



Podcast Transcript (The audio transcript has been edited slightly for readability):

Episode 6: A brief on Global Talent Economy and resources pertinent to the Impact Sector

Speaker: Bhavna Mathur

Good Morning everyone and welcome to another edition of Sattva Speaks. I am Ananya and I will be the host for today's episode. For our first-time listeners, this podcast series is dedicated to understanding the social ecosystem and the trends in the social sector. In the previous episode, we focussed on the definition and key aspects of the concept 'Intrapreneurship'. In this episode, we will take the discussion further and focus more on the Global Talent Economy and related topics.

For today's episode, we have with us Ms. Bhavna Mathur, who is currently serving as the Executive Director of IDEX Accelerator- Global Fellows Program. IDEX stands for Intrapreneur Development Experience. Since 2010, IDEX has served as an impact career launch-pad and human capital investor for over 300 fellows from over 33 countries. Its mission is to create the next wave of "social intrapreneurs" who will support, lead and advance the work of socially focused enterprises around the world. Prior to IDEX, Bhavna was involved with the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation. She is a graduate from Delhi University and London School of Economics.

AS: Bhavna, let us start by discussing the Global Talent Economy and the scenario on Global Competition on talent.

BM: Today, the impact sector is a part of what we call the new kind of talent economy or the global talent economy. Accordingly, to us, it has 4 main characteristics. The first characteristic is flexible movement of talent across geographies as well as across sectors. This, of course, gives the social sector to observe the diversity of thoughts from talents across diverse professional backgrounds and cultural backgrounds. For example, we have many IT professionals, HR professionals, and Marketing professionals moving into the social sector. We also have people from other parts of the world wanting to work in an emerging market like India and also a lot of Indians not only going to developed economies like US and UK but also emerging economies like countries in Africa and countries in Latin America where Indians are venturing for work. So, that is the first characteristic according to me. The second characteristic is a lot of importance being given to the high potential talents to develop the right entrepreneurial traits, characteristics, and the mindset to sustainably thrive in the social sector. When I say traits, I mean things like taking initiatives, working through complex and awkward uncharted situations, being flexible, being proactive, and of course being okay dealing with ambiguity. These skills are difficult to build in a traditional educational setting, but employers find these very attractive. The third character is more from the employer side. Employers across sectors are feeling the need to take the pulse of their evolving workforce and nurture a culture of ownership and innovation from within. Of course, this is to boost their own as well as their social mission. In the social sector, it becomes even more important as we are fighting so many challenges internally as well as issues that you are trying to solve

in the areas of education, health, livelihood etc. Therefore, the need to inculcate this culture of innovation is very apparent today. The last and perhaps the most relevant and pertinent characteristic of this new economy is there is a growing need for professionals to equip themselves with tools and resources to be able to work virtually. Be effective virtual leaders, to manage the team and create the impact. With an increasing number of employees working from home or working away from locations where their employers are located, this virtual workforce is becoming an integral part of the new talent economy. So yeah, these are the important characteristics of the global talent economy.

AS: How can passionate individuals get a real time understanding of the developments in the sector? Please shed some light on the available avenues.

BM: So, with sustainability and sustainable development goals becoming themes running across most sectors, be it corporates, government or education, there is a growing need to be aware of and stay updated with what is happening in the sector and to get some sort of experience. I believe that there are primarily three ways to go about it. The first is to subscribe to publications and platforms that provide the news related to the sectors to the readers. And if you find and go online, you will see that Goal Foundation, Stanford Social Innovation Review, Acumen Foundation, Ashoka, NextBillion are some of the leaders in the innovation space and bringing in much relevant news. Closer to home we have Better India, Your Story, Better India, Youth ki Awaz, which are some of the media focused platforms bringing you news from the sector and helping you keep updated with what is going on, of course giving you the pertinent discussions, innovation and research happening in the sector and also the opportunities that are available in the sector. The second one is for those people who are keen on experiencing what it is like to work in space. For them today there are a lot of opportunities that provide experiential learning courses. Fellowships that provide onsite, virtual, a blended onsite and virtual learning platform, and such opportunities provide the talent with the right skills, characteristics, and the mindset to thrive in the sector. It provides opportunities for peer to peer learning as well as reflection, networking to learn from sector leaders and provides the opportunity to share key learnings and insights from the people working in the sector. So, fellowships is one of the key aspects in learning about the sector. One can find such opportunities online platforms like proFellow, Impact Jobs, DevNet Jobs, Opportunity Desk, Impact Tools etc. There are plenty. There are sector specific jobs as well like CSR Jobs, Relief Web, Global Impact Investing network and the list goes on. Then there are geography specific platforms as well, for example in Australia you have Social Change Central, In Europe, you have Euractive. Simply a Google search on Social Impact or Social Fellowships can give you very relevant results. The third way in which one can really keep up to date with the sector is going one step further and actually participating in a Global Innovation Lab. There are many Innovation labs being run across the globe by different organizations, foundations, and government bodies that really bring diverse minds together to solve challenging social issues by using tools and strategies of the sector and concepts like Human centred design, critical system thinking, behavioural economics and many of them align to the UN sustainability SDGs. Some examples are the Unleash Innovation Lab which takes place every year taking about thousands youth from across the globe. The Milton

Foundation runs their own innovation lab. Similarly, you have Watson Institute, the Ashoka Changemakers program and then you have very sector focussed global innovation labs as well like the Open IDO. There are plenty of options for people who want to go in that direction.

AS: Bhavna, Thanks for giving an elaborate understanding on the available resource libraries. We are also interested to know about a few of the unique cases of IDEX fellowship, be it stories of cross over talents or migration within the sector.

BM: So the IDEX Fellowship and for those who want to know more about it can visit the website www.IDEX accelerator.com. The fellowship really pushes the fellows to discover themselves as well as the social sector in an accelerated way through cohort intensive, unique, experiential, and customised way. Specifically, IDEX does not mention how a fellow should experience the program. Fellows themselves chart their own paths, in terms of speaking of the sectors they want to be in and problem solving independently as much as possible. Participating in fellowships also brings together a placement piece as well as other aspects. Host organizations also benefit equally by having fellows with corporate experiences, fresh diverse perspectives from fellows over the span of 6 months. In today's world where virtual working has become a reality, IDEX has also launched its virtual fellowship which is not just equipping the fellows with skills needed to work in the sector but also equipping them with the skills and resources needed to work in a virtual environment. Speaking of crossover talent, we have had several cases including one where an engineer who worked in one of the engineering firms equipped herself with the tools and resources through the fellowship and finally joined the social sector and currently working in a technology for development organization working towards making an affordable health product. Similarly, we have had people from the IT space, for example, who worked in traditional IT firms and are now working in a foundation that is addressing issues in Urban Governance and knowledge. And so, both these fellows have been using their skills and add on to these skill sets with the fellowship and then apply it in the social enterprise space. We have also had fellows who worked with big healthcare corporations and one of them joined and got placed through the fellowship to a boutique healthcare accelerator addressing innovation for the bottom of the pyramid. We have also had several crossover talent cases across geographies. One of our fellows was from Australia now working with one of the Indian arms of a social enterprise incubators. We have had several fellows who worked in the Big 4 consulting firms who have tested waters in the impact investing space and now working full time for funding in the social impact space. These are some of the fellows who continued to work in the social sector. We have had many fellows who started their own ventures in the social space, fellows who are not necessarily Indians who started their social enterprise in India and ran it for a few years before handing it over to their Indian professionals. We have those examples as well. Overall, 85 percent of the fellows are in the impact space after pursuing the fellowship. This is also not hard to believe, with the impact space growing and the opportunities are quite diverse and new. As long as they have the right attitude, the eagerness to learn and the 'intrapreneurship' in them, the fellows can easily sail through.

AS: Lastly Bhavna, we would like to understand some of the pain points or challenges associated with the same and the possible workarounds that need to be addressed going forward.

BM: Sure. Some of the challenges and specifically those who are used to very structured settings can be the dynamism and the unstructuredness of the sector and I don't mean that in a negative way. It may come across a slightly rude shock initially, but as one gets more involved in the sector, they appreciate the importance of being fluid. Not that they do not operate on a plan, but they have a lot of room for creativity and organic growth and iteration. The way we help the fellows navigate through this is by putting them in those situations during the 6 months. The fellowship is structured in such a way that the fellows can experience living in a new country, deal with challenges on their own. Of course, when things go out of hands, we do step in. I think the whole experience is designed in a way that fellows really have to exercise 'intrapreneurship' and we design frameworks around the concept and really help them experience it through working with real existing organizations as opposed to virtual projects which are not so close to reality. The other challenge could be the pay scale. While many social sector organizations are becoming competitive with the pay scales that they offer, focus on these organizations are a lot more on the promotion of a balanced lifestyle as opposed to a flat pay package. So, for those looking at only numbers, it might be a little disappointing. Having said that, the level of exposure and autonomy that you get in a position in social sector organization is far greater than any corporates can offer and for most of the fellows, this is more than a compensation factor.

Thanks a bunch, Bhavna, for those amazing insights.

This brings us to the end of this episode. We will definitely come back soon with other interesting aspects of the talent landscape in the development sector and hence, we request you to watch out for this space for more information.

Do visit our website www.sattva.co.in and www.careersinimpact.com to get a better understanding of the social landscape, project engagements, and the opportunities in the sector.

Thanks a lot, and take care.

Sattva has been working with various nonprofits and social organisations as well as corporate clients to help them define their social impact goals. Our focus is to solve critical problems and find scalable solutions. We assist organisations in formulating their long-term social impact strategy by strategically aligning with business to provide meaningful solutions to social issues.

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