

China and Philippines Global Council Report for November, 2018

Carrying forth, with Allan Gatenby, the ICCI mission in Asia as articulated in the Manifesto published in 2015, we have designed a grassroots strategy for building our profession in both China and the Philippines and delivered that in a presentation to the Asia Pacific Career Development Association annual conference this past May in Beijing. In that spirit I report on developments in both countries.

China is locked in a trade and currency war with the United States which is causing concern that the economy is slowing down. However, trade imbalances are reaching record levels with the USA and the Chinese economy is proving resilient so far. The trade imbalance has now reached a record \$40 billion despite the huge tariffs imposed by the Trump administration. The economy keeps chugging along and is unlikely to fall below 6.5% increase in GDP despite the trade war. China continues to defend globalization in the economic sphere as the USA retreats. Its One Belt One Road initiative has now been amplified to include sea traffic and it continues to step into the vacuum being created by the America First policies of Trump and his minions.

Politically, China continues on its authoritarian path with President Xi legally now able to be leader for the rest of his life should he and his allies so choose. The economic miracle continues under his leadership but his human rights violations are piling up with increasing pushback from the millions of netizens who continue to take to the internet to comment and criticize. Next week the United Nations will continue its scrutiny on the now well-documented internment camps in Xinjiang Province where over a million people, mostly Uighurs and other usually Muslim minorities i.e. Kazakhs, Hui, are incarcerated for minor infractions such as receiving or making an overseas phone call or watching a Western movie. It is hard not to call this a massive ethnic cleansing operation designed to create a homogenized Han-dominated hegemony in this far western province. Serious attempts are made to disrupt traditional Uighur life including forcing beverage providers to offer alcohol, a no-no for Muslims, making men shave their beards, forbidding the teaching of traditional Uighur language and culture, forced learning of Mandarin Chinese, etc. If the reports are accurate and much investigation has taken place, Xinjiang Province has become a massive police state exceeding any other in China with the possible exclusion of Tibet. The government has chosen a ham fisted approach to the afflicted minorities and have broken families apart both within and without the borders of China. Consciousness of the governments draconian policies in Xinjiang are leaking out into the public and if the UN decides to make an even larger condemnation, this could be a huge setback for China in world relations as it makes the Khashoggi murder by the Saudi government seem small by comparison.

The labor market continues to be challenging as China remains on a path to expand private enterprise while pulling back state owned enterprises. There is a shortage of engineers where China has ambitiously expanded its economic and high tech capabilities. The big data capital of China along with the most powerful listening station on Earth to hear the Universe are now located in Guizhou Province, China's poorest in the southwest. It's physical beauty and warm and friendly people are balanced against lower pay and poor infrastructure but China's urbanization push continues apace. The country wants more than 50% of citizens in

cities by 2025. The push is also to have the economy be predominantly consumer-oriented as a hedge against the global power plays spearheaded by the USA. China has created a vast network of incubators to deal with young people who too often can't find jobs suited to their interests and competencies. Sadly, most incubators talk a good game but do not provide quality support services to the burgeoning start ups. We are now very active in providing services to either incubators, university entrepreneur populations and some progressive government labor and employment agencies.

We have opened several community-based CareerDNA Centers. Suzhou, Shanghai, Changzhou are operating with others in various stages of planning in Beijing, Nanjing, Hangzhou, Yantai, Taizhou, Wuxi, Xi'an and Urumqi. There is finally traction. Courses at professional and paraprofessional levels are being offered in English with Chinese translation as well as in Chinese. We have trained over 150 paraprofessionals in our CareerDNA Leaders Certification courses and launched a weekly community of learners program to develop them further. 10 "disciples" or ACDP counseling or coaching specialization student are on the more ambitious professional track with great learning in the mentor-focused approach. We have started pilot projects with two major education corporations which are publicly listed and look forward to a great 2019.

The Philippines is a horse of a very different color. It has a long history of at least 40 years of career development activity but professional leadership that is aging and moribund. The economy is growing at breakneck speed at over 7.5% increase in GDP but the country is abysmally poor with horrific poverty, low wages, large unemployment, feudal labor practices, terrible infrastructure and having to be the brunt of climate change in dealing with at least 20-25 typhoons each year of increasing severity. However, you will be hard pressed to find a more resilient, loving and even happy group of people anywhere on the planet. Their spirit is infectious and the incipient talent palpable. However, 1 of every 8 Filipino adults is working overseas, sending much needed funds back home to their families but draining the country of so much of its talent and separating loved ones for protracted periods of time.

President Duterte, although characterized in the West as an Asian Trump, is quite a lot deeper and more committed to poor people than any of his recent predecessors and so enjoys the support of more than 70% of the adults in the Philippines. Though quite coarse at times, his pivot away from the USA and towards China was a preview of the increased shunning of the American Empire by the former colonies of the world. His policies are definitively pro-labor but Filipino federal and provincial politics are riven with corruption and family dynasties so developing an effective pro-labor juggernaut has proven to be difficult. As in most countries, money talks and the wealthiest 30 families continue to have an outsized influence on keeping the status quo.

Our efforts have centered on developing a Filipino ground force under the leadership of Edsel Martinez, Director of Career Services for the Asian Institute of Management and Marites Mendoza, an entrepreneurial event coordinator especially active in the provinces outside of Manila. We have made major inroads in presenting to the national Department of Education and will meet with their Bicol Province officers on November 22nd in Manila. We have also found the President of the Technical Vocational Schools Association of the

Philippines eager to help us build grassroots community-based CareerDNA Centers. Allan and I presented to the Asia Organization Development Network Summit in Cebu last month on CareerDNA as a tool in identifying intrinsic motivation and developing employee engagement and we received one of the highest post-Summit evaluations. As in China, the time seems ripe for our career and life design counseling and coaching movement as well as our talent development programs for corporations. I feel like that bunny that Duracell calls their Energizer Rabbit. I am the Energizer Psychologist and just keep going.