



ECHA NEWS

EUROPEAN COUNCIL FOR HIGH ABILITY

AUTUMN 2016

President's Report

Dear ECHA Members,

It is my pleasure to share several good news, which all show the intensification of ECHA's life in the past few months. First and foremost, it is good news that the preparation of our 16th ECHA Conference in Dublin between 8 and 11 August 2018 (<http://echa2018.info>) proceeds well. Visiting the conference web-site you may already submit your (nonbinding) pre-registration to get regular updates on the preparation of this exciting event having the major topic of "Working with Gifted Students in the 21st Century". However, as always, all gifted education and talent support related contributions will be most welcome at this conference. The 2018 conference will also give an excellent opportunity for networking, including meetings of our national correspondents, special interest groups, as well as the growing European Talent Support Network.

Due to the increasing interest in ECHA Conferences, the 2016 ECHA general assembly allowed the organization of thematic ECHA Conferences, which are planned as much smaller, and much more focused meetings than bi-annual international ECHA Conferences. The general committee issued a call for a 2019 thematic ECHA Conference. This call is a pilot experiment to see whether this concept is indeed as exciting for our members as a preliminary poll suggested, where 86% of the participating ECHA members expressed their interest to attend a thematic ECHA Conference. Our new vice-president, Albert Ziegler, assumed responsibility to oversee the preparation and organization of ECHA Conferences. The general committee will announce the result of the call before Christmas on the ECHA website.

The ECHA Education Board (which was established by the 2016 General Assembly of ECHA with the leadership of Christian Fischer and having Lianne Hoogeveen, Ulrike Kempter, Victor Müller-Oppliger and Szilvia Péter Szarka as members) prepared a document summarizing basic components and conditions of ECHA training. This document gives general guidelines for the qualification / accreditation of university-based programmes leading to a certificate of advanced studies, diploma of advanced studies or a master degree. You may find more details at this web-site: <http://echa.info/echa-training>. The ECHA Education Board currently works on the details of this excellent training programme, which drew interest already from many European countries, where ECHA training has not been established yet.

The work of the European Talent Support Network was intensified after the registration of European Talent Points was opened in last November. More than 300 Talent Points have been registered in this period from over 35 countries including associated Talent Points from several other continents. The second call of European Talent Centres was also successful, and the network had new applications for centres from Denmark, Germany, Greece, India and Peru. The map of Talent Centres and Talent Points (including their brief description and contact possibilities) can be seen at this web-access: <http://echa.info/high-ability-in-europe>. The first council of the network will be elected by the end of October. The network organized several regional meetings, among others a very successful one in Ljubljana, Slovenia, started various joint projects including a successful Erasmus+ application coordinated by our secretary, Colm O'Reilly, on developing an e-platform on teacher training in gifted

education, as well as planned Creative Europe and Horizon2020 applications in the fields of Europe-wide promotion of talented young artists and STEM/ entrepreneurship, respectively.

Importantly, after the successful youth summit during the Vienna ECHA Conference, a youth platform of the European Talent Support Network was established. Three talented young people can be nominated as member candidates of the youth platform by each Talent Centre or Talent Point of the Network. Membership is decided by a 5-member committee of the youth platform by evaluating the quality, creativity and enthusiasm shown by a motivation letter of the candidate. Armin Fabian, the interim representative of the youth platform summarizes the aims and progress of the youth platform in a separate contribution in this ECHA News issue. With the leadership of the former ECHA president, Javier Tourón, an ad hoc committee is exploring the possibilities of establishing a European Talent Space, which would be a 3D virtual world social network for talented young people. I hope to be able to give more details on this exciting new possibility in the spring 2017 issue of ECHA News.

The growing importance of gifted education and talent support in Europe is also shown by the fact that the Dutch, Slovakian and Maltese EU presidencies all declared talent support a priority of their presidency period, and organized various conferences in this area. The Slovakian EU presidency flagship conference "On the fostering and development of talent" was

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held between September 12 and 13 in Bratislava. At the conference ten sessions examined talents as skills for the future of Europe, talents in early childhood, primary schools, vocational training, higher education, science and art, as well as recognition, development, social inclusion and entrepreneurship of talented young people. At the closing session talented young people introduced their experiences and success stories. The conference was a great success, where besides the excellent presentations the EU commissioner of education, the president and education minister of the Slovak Republic, as well as the minister of education of Malta all made key statements supporting talented young people.

All these changes are giving a momentum of continuous activities of ECHA and its members between two international ECHA Conferences. This is also reflected by the increase in the number of ECHA members (please direct your highly esteemed colleagues of the field to this web-site: <http://echa.info/membership> to become a member of ECHA). The number of members of ECHA's Facebook group – <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ECHAGroup/> – is also increasing and was getting close to 700 at the time of writing this contribution. We are currently working on a more fluent handling of ECHA membership issues with our new secretary, Colm O'Reilly. We have also plans to upgrade our website. Victor Müller-Oppliger is helping the re-election of ECHA National Correspondents. The general assembly extended their mission serving an even wider range of ECHA activities – including the short reports of ECHA National Correspondents in the upcoming spring issue of ECHA News. I am wishing all of our members to reach new dimensions and horizons via talent support-related cooperation across Europe.

Peter Csermely, President of ECHA

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Editorial

ANNETTE HEINBOKEL, GERMANY

Early in October 2016 a movie called 'Mein Sohn, der Klugscheißer' was broadcast on German TV. Debbie is a single mum, a bus driver, who heaps all her love on her son Jérôme. However, he is highly gifted, and she simply can't give him what he really needs. ('Klugscheißer' is one of those untranslatable words, the closest one could get to it would be 'wisdom shitter'.)

This movie made me think of other movies where the subjects are gifted children. The German movie is similar in a way to 'Little Man Tate', directed by Jodie Foster, who also played Fred's mother Dede. She is also a single mum who earns her money by working in a bar. And she also loves her son Fred dearly, but can't fulfill his intellectual needs.

Both boys are unable to get along with their age mates, and the mothers need to let their sons go to give them a chance to learn and communicate at their own level.

Roald Dahl's 'Matilda' is pure fun. Matilda is unlucky because fate dumped her in a very stupid family; on the other hand she is lucky with her teacher, Miss Honey, who understands and supports her as best she can. Matilda uses her intelligence and her super human powers to protect herself as well as protecting and helping her friends.

'Good Will Hunting' is an excellent film that won two Academy Awards. Will Hunting is a self-taught genius who works as a janitor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology as part of a deferred prosecution agreement. A professor poses a difficult maths problem for his students that Will solves anonymously. He is not well adapted to function in society, but there seems to be a happy ending as he drives off to California to his new girlfriend.

In the 'Midwich Cuckoos' a group of gifted children is presented as dangerous. They were created during a visit by aliens and they are all highly intelligent. However, the older they become, the more it is clear that they can not only read but also control people's minds to the point where they force them to kill themselves or each other. In the end a man they still trust forces all negative thoughts out of his brain, goes to the house where by then they live together to show them a film and blows himself and the children up with the dynamite the projector is filled with.

It seems to be difficult not to present gifted children in fiction as highly intelligent, but also 'freakish'. Maybe that's one reason why they are sometimes still regarded with trepidation by society.

Annette Heinbokel, editor

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The Youth Platform of the European Talent Support Network

ARMIN VINCENTIUS FABIAN,
ROMANIA

The youth platform of the European Talent Support Network was established after the first European Youth Summit, which was organized in the frame of the 15th international ECHA Conference in Vienna in March 2016. The Youth Summit was a specially dedicated event to gifted students coming from different European countries, with the main topic related to the rights, and in particular the right to learn and its connection with the principle of equality.

After the end of the European youth summit and the 15th ECHA Conference we continued the work as volunteers to establish the Youth Platform of the European Talent Support Network. In the middle of September our community had 44 members from 16 countries all around Europe. As the team is an open, continuously expanding community, members of the youth platform can be nominated by any Talent Centres and Talent Points of the Network. Further information about the eligibility requirements and the evaluation committee can be found on the website of the ECHA¹.

The youth platform aims at trans-national cooperation of talented young people connecting the European Talent Centres and Talent Points, as well as the associated Talent Centres and Talent Points. Our objectives are to create and support joint projects of talented young people, to discuss the development of gifted education in the countries of the network from the youth perspective, to cooperate with the European Talent Support Network and the ECHA General Committee, to organize further European Youth Summits and webinars, web-based conferences, seminars and interactive discussions. The youth platform has already launched its first concrete project, called "Develop your knowledge!", which is a method of e-learning by using different platforms, like blog articles (<https://ypetsn.wordpress.com>), power point presentations, prezi shows or youtube videos. Five members of the platform are also involved in the exploration of the possibility to start a 3D virtual world social network for platform members, as a part of an ad hoc committee under the leadership of Javier Tourón.

As the representative of the youth platform, I was invited to take part and give a speech at the Slovakian EU presidency flagship conference "On the Fostering and

Development of Talent" held between September 12 and 13 in Bratislava. My lecture presented my personal story, the establishment, work and future plans of the youth platform, as well as the importance of social responsibility of talented young people. The conference was organized exceptionally well by the Slovakian hosts and demonstrated that an international cooperation on talent support is one of the top priorities of Europe. I was really glad to hear all the professional discussions, and attend the gala evening, which was a perfect environment to meet new people. We also had a poster on the youth platform together with the deputy representative Lukás Kyzlík from the Czech Republic, who also participated in the Conference.

It is both a pleasure and a great honour to be the representative of the youth platform, but for me the most important is to support and develop gifted education, as talent support has a growing importance in the 21st century.

¹ <http://www.echa.info/175-youth-platform-of-the-european-talent-support-network-description-of-aims-and-membership-criteria>

Armin Vincentius Fabian is a high school student and interim representative of the Youth Platform of the European Talent Support Network (YP-ETSN)

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Gifted in the Eyes of Others

LJILJANA KRNETA,
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

In 2011, the association "Zajedno u Evropu" (ZUE) "Together towards Europe" or TTE was founded in Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), with the intention of researching the phenomenon of giftedness and creativity, and the aim to raise awareness in our environment about the importance of gifted and talented individuals, about their position in society, their education and encouragement of the gifted and talented. The founders of the association were Ljiljana Krneta, professor of psychology, Aleksandra Šević, psychologist and Elizabeta Vidovic, a pre-school educator. Secretary of the association is Zivana Radic.

At its founding assembly Aleksandra Šević was elected as the president of the assembly, and Ljiljana Krneta as the president of the association.

The work of TTE is determined by the associations' statute and programme activities. The objectives and tasks of the association are numerous, but the main objectives and tasks are:

- providing timely information about the work of the association;
- informing members (psychologists, pedagogues, teachers, educators, parents) about scientific and technical knowledge, with the aim of contributing to the overall development of education in this topic;
- encouraging activities towards creativity and talent in all areas of life;
- educating members of the association;
- fostering ethics of the profession in the field of education;
- affirming scientific and educational practices in working with gifted and talented;
- organizing cooperation with similar organizations within Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), the region and Europe, etc.

As a result of the lack of financial support, TTE encountered a series of financial difficulties, therefore lately the association has had fewer activities. However, as the president of the association "Together in Europe" I would like to emphasize some of the activities that have marked the work of the association since its start.

Gabriela Bundalo, a teacher, Emina Simunic, a psychologist, Nina Deretic, a lawyer and a group of young and talented students of Academy of Arts in Banja Luka gave a great contribution to TTE's work and activities. Along with the respected talents of many people and by being an example to others, children and young people, they turned

their activities into educational workshops, panel discussions, presentations, performances - communicating through music, acting, painting and dance. This will all be presented under the name "Gifted in the eyes of others", at an international conference, in September, 2016 in Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina, organized by the association "Together towards Europe".

One aspect of the work done by the association is to popularize the activities of TTE through the media. In TV programmes on public service broadcaster RTRS Banja Luka, Ljiljana Krneta discussed the association's activities various times, for example on morning shows, "In Focus"- tv



Dusan Urosevic, conductor



Studio, 70 x 35 oil pastel, 2014. Dusko Bojanic, Academy of Arts

show, "Kvadrat na znanje", "The impact of media on children and youth," furthermore on ATV BL in the show "Apostrophe", "Children with special needs" and finally in the print media.

Research was also part of the association's work during 2012-2016, we conducted several empirical studies on the topic of giftedness and talent. The research results were presented at scientific conferences at the College for the Education of Teachers in Vrsac, M. Pavlov, Serbia 2012-2014. In Ljubljana in 2014 at the ECHA Conference Ljiljana Krneta presented the results of the research on the topic "The gifted and other students' perception of the present and the vision of the future" (Krneta 2014). In December 2015 at the conference of students of the Faculty of Political Sciences in Banja Luka on "Family values in modern society" Ljiljana Krneta stressed the importance of family values, talents and the cultural milieu in which these values are actualized in BiH in relation to giftedness. She highlighted the work of the association and its activities in this field.

In 2016, the association 'Together towards Europe', plans to organize an international conference in Banja Luka, dedicated to the gifted and talented, named "Gifted in the eyes of others". Special contribution to this conference will be a performance by young talented individuals, who will present the vision of young people in the digital and media-age modern society through the activity of TTE. At the 15th ECHA Conference, in Vienna, Austria, in 2016, the participants of the conference were presented with TTE's activities and had pamphlets available with more information about the association. The associations' website is under construction.

The association "Together towards Europe" (TTE) has its headquarters at Vojvode Stepe Stepanovica 185-2A, Banja Luka, Bosnia

Ljiljana Krneta has a PhD in psychology and is founder and president of the association 'Together Towards Europe'

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- Krneta, Ljiljana** (2014). *The gifted and other students' perception of the present and the vision of the future*, ECHA Conference 2014, Ljubljana, Slovenija

Seal of the association



Mutual Cooperation of Austrian European Talent Centres: a Novel Emerging European Best Practice in Talent Support

JOHANNA STAHL & ELISABETH HALMER,
AUSTRIA

The Austrian Research and Support Centre for the Gifted and Talented in Salzburg (ÖZBF) and the Institute TIBI, the department for gifted education at the Private University College for Teacher Education in Vienna, have a long tradition of cooperation in talent-related issues.

The ÖZBF is the national institution for the further development of gifted education and the promotion of excellence in Austria. In line with its vision “supporting talent, shaping the future” it supports persons, institutions and initiatives promoting young people’s talents. It was established in 1999 and is financed by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education and Women’s Affairs, and the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy.

The Institute TIBI, founded in 2004, provides a variety of offers, particularly for teachers. The team initiates and supports concepts, ideas and projects which are dedicated to the development of the many gifts and potentials of young people. The main objective is to make every child’s education a personal success in order to pave the way into an autonomous and responsible life.

Both, the Institute TIBI as well as the ÖZBF, cooperate on the national and international level with researchers and practitioners and can combine scientific expertise

and practical knowledge, i.e. during the organisation of the 15th international ECHA conference, in which the ÖZBF was also a vital cooperation partner. With both organizations being European Talent Support Centres now, their cooperation is further reinforced.

Being similar and yet very different both organizations know that cooperation leads to mutual benefits whereas competition or rivalry would harm both of them and especially their cause.

On the one hand this similarity with regard to basic values and principles, namely to work on the advancement of gifted education programmes and research, makes them excellent partners. On the other hand, their different foci make them partners and not competitors.

Therefore, based on our experiences, we can recommend the following for collaboration among a team of talent centres:

- learn about the expertise of each centre,
- identify areas where you can supplement each other,
- find out, where you can join efforts and
- assume a position of critical friends for each other without being jealous of the partners success. Undoubtedly, this might not always be easy, but as long as both parties do not lose sight of the common cause, such a cooperation can be prosperous.

With regards to routine communication, we mainly rely on email and phone contact. Collaborating and working on documents proved to be easiest via online sharing, i.e. through cloud-based online storage and online office applications. This allowed for easier managing and synchronizing of our efforts and activities with regards to the European Talent Support Network.

Elisabeth Halmer is head of the Institute TIBI (Department for Gifted Education) at the Private University College for Teacher Education in Vienna where she also teaches students in the field of gifted education. She acquired an ECHA diploma, is life coach and also works for the school board of the Archdiocese Vienna.

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Johanna Stahl is a postdoctoral researcher at the Austrian Research and Support Center for the Gifted and Talented (ÖZBF) in Salzburg. Her work focuses on the effects and long-term benefits of different support models for gifted students as well as on the development of diagnostic approaches for gifted education. She is a psychologist and holds a doctorate in Cognitive Neurosciences.

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Future Perspectives of Gifted Education in Germany

**CHRISTIAN FISCHER &
ANNE VOHRMANN, GERMANY**

As Annette Heinbokel wrote in the latest WCGTC News, 2015 has been a busy year for Gifted Education in Germany. The promising path did not end in 2016.

The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany (Kultusministerkonferenz (KMK)), released their "Strategy to promote and support high achieving pupils"¹ in June 2015 and this led to two major important conferences:

On December 4th 2015, experts, ministers for education and teachers from Bavaria, Hesse, and Saxony (states ruled by the rather conservative party) came together to adopt the so-called "Berlin Declaration of Intent" (Berliner Absichtserklärung). A few weeks later, on February 29th 2016 the ministers for education from Baden-

Wuerttemberg, Saarland, Rhineland-Palatinate, North Rhine-Westphalia, Bremen and Hamburg and representatives from the government of the states ruled by the socialist and/or green party adopted the Mainzer Declaration on Gifted Education as well².

Both of the conferences aimed at initiating procedures to support gifted children in and outside school. In Germany this change of events is of major importance as gifted education has been overlooked in politics and schools for a long time. In 2016 a declaration, compiled by both, the States and the Federal States of Germany, which takes the KMK-Strategy into account, will be published. This declaration will include precise and practical advice and ideas on how to support and challenge gifted children in German schools. Everyone working within this area is tensely looking forward to this paper.

The process initiated by the changes in Germany will be topic of the 6th

Münsterscher Bildungskongress, the most important conference on gifted education in Germany. The 6th Münsterscher Bildungskongress will take place from September 19th - 22nd 2018 in Münster. We are looking forward to meeting you there."

¹ You can find the strategies here:
http://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/pdf/350-KMK-TOP-011-Fu-Leistungsstarke_-_neu.pdf

² Mainzer Erklärung: http://www.icbf.de/images/stories/aktuelles/mainzer_erklaerung.pdf

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The European Union Science Olympiad (EUSO2016) in Estonia

VIIRE SEPP, ESTONIA

On 7-14 May 2016 Estonia was the host country of the 14th European Union Science Olympiad. The European Union Science Olympiad (EUSO) is a multidisciplinary, integrated science, praxis-based, team competition for EU secondary school science students.

The main aim of the EUSO is:

- to stimulate the active interest of students in the sciences and challenge science students to develop their talents.
- to convey to students, schools and the community the importance of advanced study and progressive learning in science and to raise interest in pursuing technical and scientific career paths.
- to foster a positive and high profile image of science and scientists.

- to encourage an appreciation of the value of science amongst the wider community.
- to promote and reward the pursuit of excellence in scientific endeavour
- to encourage greater contact and co-operation between secondary school students and teachers from the EU and to exchange ideas and materials about science education among EU states.

Each EU member state is invited to send a delegation of two teams with three students in each team (6 students in total). Students must be sixteen years of age or younger on December 31st prior to the competition. Teams are accompanied by mentors for each discipline (biology, chemistry and physics), who are also members of the International Scientific Jury of EUSO.

The first EUSO was held in 2003 in Dublin

(Ireland), teams from seven countries participated in this first event. At the 14th EUSO 23 countries participated, 49 teams in total (Estonia as the host country had the chance to take part with 4 teams).

To elect teams for the EUSO most countries organize preliminary contest. Estonian candidates for the EUSO were chosen on the basis of the results of the Estonian National Academic Olympiads in the sciences, chemistry, physics, and biology. Training sessions were organized for candidates, and at the end of that camp the final selection of four teams (3 students each) representing Estonia took place.

The host country is responsible for the preparation of the tasks for the competition. Participants have to solve problems during two practical tests, lasting four hours each. The tasks require the interpretation of experimental data, facilitate the manipulation of information and ideas,



Start Car Race

encourage substantive communication between the team members and often allow for alternative solutions. Tasks in each EUSO usually are related to country-specific context. As Estonia is well known for the good quality of its dairy products, the topics of the first experimental task were the biological, chemical, and physical characteristics of milk, and teams had to produce their own cheese. On the second day of the contest the experiments contained an interesting exercise - building a microbial fuel cell battery and racing a battery powered car over a 5-meter distance. In an unprecedented move in the history of EUSOs, this event was made available to the audience. Winner of the highest prize at the EUSO2016 – Trophy of EUSO – was Germany. Gold Medal winners were teams from Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Estonia. All results, the programme, and a photo gallery of the EUSO2016 is available on the official website www.euso2016.ee

The EUSO 2016 was held under the auspices and financing of the Ministry of Education and Research of Estonia. The main authority responsible for the EUSO 2016 was the University of Tartu. Most members of the Academic Committee were former Olympians. They got a lot of compliments for the excellent tasks from participants as well as from mentors. The slogan of EUSO2016 in Estonia was:

“There is chemistry between physics and biology”.

“It was the first time in the history of EUSOs that tasks were really integrated and demanding real team work” mentors of participating teams mentioned. Volunteers – guides for participating teams – were high school students. A lot of them had participated in Estonian National Olympiads before. Their hospitality, discipline, and eagerness awoke admiration among mentors.

Academic contests play a very important motivational role for gifted students, not only in their intellectual development but also socio-emotionally. “The Olympiad is a way of life” is the opinion of former and present Olympians. Friendships born during the Olympiad will continue in the long term. Former Olympiad participants will become future colleagues in their academic and scientific careers and they will give their contribution to the development of science and technology.

Viire Sepp, PhD, is a visiting lecturer in gifted education at Tartu University and member of the Steering Committee of EUSO2016. She is also the Estonian National Correspondent for ECHA

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Video about the building of a microbial fuel cell battery:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_zCsAfEbVRc



Party at Tartu Tamme Gymnasium



Successful Promotion of the European Talent Support Network in Slovenia, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia

MOJCA JURISEVIC, SLOVENIA

The Centre for Research and Promotion of Giftedness (hereinafter: CRSN) at the Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana, which was established in 2010, integrates knowledge, experience and ideas of researchers and practitioners in the field of giftedness, and pursues a variety of research and development, training and consultancy activities. In the first five years of its operation, the CRSN, which strives for the promotion of giftedness by fostering the quality of life of the gifted and talented, became a recognized institution in the field of talent research and of addressing the gifted population in the domestic and the international arena. In July 2015 the CRSN received an important European accreditation, thus becoming one of the centres of the European Talent Support Network - EUROPEAN TALENT CENTRE SLOVENIA, which ranked the CRSN and the Faculty of Education of the University

of Ljubljana among the internationally recognized promoters of the advocacy of the gifted population.

The basic purpose of networking within the European Talent Support Network is cooperation and promotion of talented European citizens for the common good in various areas of social engagement, collaboration between the accredited centres (European Talent Centres), and integration of new institutions or Talent Points (European Talent Points) through individual centres.

On the basis of the calls for collaboration by the accredited European Talent Centres the interested institutions submitted their applications for registration as a European Talent Point up to 31st January 2016. The applications received by the CRSN were examined and assessed according to the following evaluation criteria: the description of the vision and of the plan for work with the gifted; prior experience



Ceremony for appointing the European Talent Points by the CRSN

of the institution in work with the gifted, and experience in collaboration with other institutions in work with the gifted.

The European Talent Points Selection Committee of the CRSN at the Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana, composed of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mojca Juriševič (member), Full Prof. Dr. Mojca Čepič (member); Assist. Prof. Dr. Maja Umek (member) and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vesna Ferik Savec (Chair), established that 28 applicants were fulfilling the evaluation criteria, and were proposed for approval.

On the basis of the committee proposal in March 2016 the CRSN approved the proposed 28 institutions, of which 17 institutions were from Slovenia, 8 institutions from Croatia, and one institution from each Serbia, Macedonia and Kosovo. These institutions are as follows:

- ATOMI – Instituti Ndërkombëtar për Inteligjencë të Jashtëzakonshme (Kosovo)
- Centar za poticanje darovitosti (Croatia)
- Centar za poticanje darovitosti djeteta Bistrić (Croatia)
- Center za psihodiagnostična sredstva (Croatia)

- Dječji vrtić »Cvit Mediterana« Split (Croatia)
- Društvo za opazovanje in proučevanje ptic Slovenije (DOPPS) (Slovenia)
- e-Hiša, novogoriška hiša poskusov, Nova Gorica (Slovenia)
- Fakultet za odgojne i obrazovne znanosti, Sveučilište Josipa Jurja Strossmayera u Osijeku (Croatia)
- Gimnazija Bežigrad (Slovenia)
- Gimnazija Brežice (Slovenia)
- Gimnazija Jurija Vege Idrija (Slovenia)
- Majsai Úti Áltlános Iskola (Serbia)
- Makedonska asocijacija za nadareni i talentirani (Macedonia)
- Osnovna šola Antona Ukmarja, Koper (Slovenia)
- Osnovna šola Črenšovci (Slovenia)
- Svetovalni center za otroke, mladostnike in starše v Kopru (Slovenia)
- Udruga »Vjetar u leđa«, Zagreb (Croatia)
- Udruga Klikeraj, Osijek (Croatia)
- UMMI, Zavod za izobraževanje Koper (Slovenij)
- Univerza na Primorskem, Pedagoška fakulteta (Slovenia)
- Univerza v Ljubljani, Akademija za glasbo (Slovenia)
- Univerza v Novi Gorici (Slovenia)
- Ustanovna Slovenska znanstvena fundacija (Slovenia)

- Vrtec Morje Lucija (Slovenia)
- Vrtec Rogaška Slatina (Slovenia)
- XV. gimnazija Zagreb (Croatia)
- Znanstveno edukacijski centar Višnjan (Croatia)
- Zveza za tehnično kulturo Slovenije (Slovenia)

The ceremony for appointing the European Talent Points by the CRSN, which was attended also by the guest of honour Csilla Fuszek, Director of the European Talent Centre Budapest and a member of ETSN executive committee, Prof. Dr. Goran Turk, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ljubljana, and by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Janez Krek, Dean of the Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana, took place on 20th April 2016 on the premises of the University of Ljubljana.

Mojca Jurisevic is director of the Centre for Research and Promotion of Giftedness, Slovenia

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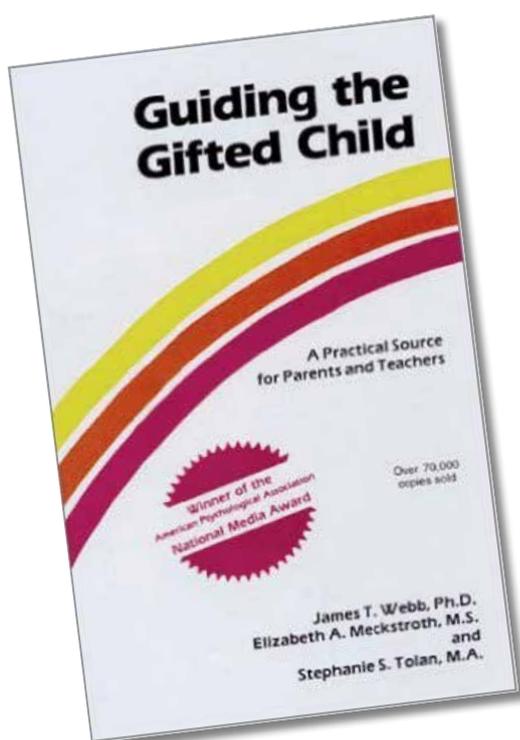
Interview with James Webb

The interview with James Webb was conducted in Münster, Germany, in autumn 2015 by **MARTINA ROSENBOOM, GERMANY**

Interview

Question (Rosenboom): I think your first book started right there: how to help parents (Webb 1989). When there is a book for families and the parents and the teachers, do the parents and the teachers read the book the same way? Do they see things the same way?

Answer (Webb): They read the same words but they read it from different points of view. And their concerns, their worries are different. Teachers are mostly worried about how the child is doing in school, how the child relates to the teacher, how the child relates to classmates. The parents worry about those things but the parents also worry about how well is a gifted child able to make friends? Why do they have to cut the tags out of the back of their shirts? Why does a child seem to be so strong willed, asking so many questions, have difficulty falling asleep at night because his mind or her mind is working so vigorously and how the child is getting along with others in the family, brothers and sisters. And why the child often seems to feel so stressed because of being so perfectionist. So they read the same book but with different eyes. The parents in my belief are the ones who need the book even more than the teachers, partly because they, the parents, are concerned with a broader range of issues but also because the teacher will only be with the child that year, or perhaps two years. The parents will be there for decades. The best I know about the research and from my experience says parents are more important in the long term outcome of gifted children than are teachers. Parents have told me year after year after year that for



them it's a very lonely experience being a parent of a gifted child. They don't know where to turn for information. They find it difficult to talk to the teachers because the teachers are only concerned with the academics. They can't talk to other parents because other parents don't understand. They have a different type of child and their parenting experiences are different than that of the parents of gifted children. They are also often a little embarrassed. What's the problem, you have such a bright child, you have it easy. Well no, not necessarily. There are some problems that are more common for gifted children. So that's why we wrote the book. It's focusing mostly on the parents but also on teachers and psychologists.

Q: Are teachers as lonely as the children, as the parents?

A: Yea, they are puzzled but not really lonely. They are more puzzled because they can see the child's potential but often don't know how to help the child reach that potential. Most often teachers don't see any problems with gifted children. Partly because not many have received training about gifted children but also because the teachers have to teach a large group of children and they have to make sure that they teach not just the brightest but all of the children including those that are slower in areas. So the teachers can't give a lot of attention to the gifted child. They have to focus on other children, too.

Q: So the second book that was published in Germany was about gifted children and for some it focused on disorders; what can go wrong (Webb 2005). Was this the need of readers of the first book? Why doesn't it work or why is the focus not only on how these children are, but especially on what can go wrong?

A: Actually the book was not so much on what can go wrong but rather on the misinterpretation by psychologists and psychiatrists and pediatricians who see the gifted child's behavior and misinterpret it as a disorder, as a psychological disorder. We learned so much more in the twenty years since the first book was published. And so the first book was fairly small, the second is larger. It deals with the same issues: characteristics, motivation, discipline, stress, perfectionism, peer relations, sibling relations and so forth. But in addition to those chapters we also added new chapters on educational planning, we added a chapter on how parents can advocate for their child with the school and we added a chapter on finding a professional psychologist or pediatrician or psychiatrist that you can work with.

Q: Your next book was about misdiagnosis (Webb 2005), so let's talk about psychologists and what can go wrong even there. You know you have to look for a psychologist or a psychiatrist and even that can go wrong.

A: Yes, that is the main idea in the book, but there are other ideas, too. The main idea is we know that gifted children are strong willed, we know that they have a strong personality, we also know that often because of their strong will and their advanced thinking that they are likely to have problems in getting along with other children of the same age. The highly gifted children are likely to be impatient with others. They are also likely to be idealists who become disillusioned with the world. Others will withdraw and become depressed. And so the parents seek a psychologist or counselor and the counselor, almost no counselor or psychologist or pediatrician has received training about gifted children. And so the counselor or

the psychologist sees the behaviors and tries to understand those behaviors in terms of the diagnostic manual. ICD, International Classification of Diseases or the DSM which is used in the States and somewhere and other parts of the world, but mostly it is the ICD. And so they look at this child who is intense, very active, asks so many questions, has difficulty getting along with peers, is impatient and has poor social relations and they say "Ah, that's a disorder." And so we diagnosed that as Oppositional Defiant Disorder or diagnosed it as Attention Deficit Disorder or diagnosed it as Asperger disorder. Those are the three most common that we've seen. There are others.

Q: We see these two, these are the common diagnosis.

A: Yeah, and some of these gifted children of course will have these disorders but in our experience, most, by far most of them do not. It is a misdiagnosis, an incorrect diagnosis and until the psychologist and the parents understand the gifted part of it the treatment is likely to be inappropriate and not very helpful. We find too often that these children are placed on medications that they don't need. Now the interesting thing here is that with ADHD most often the drugs prescribed are ones like Ritalin or one of the stimulants. When there is an incorrect diagnosis and you have a gifted child they often are put on Ritalin and their behavior improves. The research indicates that even with people without ADHD, a mild to moderate dosage of Ritalin or similar medications will help people to focus and concentrate exactly like for adults, we drink our morning cup of coffee, our morning tea or our coca cola, which has caffeine which helps us focus. So what happens with that is that the medication helps gifted children endure an inappropriate setting. They are able to be more patient and they are able to focus on what the teacher wants them to focus on.

Q: Even if it is uninteresting. Because they are more patient.

A: Yes, that's exactly right. So the misdiagnosis, we're trying to educate physicians and psychologists and counselors. But then there is another part of the book and that is dual diagnosis. Where you have a child who is gifted but also has some other type of exceptionality. Perhaps that child has a hearing problem, is hearing impaired, or perhaps a vision problem or perhaps cerebral palsy or perhaps has a learning disability. And interestingly we find that the very, very, very bright gifted children are more likely to have a range of abilities such that they are going to be both gifted and have a learning disability at the same time. They'll be very gifted in some areas of academics or abilities but in one or two areas they will be only average or even sometimes below average. The difficulty with a twice exceptional child is that most often professionals focus on the disability and forget about the gifted part. However, if you follow these twice exceptional children into adulthood you see that as adults later in life they often figure out ways to overcome the disability and to develop their abilities.

Q: But only later on, after years of suffering.

A: An example would be Sir Richard Branson. Sir Richard Branson founded Virgin Atlantic Airways and Virgin Records in England. He is clearly a very bright man. He also can hardly spell, he is very dyslexic. He can't spell and he has difficulty reading. He learns by listening and remembering. There are other famous people in history also

who had dyslexia or were both gifted and had some other coexisting problems. It makes you wonder if they had support in school and from professionals outside of school, would they have been able to achieve even more and would their lives have been more content?

Q: Who does this book address? Is it for professionals and the parents?

A: Mostly for psychologists and physicians and counselors. However, the parents of gifted children often are very bright themselves. Often they, too, are very frustrated trying to find answers and understanding the child and so the parents will go to the internet and do a Google search for information or they will go to the library and try to find books to help them figure out these puzzling behaviours. So when we wrote the book we wrote it for professionals but we made sure that the book was written in terms that a bright parent could understand. I used to train psychologists in university and one of the things that I would tell my students was there is very little use for jargon, for fancy words that are this long. If you take a professional term that is a fifty year old term and if you cannot express in your own words you don't understand it well enough. We took the terms and explained them in ordinary language.

Q: So make a manual with sustainable information, but put it into words that even parents can understand.

A: In the book we have the characteristics that professionals look for in making a diagnosis. Next to it we put a list of the characteristics of gifted children that are similar. And then we put a list of how you sort it out. What characteristics contra-indicate. And then we talk about what to do to meet the child's needs but not very much in that book. This is mostly about sorting it out.

Q: So if you look for maybe ADHD but at the same time you see the child acts like this and this you have to have a second thought if ADHD maybe inappropriate.

A: Yeah, for example you will find a child with ADHD has these problems in many situations; at home, at school, at church, on the playground. The gifted child by contrast will show the problem in some situation but not in others. That child will show ADHD problems in this class in school but not in that class in school. Or perhaps show them at school but not on the playground at church, but not playing with peers. There is just some pattern where you don't see it all the time.

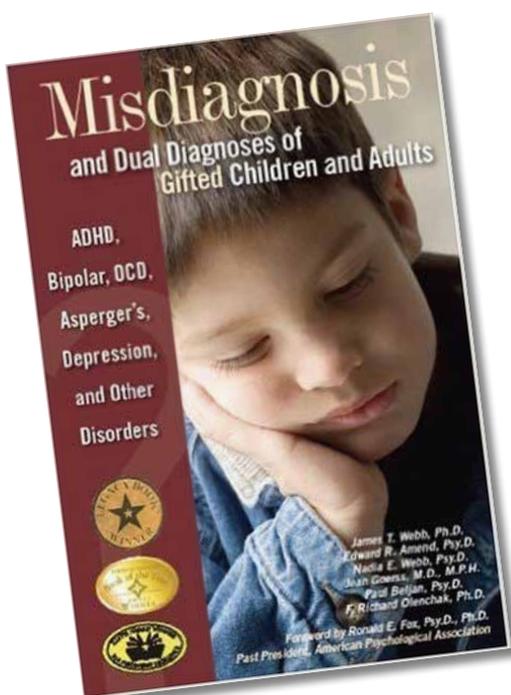
Q: But when I think about parents reading this book how do you prevent parents from going to the psychologist and say "It can't be ADHD because I read in this book that it must be a misdiagnosis."

A: I hope the parents will. As a psychologist who used to be a university professor, I and my colleagues wrote this book so that parents could take it to professionals because the book was written by another professional. Maybe, perhaps they will at least think about this. In the front of the book when we published the book

we contacted leaders in pediatrics, psychiatry, psychology, family practice, medicine, learning disabilities and asked them to read the book and write an evaluation to give the book credibility. Because we knew that this would be a new area. And like every new area people are hesitant to quickly adopt it as it should be, they should be hesitant, they should look and think. We also recognized, though, that one of the quirks, one of the strange aspects of human behavior is we only listen to our own kind. Psychologists only listen to psychologists, pediatricians only listen to pediatricians, psychiatrists only listen to psychiatrist and so we made sure that we had a leader from each of the different professions who gave this topic some credibility. But yes, I do hope that parents will take it and say this is something to think about. It is like a second opinion. And in medicine for centuries we've valued having a second opinion. I don't know of any good professional who says "I have all the truth, I have some truth perhaps but I don't have all the truth". So if you think that I am incorrect let's get a second opinion, let me learn something from this.

Q: A second opinion by another psychologist is another thing that I read a book about. But I think it could help parents to understand what psychologists are looking for. So they could say "Yes, he did this in school and to be honest he does this at home, too, but we can cope with it. Maybe we know how to cope with all the stress, but school doesn't have a room of its own for our son just to come down." Why do we talk about disorders all the time? We talk about gifted children, but we talk about disorders.

A: It's interesting, if you look at the history of diagnosis going back 50 or 60 years, the number of diagnosis in mental health is increasing unbelievably. It's almost an explosion of simply the number of disorders. In the 1950s and 60s we heard about 60 or 70 diagnosis in mental health disorders. Now we have about 400 or more. I don't think people have changed that much. I don't think they are getting sicker. I think instead that our professions have begun to focus more and more on trying to find disorders and named in some cases certainly creative disorders that really represent normal behavior.



Q: On the other hand, this helps us to help the children. Or is it the pressure to make everything the "best"?

A: Yes, to some degree. I think that underlies it, but what I see also is an increasing intolerance for unusual behavior in at least Western Societies, well, I think it is more than that, I think it is worldwide now, there is increasing pressure towards conformity and mediocrity and fitting in. That if you are unusual in some way that's likely to be considered a disorder. And we are trying to get humans to be all the same.

Q: And we are trying to make them perfect.

A: Yes, exactly. And if you are an exceptional person or exceptional child then that goes against that movement.

Q: As an exception at least it has to be better. But on the other hand if someone is better, that makes me worse. So how can we focus on joy with the kids again?

A: That's difficult. Now fortunately there is a movement in psychology called Positive Psychology, that began mostly under the leadership of Professor Martin Seligman of the University of Pennsylvania. And professor Seligman recognized that psychologists and psychiatrists were very good at focusing on problems of people. But he also noticed that there were patients or people that he knew of who had so many challenges growing up. Everything from physical abuse to poverty to sexual abuse to inadequate education and somehow they had survived and thrived.

Q: So you are talking about resilience.

A: Resilience, and Seligman then said why by all rights they should not have been able to function well as an adult but they are functioning beautifully as an adult. We need to not just focus on the problems, we need to focus on the strengths, the resilience, the positives. And so he began focusing on this and positive psychology and one part of this more recently has been, it is called the Happiness Project. The Happiness Project where some students, some colleagues of Professor Seligman began to look at various cultures and groups within cultures that were unusually happy. He said how, why, they live in the same world but they are much happier than we. And to get from that some of the ideas that people can use as counselors or simply bright adults, people who read and get these ideas and implement them in the family or in the work place.

Q: Just the brightness, normally it is good to be bright even if you have ADHD or a writing disorder, they say "It is good to be bright, we have to look for this, we can use this, it's a strength." But we as an organization mainly for parents have to tell the parents "Be glad you have a bright child at home." It should be nice but normally it isn't nice because if it were nice the parents wouldn't come to us.

A: It's nice, but remember these children are unusual, they are exceptional. They are very likely to feel like a minority on the fringes. But because they are bright they can see how they might be. They can also see how the world might be. And because they think very broadly they are intensely aware of what's happening in this world

and in our society. They are aware at a very early age for example about the problems with pollution, the problems with immigrants, the problems with diseases and also aware that some people can be very mean and hateful and they actually kill other people in parts of the world. And they wonder why, and they try to talk with other eight year olds who don't want to be concerned with that, they are concerned with playing hopscotch or some other game. And so they find themselves feeling alone and disillusioned and they can become depressed. Well, that's the opposite of joy and happiness. How can you help them feel joy and happiness? By the way as an aside, the parents of these children often have similar awareness and experience and they, too, as gifted adults find themselves feeling disillusioned.

Q: So the child triggers the thoughts the parents have the same way. Just being disappointed about the world and "I want to give my child a positive look onto the world, don't look at all of that terror and don't watch TV and things like that." But the children do and I say "I don't know how to cope with it. I don't know how to cope with it in myself." And now my child asked this. That's the second problem.

A: This is what led to my most recent book which has not yet been translated into German (2013).

Q: Just the parents looking at themselves.

A: And talking with their children. The title is "Searching for Meaning: Bright Minds, Idealism, Disillusionment and Hope." And in the last part of this book, in the last three or four chapters I focus particularly on positive psychology and the Happiness Project of ways that parents can help themselves and their children find a sense of joy in life, a sense of belonging and happiness.

Q: Yes, and "hope" is a nice ending of the title because writing about disillusionment I think this should not be the last word. Just coping with it and using positive psychology.

A: We do all cope with this in our lives, sometimes in unhealthy ways, sometimes in healthy ways. I mentioned in my talk earlier about the IQ, there is also an increase in the use of drugs and alcohol. And it seems as though there is one gifted adult that I talked with. He said, "Alcohol and drugs are not the problem for me, life is the problem. Drugs and alcohol help me try to cope with life. "

Q: Just stop thinking.

A: That's right, you stop thinking or you narrow your thinking. So I focus only on this and put blinders on, then I don't have to hurt if I don't see. Sometimes they are trying simply to stop thinking. Sometimes they are using drugs as uppers to get them feel happy again.

Q: So it is very good to hear that there is a new book. In Germany we have to cope with this talk about misdiagnosis.

A: It pulls the thread that you see in all of these books, the behaviour that yields meaning for people is the feeling of being connected with other people. That's the golden thread. So often gifted children,

gifted adults feel disconnected from other people and so whatever we can do to help gifted children and adults feel that they belong, that they are a part of humanity, they are connected, that's good. It's important for us to remember to help them understand that being gifted does not mean you are a better species of human. It simply means you were born wired differently, you have different needs, you have different ways of seeing the world. But that's not better. I have known a lot of very bright people who are not very good humans.

Q: I work in the German Association for the Gifted Child (DGhK) and if you come to our association you come just to see other parents who think like you. You have to belong somewhere, just get connected, but you have to know what separates you from so many people.

A: In the U.S. we have a saying "If you don't know where you are going any road will do." So yes, you need to think of where you want to go.

Martina Rosenboom is president of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für das hochbegabte Kind (DGhK; German Association for Gifted Children)

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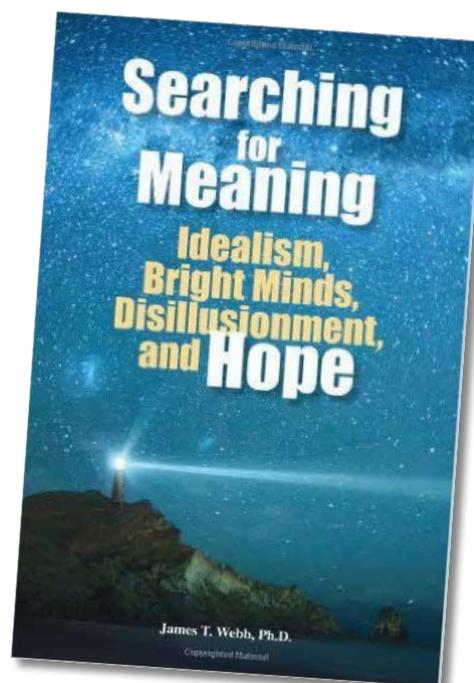
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(For the books the year they were first published is given; there are later editions)

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Pathways to Peace and Justice

ESZTER KABOS, HUNGARY

21-22 September 2016 – Gribskov, Denmark via the Hungarian Templeton Fellowship Programme

Through the Hungarian Templeton Fellowship Programme, I was lucky enough to get the opportunity to travel to Denmark in September 2016 for a two days long conference on Peace and Justice, which is the 16th goal of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by 193 UN countries in 2015.

I was very warmly welcomed by the organisers and all the participants, I had the chance to stay at one of the organisers' house for two nights. One of my best memories is the networking dinner before the first day of the conference, where women and a few men from Denmark, Sweden and Great Britain gathered to share their motivation and purpose in relationship with the 17 SDGs. Among them were experienced businessmen, politicians and former politicians, and artists: virtual reality designers, singers etc., some of whom I believe can be really useful for my own projects in the future and I'm very grateful to have met them. During the two days of the conference held in the Gribskov Kultursal, there was a main focus on achieving inner peace through meditation and the feeling of connectedness with everyone around the world, as the organisers stated 'the work for outer peace begins with inner peace'. We also worked on peace in the form of "meshworking" on 4 different levels: family/community, city/region, national and global. We had to think of problems and possible solutions as well as the obstacles that may arise in the process of solving the problem. We had dedicated guests such as Barbara Marx Hubbard on Skype and we could see Ban Ki-moon ringing the Peace Bell. In a ceremony we flew 193 flags in front of the Peace Pole which was later planted on the most northern point of Zealand.

The next morning we visited the Peace Pole and did a walking tour in the footsteps of Kierkegaard while discussing questions about truth. After getting back to the Kultursal and discussing our experiences and thoughts about the conference in a group, we continued working. I was most interested in a discussion about the future of this project and operative tasks about organising the next conference and a community around the Pathways Project. Here I realised again how many valuable people I got to know and exchanged contacts with all of them so that I can help with shaping the future of this conference while gaining access to valuable networks.

Once again I would like to thank the Hungarian Templeton Fellowship Programme for introducing me to this opportunity and financing all my expenditures related to travelling and participating.



The Peace Pole with the flags



The next day it is planted in its final place in nature.

In 2016 the programme is running in Hungary for the first year and I have been part of it since it was launched. So far it has offered me coaching together with a group of friends, many professional events such as visiting a factory, a personal mentor and the chance to participate in this conference. They have taken in 300+ students and were thus challenged by catering to everyone's needs from young high school students to musical talents and people who study at university subjects ranging from management to physics. I perceive they have been very successful at doing that by the varied list of events they have created. I'm glad I took part in the first part and wish them much success with future generations.

Eszter Kabos is an undergraduate student of Mathematics and Economics at the University of Cambridge and a member of the Cambridge University Hungarian Society as well as Deputy Leader of the Hungarian team at the European Girls' Mathematical Olympiad

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"There are no shortcuts to becoming a great musician. It is vital to focus on the journey, not on the destination. Free tickets don't exist. Become amazing and you shall attract amazing." *Corver*

A Knock On The Door

VINCENT CORVER, SWITZERLAND

In this age of instant gratification our lives from a young age are consumed by the presence of iPhones, iPads, TV-screens and other electronics that cause the decay of our own imagination, and thereby the failing desire to shape goals which may realize our dreams.

Social Media are showing us a world of lifestyle illusions, which we desperately seek to imitate and identify ourselves with. Portraying our desires on the wall as a moment in time, but not teaching us their factual realism, working hardship and the sweat and tears behind them.

Our fears of social rejection are ever-growing. We choose to advocate jealousy, negative criticism and competitiveness over kindness and our willingness to share positive thoughts. We are so desperately absorbed by our own style and image, we forget to experience what is factually around us and how we may aspire to grow as individuals with passion and vision. We forget to actually see the opportunities that are given to us on a daily basis and how we may use them to open new doors and create new opportunities in our own life

In this 'social world' we all share a common desire: recognition - even in the smallest of forms. Yet we often fail to realize that recognition is reflected by outreach, which in turn creates comeback, which in turn generates recognition. We forget a compliment may have a profound impact on someone's life, thus to be kind to others who are battling for their dreams. In all sincerity, the compliment is the very 'seed' that grows into the tree of talent existing in all of us.

People often forget our human abilities are endless, and with the right passion and immortal determination we are granted the opportunity to achieve the impossible. Essentially, our curiosity is King. Education becomes the art form of teaching us to listen out for moments of opportunity

Often the most meaningless moments may appear the most valuable in the end, like a simple 'knock on the door'.

"A sincere word of praise may represent the very 'seed' that grows into the tree of talent existing in all of us."

Corver



Vincent Corver

I am a Grammy Nominated Concert Pianist & Producer, classically trained from the age of six years old, graduating at the Royal Conservatoire in Holland and Royal Academy of Music in London. Besides my classical career, I have become an established composer & producer in the film- and mainstream music scene. I am a published writer, influencer and lecturer on topic of artist strategy planning and am in close relationship with the Weill Cornell Medical University in Qatar. My purpose is to aid young artists in their career development in an effort to evoke a key understanding on how to shape their unique artistic product, and how to bring this to the industry's attention.

I am also cooperating with the European Council of High Ability and I would be fascinated with the opportunity to perform in future public talks & sessions where I may contribute with my experience working with young gifted children in music for the past twenty years.

Vincent Corver

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VINCENT