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MANAGEMENT BY TOLERANCE: LEADERSHIP THROUGH MOTIVATION AND CREATIVITY

“Management by tolerance”. The suggestion of the title is that there is (still) a lot of intolerance in management. The question that comes up immediately: intolerance to what? The answer lies in the second part of the title: intolerance towards creating motivating and creative conditions for employees or members of organizations by their leaders. Probably we have in this respect to realize and accept that theories and concepts of modern leadership and practice are still different phenomena. It is namely an overall accepted opinion and proven fact that motivation and creativity are pre-conditions for success of an organization. One will not find any example of a great performance of an organization where motivation and creativity are neglected or absent.

Let me stay close to the organization I lead, the IEDC-Bled School of Management in Slovenia. We saw, that the traditional management and leadership programmes are focused on functional knowledge. However, globalization in many fields (finance, markets, partnerships, etc.) asks for another mindset and other capabilities. It asks for

an “open mind” and tolerance toward other cultures (life styles, religions, etc.) in order to be able to work in a global environment, in international partnership and teams. For that reason we internationalized IEDC-Bled School of Management since its establishment; we internationalized the faculty, the participants and the staff. In order to make executives better listeners and observers, and to stimulate their imagination and creativity, we introduced the topic “Art and Leadership” in the curricula. We are using music, visual arts and film to add to the analytical capabilities. The world became too complex that solutions can be found only by inductive methods. The slogan of IEDC is “A creative environment for creative leadership”. The school is beautifully designed, it is in fact an art gallery with about 200 paintings, and among the members of the faculty team are also a pianist and a conductor, a galleryist and a film director. “Art is helping us to see more, to hear more, to feel more”; “Art is shocking, provoking and inspiring,” said the famous professor Edgar Schein. Art is helping us to become better leaders for a better world.

Executives are often caught in the organizational environments that surround them. Even when active in an international context, they are operating inside the corporate “box”. At the same time, the corporate leadership realizes that there is an essential need for permanent innovation that can only be realized with creative, open minded people.

Here I would like to say something about our way of experiential learning. The IEDC programs on “Leadership transformation – the catalytic mindset” and “Leadership change, identity and values”, conducted in post-war Sarajevo and in Bled, invite executives to leave the box and to be confronted with a reality that previously appeared to be hopeless and without perspective. Meetings with active “survivors” in Sarajevo - political leaders, business leaders, social thinkers, religious leaders, and artists who found opportunities to survive and contribute in the most difficult situations - opens their eyes to the seemingly unaccountable opportunities in their own reality and makes them “humble, inspired and committed to make a change” as one

participant described. "The impressions of Sarajevo and Bled will come into my thoughts on a regular basis. They will inspire again, encouraging me to maintain an open attitude towards my environment and will remind me that nothing is impossible," was the evaluation of another participant. Meeting the doctors who operated under an oil lamp, not having electricity, the representative of raped women who told the participants how they fight against prejudices they encounter, mothers whose children and husbands were killed in front of them, are unbelievable emotional shocks which make leaders think and reflect on their deeds, tasks, the meaning of what they do, and create a change in themselves.

To stay in terms of the title of this program and my contribution, IEDC sees it as its mission to develop tolerant, motivating and creative managers and leaders. These leaders are realizing that success these days is increasingly

a team performance and teams are increasingly composed on the basis of diversity (complementary in cultural backgrounds, different knowledge and skills etc.) The modern management vocabulary contains terms as global, multicultural, delegation, ethical, sustainable. Developing teamwork and partnership. In the meantime the political vocabulary did not change very much with terms as power, opposition, while coalition is seen as a regrettable and mostly not avoidable phenomenon. Try to find examples, that governing parties were seriously listening to parties outside the government, and examples, where parties outside the government (as you notice I try to avoid the term opposition) were openly expressing to agree with a proposal of the governing ones. Is it not a loss for the society, if a great part of the population for a certain time is excluded from the process of generating ideas and solutions? Business leaders are also having their own ideas and strategy,

but good leaders will never stop listening to people, who have different ones. This is not only a question of tolerance as a passive attitude but a question of survival continuously being active in generating the best ideas to grow and develop.

This may not be understood as just a plea for more professional leadership or technocratic leadership in political arena. It is about a hope to see leaders, who know to listen and are open for different visions and ideas, not with the tolerance as an attitude only, but as a condition and the tool to engage as much as possible the citizens. Leaders, who act local or national, but with a global orientation.

Whether the since 13th century existing parliamentary-democracy offers still to-day, the right conditions for such political leadership or becomes a handicap in the information society with digital citizens, is an issue worthwhile to pay more attention to.