

A VOLUME IN
INTERNATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION

TALENT DEVELOPMENT AND THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

Perspectives From Special Interest Groups



Fredrick M. Nafukho, Khalil Dirani,
and Beverly J. Irby (Editors)

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A Volume in
International Higher Education

Series Editors
Fredrick M. Nafukho and Beverly Irby
Texas A&M University

International Higher Education

Fredrick M. Nafukho and Beverly Irby, Editors

*Talent Development and the Global Economy:
Perspectives From Special Interest Groups* (2017)

edited by Fredrick M. Nafukho, Khali Dirani, and Beverly Irby

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edited by Fredrick M. Nafukho, Helen M. A. Muyia, and Beverly Irby

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edited by

Fredrick M. Nafukho

Khali Dirani

Beverly Irby

Texas A&M University



INFORMATION AGE PUBLISHING, INC.

Charlotte, NC • www.infoagepub.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

CIP record for this book is available from the Library of Congress
<http://www.loc.gov>

ISBNs: 978-1-68123-997-2 (Paperback)

978-1-68123-998-9 (Hardcover)

978-1-68123-999-6 (ebook)

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Printed in the United States of America

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FOREWORD

I am honored to be asked to write the foreword for this book, *Talent Development and the Global Economy: Perspectives from Special Interest Groups*. The book represents an important contribution to ideas for and about talent development in this age of globalization and the digital and gig economy.

As the former director of research for two training organizations, Zenger-Miller and AchieveGlobal, Inc., as a researcher focused on human resource development, as a current faculty member working with doctoral and masters students in adult and higher education, and as current discipline liaison involved in faculty development, I welcome such new knowledge. Indeed, I wish that such information had been available in the past so that its insights could have been used in my research and put into practice earlier.

The three book editors, Fredrick Muyia Nafukho, Khalil Dirani, and Beverly Irby provide important scholarship and credibility to the text. Fred's work in educational policy analysis within international and comparative education, human capital development, and leadership development make him the ideal person to lead this effort. Certainly, he contributes both scholarly and practical experience to the text. Similarly, Khalil Dirani brings special insights regarding international human resource development and leadership development, with a focus on the Middle East. Although I am not personally acquainted with Beverly Irby, I am familiar with some of her work particularly that in online learning, instructional

leadership, and international leadership. The backgrounds and research of these three co-authors make them the perfect collaborators for this book.

The time and effort involved in writing and editing such a text requires passion for the topic, and it is clear that these three experts have such a passion. All three are involved in different aspects of leadership talent development within international setting. Furthermore, all three are involved in or have conducted research on online learning and development. It is through their combined research and practice that the three recognized the need for such a text. And, we are the beneficiaries.

Not only do the three coeditors bring a wealth of experience, we are privileged to have insights from the various contributors. Certainly, Sehoon Kim and Soo Jeoung Han on international graduate students, Tomika Greer on African Americans, Hae Na Kim and Hsu Yun-Hsiang on Pacific-Islanders, can reflect on their own personal experiences as well as their research work. Minerva Tuliao, Kathy Najjar, Rich Torracco, Jill Zarestky, Shannon Deer. Soo Jeoung Han, Shinhee Jeong, and Michael Beyerlein contribute their knowledge and experience to the various chapters on talent development for specific groupings and organizations. Finally, Fatemeh Rezaei, Misha Chakraborty, and Heidi Flavian present us with important insights regarding the use of new technologies in talent development.

The chapters appear to be organized into four major topical areas. The coauthors begin by providing an argument for the focus on talent development and the global economy. The next section highlights some specific types of individuals within that global picture, namely international graduate students, African-Americans, refugee women, and Asian-Pacific Islanders. Previous literature has not really focused on such individuals; and having these insights will benefit researchers and practitioners. The next section focuses on groups and organizations, such as non-governmental organizations, team leaders in for-profit organizations, and working poor families. These various groups and organizations represent areas of growing interest. The final section emphasizes some new approaches to talent development, specifically social media and cognitive mediation. Again, these provide readers with insights needed for future work.

The ideal audiences for this text include human resource development researchers and practitioners. Both groups can gain important insights to further their work. Another audience would be those researchers and professionals focused on internationalization and globalization and its impacts. They would recognize some important new types of individuals, groups, and organizations for their research and interventions. A third audience consists of those interested in the use of new technology for talent and leadership development. In all of these cases, the audiences would include graduate students, university faculty and administrators, researchers, and practitioners.

Ultimately this book should lead to increased research and improved practice in talent and leadership development. These increases and improvements should influence work not only in the United States but throughout the world. After all, as the coauthors argue, “This is a global economy.”

Darlene F. Russ-Eft, PhD
Professor & Discipline Liaison
Oregon State University
Corvallis, Oregon USA.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The editors acknowledge the strong contributions on the authors who bring forth current and critical issues related to global issues and talent development. We also acknowledge the strength that the entities called special interest groups display as they, from the collective body of action researchers, scholar-practitioners, activists, and practitioners move toward an enhanced and functioning workplace. The authors within this body of work call for the basic concept of talent development—that of bold and forward thinking that can be turned to conscious action through learning and talent development.

CHAPTER 1

WHY FOCUS ON TALENT DEVELOPMENT?

Fredrick Muyia Nafukho, Khalil Dirani, and Beverly Irby

As the world of work changes globally, the number of people working in the on-demand economy, also known as the *gig economy*, is on the rise. Thus the gig economy is characterized by the online marketplace or applications that connect providers or freelancers with customers (Intuit, 2015). According to Intuit, several examples of online services exist that provide products and services to consumers via the Internet including, transportation (Uber, Lyft, GRUB Hub); finding work using online talent marketplaces (Upwork, OnForce, Work Market HourlyNerd, Fiverr); renting out space (Airbnb, Couch Surfing); and miscellaneous services (Task Rabbit, Gig Walk, Wonolo). In this knowledge and gig economy, the demand for talent development is becoming one of the greatest opportunities for profit and benefit, as well as for nonprofit organizations. All over the world, competition for talent poses a number of opportunities and challenges as educationists, trainers, and human resource development experts try to address this critical component for competitiveness and service delivery. Developing a workforce for the 21st century requires strategic talent development policies at institutional, regional, national, and international levels.

Talent has been identified as the only differentiator for an organization, nation, or region's success in this uncertain, complex, competitive, and global environment. Ulrich (2008) defined talent as the equation of 3Cs: Talent = Competence x Commitment x Contribution. Malaeb and Chanaron (2010, p. 2), noted. "*Competence* means that employees have the skills and abilities *today* and *in the future* for required business results ... *Commitment* means that employees are involved and engaged ... while *Contribution* means that employees find personal abundance at occupation." While Ulrich (2008) observed that commitment is focused on meaning and identity and other restraints that tap an employee's heart. In addition, Ulrich and Smallwood (2012) clearly articulated the value of talent on organizations.

This book is unique in many ways, which makes it extraordinary. First, unlike other books that have examined issues of change facing the global economy, no book has examined the issue of talent development from the perspective of special interest groups including the African American perspective; the Asian Pacific Islanders perspective; social media users' perspectives; the perspectives of international students, women refugees, refugees, and nongovernmental organizations; and from the perspectives of for profit, for benefit, and nonprofit organizations. Thus, talent development the world over has become one of the most important issues when it comes to developing human resources, especially through education and training.

This book is divided into 10 thematic chapters including the introductory chapter. In Chapter 2, Sehoon Kim and Soo Jeoung Han examine the issue of talent development from the perspective of international students in higher education. Thus, international graduate students are regarded as prospective talent who can be great assets in increasing the knowledge base within any nation's economy. They emphasize the importance of understanding international graduate students' career decisions after graduation for organizations and countries that are developing a talent pool. Sehoon Kim and Soo examine factors influencing international graduate students' intentions to remain abroad. Through data collected from 499 international graduate students in the United States, a hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted. Findings of the study revealed that professor support, home country family ties, and labor market perceptions may be important factors affecting international graduate students' mobility intentions. The study also established that Indian students were more likely to return to their home country than Chinese or Korean students.

In Chapter 3, titled "Leveraging Talent Development in the United States: The African American Perspective," Tomika Greer observes that as an outcome of their involvement in slavery, African Americans have historically had a unique relationship with work compared to other ethnic

groups in the United States. Following a variety of concerted efforts to equalize the playing field for African Americans in the workplace, there is still a shortage of African Americans in the highest ranks of leadership in many organizations. Greer considers talent development as a strategy for correcting the existing imbalance in leadership positions. It is argued in the chapter that talent development can only be effective for improving the prevalence of African Americans in leadership positions if organizational leaders are willing to redefine “talent,” help African Americans gain access to talent development programs, and include African Americans in the organizational strategy for talent development.

In Chapter 4, Minerva Tuliao, Kathy Najjar, and Rich Torracco explore the talent development of refugee women. They point out that as half of any refugee population, refugee women with varied skills have the potential to contribute to the socioeconomic development of their industrialized countries of resettlement, but face many challenges toward that goal. The chapter addresses the education and training challenges faced by refugee women at the pre-employment stage and how they can be overcome through talent development.

Hae Na Kim and Hsu Yun-Hsiang in Chapter 5 address the issues of Asian Americans’ talent development from the career development perspective. They observe that while the number of Asian Americans is growing, there are only a few Asian Americans in leadership positions, and there are certain types of jobs that Asian Americans prefer. The chapter also examines the factors influencing the career choice and development of Asian Americans, and discusses how Asian Americans can diversify their career choices in order to optimally utilize their talents.

Jill Zarestky and Shannon Deer in Chapter 6, “Maximizing Motivation: Talent Development in Non-Governmental Organizations,” discuss human resource development practices in general, and point out that talent development in particular is an underresearched topic within nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). They also note that NGOs differ from for-profit and other nonprofit organizations in their missions, structure and operations, management and HRD practices, and employee motivation types and levels. The chapter explores NGO talent development strategies with an emphasis on the specific circumstances and challenges faced by NGOs, and with a view toward sustaining NGO operations across the spectrum of philanthropic, nonprofit, and developmental efforts. In addition, the chapter presents key motivational theories and research on employee motivation in nonprofit versus for-profit companies, and advocates for NGO talent development practices that maximize the opportunities presented by the NGOs’ philanthropic missions and their highly motivated employees.

In Chapter 7, titled “Talent Development of Global Virtual Team Leaders: Challenges and Strategies,” Soo Jeoung Han, Shinhee Jeong, and

Michael Beyerlein focus on globalization of the economy and development of communications technology, which has led to growth in the use of work teams with members in multiple countries resulting in increased multiculturalism in the distributed virtual workplace. The chapter identifies factors that affect the processes and performance of nationally/culturally diverse teams in a virtual environment and discusses the strategies that leaders can use to develop their global virtual teams. The authors identify a set of challenges for global virtual team leaders and suggest tangible strategies for overcoming the identified challenges.

Chapter 8 by Rich Torraco, titled “Training Development and Working Poor Families in the United States,” addresses the persistence of working poor families and the causes and consequences of this problem. According to Torraco, a working poor family is one in which at least one adult family member works full time for a full year, but despite the wages earned, mostly from low-wage work, the family remains in poverty and is unable to attain basic financial security. The chapter examines the issue of the working poor in the United States and discusses relevant aspects of this problem; in the United Kingdom comparisons are also drawn with other developed nations to show the severity and prevalence of the problem. It is pointed out that the persistence of working poor families has three major causes: educational barriers faced by the working poor, recent changes in the job and labor market, and rising economic inequality.

In Chapter 9, titled “Talent Development via Cognitive Mediation,” Fatemeh Rezaei and Misha Chakraborty discuss the role of social media in developing talented employees within an organization. They provide pertinent information showing why it is important to consider social media as a potential source for talent development in today’s workplace. In addition, the chapter examines practices that are offered by researchers and practitioners regarding the role of social media in talent development. Also addressed in the chapter are the potential benefits and positive outcomes from the use of social media in the training and development systems of organizations.

Chapter 10 is written by Heidi Flavian who points out that when referring to one’s talent, people usually refer to one’s specific ability to cope with a variety of challenges in a specific domain. Moreover, they assume that this specific talent is an individual quality one is born with. Flavian correctly argues that in recent decades, researchers and theoreticians have developed a variety of approaches for developing people’s talents while focusing on cognitive mediation. Their main claim is that although people are born with talents in a variety of domains, it is up to educators and the environment to provide students with the proper cognitive tools to realize all their talents and use them as effectively and efficiently as possible. The

chapter demonstrates that cognitive mediation for talent development is essential for all learners.

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