people not knowing what skills they should learn, because they have become useless by the time they have learnt them. I call this century a century of shifting sands. It is the century of not-knowing. We do not know what skills specifically we should teach our children so that they can be successful.

I think in this scenario, it seems to be much easier to think about what kind of education they might have, rather than what knowledge we should give them. To me it seems that today, there is the rapid pace of change on the one hand, and on the other the dramatic epidemic of mental health challenges that our young are faced with across the world. It is truly scary. There is no mooring, no anchors, there is a sense of drift. These are two things that are happening in our world; change is relentless and there is nothing to hold onto.

Brian A. GALLAGHER

I take your point about education systems being about educating versus disseminating knowledge, is the way I hear it. If you are an employer do, they then as employers take up the specific skills to be trained against? You need skills as an employer, yeah?

Chittaranjan KAUL

If I was to help a young person learn, what do I think would be useful for an employer 20 years from now, which is when he is going to get in the workforce, or 15 years from now, or even 10 years from now. I really do not know. I do not know. I am not sure what he should learn specifically by way of skills. The entire effort to say that we must pack skills into children is really flying in the face of what we see every day. To me, it seems that they need to learn the science of attention. They need to learn the science of presence. They need to learn the science of critical enquiry. We do not teach, we do not help young children to learn that very much. At the same time, it seems to me that what is terribly important, and the Archbishop this morning referred to it, we also need our young children to learn the religion of togetherness and interdependence and connection. Both of those things have been talked about for centuries, but never before, it seems to me, has there been a greater need to do both together. What are the skilful means of dealing with the shifting sands that I have here? It is very important, but it is also important to learn how I connect with my world, the world that is around me. Again, we do not do much of that. Clearly, the impact of technology has exacerbated that problem substantially. We really need to go back and say, this needs to change.