

7. IMPORTANCE OF SILVER ECONOMY

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ABSTRACT: *THE BEST WAY TO GO BEYOND AND TO DEVELOP THE SILVER ECONOMY IS TO ANTICIPATE-IMAGINE AND TO CONCEIVE-CATALYZE THE GENERATION OF A SUSTAINABLE, PASSION-BASED SILVER ECONOMY, OR SILVER ECONOMY 2.0.*

ANY BIG (FUNDAMENTAL, CRUCIAL) PROBLEM IMPLIES QUESTIONS TO BE PUT, CHALLENGES TO BE RAISED, AND ISSUES TO BE SOLVED; AND AGEING PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES (EU) IS A FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM.

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION WE PUT IS “HOW COULD WE ENGAGE SENIOR PEOPLE IN MEANINGFUL CHANGE (TRANSFORMATION) TOWARDS NOT ONLY ACTIVE LIFE STYLE, BUT ALSO PRODUCTIVE AND CREATIVE LIFE STYLES? IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EMERGENCE OF THE “SILVER ECONOMY”, THE BIG CHALLENGE IN AGEING, DEVELOPED SOCIETIES, COUNTRIES IS, FIRST, IF IT IS POSSIBLE TO TURN THE PASSIVE (SOCIETY TAKE CARE) AGEING PEOPLE INTO “ACTIVE PEOPLE AP” (AP TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES), AND EVEN PRODUCTIVE (AP RE-BECOME PRODUCER OF GOODS AND SERVICES FOR SOCIETY) OR CREATIVE AGEING PEOPLE, AND SECONDLY IF IT IS POSSIBLE, HOW, WHAT IS THE PATHWAY TO MOTIVATE THE TRANSFORMATION!

AS IS NORMALLY UNDERSTOOD AND DEVELOPED IN THE LAST YEARS, SILVER ECONOMY (WE CALLED IT SILVER ECONOMY 1.0) IS NOT ENOUGH. WE ENLARGED IT TO THE CONCEPT OF “SUSTAINABLE, PASSION BASED SILVER ECONOMY” (OR SILVER ECONOMY 2.0). SO, IN THIS CONTEXT, THE BIG PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED CAN BE REFORMULATED AS HOW TO GENERATE A “SUSTAINABLE, PASSION BASED SILVER ECONOMY” (SILVER ECONOMY 2.0).

ANY POLICY CONCEPTION, ORIENTATION OR POLICY MAKING MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE IMPERATIVE OF CHANGING THE ACTUAL NON-SUSTAINABLE, WESTERN-TYPE, GLOBALIZED CIVILIZATION, DETERMINES THE ACCELERATION OF THE EVOLUTION OF HUMAN SOCIETY AND/OR CIVILIZATION. BESIDES REFRAMING THE PERSPECTIVE, THE THEORETICAL APPROACH, WE HAVE ALSO TO PRAGMATICALLY HARMONIZE TWO MAIN DRIVERS OF THE SILVER ECONOMY 2.0: HARD EMPOWERING DRIVER: THE NEW HIGH-TECHNOLOGY (ESPECIALLY BIOTECHNOLOGY AND IOT-INTERNET OF THINGS AND IOV - INTERNET OF VALUE) AND SOFT EMPOWERING DRIVER: THE NEW VISION (PERSPECTIVE, PARADIGM) OF THE SCIENTIFIC EXPLANATION OF POSSIBILITY IN CONTRAST WITH THE SCIENTIFIC EXPLANATION OF REALITY (AS DEVELOPED BY THE QUANTUM PHYSICIST DAVID

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DEUTSCH IN "THE BEGINNING OF INFINITY") AND OF THE PSYCHOLOGY OF POSSIBILITY (AS DEVELOPED BY HARVARD PROFESSOR ELLEN LANGER)

IN THE FINAL PART OF THE PAPER WE PRESENT A RESEARCH PROJECT PROPOSAL FOR CONCEIVING AND CATALYZING THE GENERATION OF SILVER ECONOMY 2.0., DESIGNED FROM THE KAIROTIC PERSPECTIVE OF DEVELOPMENT. ADOPTING "A KAIROTIC PERSPECTIVE OF DEVELOPMENT" MEANS TO PUT THE DEVELOPMENT (GROWTH) UNDER "A KAIROTIC PERSPECTIVE"

- ACTING DURING THE FAVOURABLE MOMENT. THE "RETIREMENT MOMENT" COULD BECOME SUCH

A KAIROTIC MOMENT. . PRACTICALLY, THE RESEARCH PROJECT PROPOSES TO INVESTIGATE, TO RESEARCH, TO EXPERIMENT - TEST AND EVALUATE HOW TO MAKE THE TRANSITION FROM A PERSPECTIVE OF "CARING/CARE" (PASSIVE LIFESTYLES) TO "ACTIVE AGING" (ACTIVE LIFESTYLES AND/OR PRODUCTIVE-CREATIVE LIFESTYLES) THROUGH AN "EMPOWERING" IN A "KAIROTIC SPACE" TO A "KAIROTIC MOMENT" THROUGH " KAIROTIC SCENARIO".

KEY WORDS: ACTIVE AGING, NEW LIFESTYLE, INNOVATION, KAIROTIC, ACTION-RESEARCH.

Intorduction

Paraphrasing and going beyond Peter Drucker with his aphorism "the best way to predict the future is to create it", we say that "the best way to develop a silver economy is to anticipate-imagine and to conceive-catalyze the generation of a sustainable, passion-based silver economy".

In European Union, during the coming years, elderly people will account for an increasingly important share of the European population. As long as the working age population will proportionately shrink, this will turn into a big problem. So as old-age dependency ratio will increase, fewer working age people will have to support more seniors.

The statistical data on aging in the EU shows that the current situation is worrying: The proportion of older people in our societies is increasing fast, due to low birth rates, ageing "baby-boomers" and rising life expectancy.

Between 2010 and 2060, the number of people over 65 will grow from 17.4% to 29.5% of the total population. The number of people over 80 will nearly triple to 12%².

During the same time, the working age population in the EU is expected to decline by 14.2%. Pensions, health care and long-term care systems risk becoming unsustainable, with a shrinking labor force no longer able to provide for the needs of the growing number of older people.

At the national level, Romania has entered a period of rapid and dramatic population aging. Older Romanians are expected to make up more than 30% of the total population by 2050. All demographic projections for Romania point to a rapid expansion of the older population in the coming decades. Specific projections vary. The population aged 60 years and older will increase from 19.3% in 2005 to 33.3% in 2050. Eurostat³ projections indicate an increase in the 65+ population from 14.9% in 2008 to 30.9% in 2050 and to 35.0% in 2060. The median age of the Romanian population increased from 34.4 years in 2000 to 38.3 years in 2010 and is projected to increase to 51.4 years by 2050. Like other EU countries, Romania's older population is itself

getting older, a process referred to as the aging of the aged. For example, from 2008 to 2050, the percentage of the 65+ population that is 80+ is projected to increase from 18.7% to 30.5%.

Romania has the pension and health insurance systems and the system of social welfare services address the specific needs of older Romanians, but comparing the social protection systems in the European Union with those in Romania suggests the existence of a development lag⁴. The relevant legislation exists but there are still issues regarding the implementation of specially developed social services for older persons. As a result, there are major inadequacies in the organization of the social service system: too few public services, insufficient budget funds, insufficient collaboration between public and private services, and frequently overlapping services³⁰.

The Big Problem: questions to be put, challenges to be raised, and issues to be solve

How could we engage senior people in meaningful change (transformation) towards not only active life style, but also productive and creative life styles? ...is one of the most important question to be put.

In the above context and taking into account the emergence of the “silver economy”, the big challenge in ageing, developed societies, countries is, first, if it is possible to turn the passive (society take care) ageing people into active people - AP (AP take care of themselves), and even productive (AP re-become producer of goods and services for society) or creative ageing people, and secondly if it is possible, how, what is the pathway to motivate the transformation!

Unfortunately, in a time of multiple crises, the dominant discourse in the western-type, globalized, world civilization is the economic-financial one. In this situation, the big issue of ageing people in a time of multiple crises, should be approached with different and fresh perspectives, new frameworks, new thinking, and an open mind. All of these must be seen first of all from a future perspective.

In our approach we start from the assumption that no economic, political, or military power can compare with the power of a change of mind. By deliberately changing their images of reality, people are changing the world (Harman, 2007), but we add also the need that first people must change themselves and so to become or be the change they want to see (Gandhi). Further on, in our paper we try to take into account and even to go beyond of what Einstein said we cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them, and so, we begin to reframe new perspectives, new challenges and even new paradigms, to rethink ideas, approaches and to reshape/redesign styles of life, programs, strategies, etc., regarding the phenomena of ageing people's economy.

Being aware of the difficulties we encounter in this uncharted waters, lands, the big issue to be solved is referring to **how to generate a “sustainable, passion based silver economy”**. To generate a market, an economy, as we showed in our research paper *Generating a Cultural Tourism Market in Northern Oltenia*⁵, is a multi-level, complex enterprise, which should be first test on a pilot project, using an action-research approach.

Some glimpses concerning the classical researches regarding the ageing people

Research in recent decades in the field of aging have increased in number and diversified, while

³⁰ A. Jinaru, G. Țurlea, J.F. Feldman *Noua economie din perspectiva aderării României la UE*, Ed. Institutului European din România, Bucuresti, 2003

the establishment of study centers has also known an accelerated development, especially in the US but also in Western Europe.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines aging as a process of progressive change in the biological, psychological and social structure of individuals. (Stein, 1999).

Currently, aging is studied:

a) from a biological perspective as old age and defined as a biological process of dysfunctional change by which organisms become less capable of maintaining physiological function and homeostasis with increasing survival. This definition and other similar reflect the difficulty in defining aging precisely. Of course, other aspects are outlined such as psychological, sociological, biological, and medical perspectives

b) from a biomedical perspective as successful aging, described in terms of longevity (or survival), active life (or health) and disability-free life expectancies, absence of chronic disease and risk factors, and physical functioning.

We mention as a turning point in the evolution of research about aging the paper "Human Aging: usual and successful" (Rowe and Kahn, 1987). They developed the *leading biomedical model* for successful aging based on the MacArthur Foundation's longitudinal studies. In their paper they defined successful aging as the ability to maintain a combination of 3 key behaviors and characteristics: low risk of disease and disease-related disability, high cognitive and physical functional capacity, and active engagement with life (Rowe and Kahn, 1987). Autonomy and social support are also deemed important for successful aging.

In the last years, a large body of research and theoretical literature confirms that physical, cognitive, and social functioning, broadly speaking, are key factors of successful aging and that multiple lifestyle choices, behaviors, and psychosocial factors influence them.

Understanding the ageing people from the perspective (paradigm) of "mind-body" unity

After a significant exploration, we chose as a starting point in our research paper the theory developed by Harvard University professor Ellen Langer „mindfulness and the psychology of possibility". Her recently appeared book, the Wiley Mindfulness Handbook, is an anthology that integrates research from Langer's western scientific theoretical base of mindfulness with eastern forms of meditation. Her book is a seminal work in what the author calls the psychology of possibility' a perspective on the unexplored powers of human mind.

In the last decencies, the perspective of mind-body' unity is becoming accepted in the field of socio-economic science. As Harvard professor Langer said „I began to realize that ideas about mind/body dualism were just that, ideas, and a different, nondualist view of the mind and the body could be more useful. If we put the mind and the body back together so that we are just one person again, then wherever we put the mind, we would also put the body. If the mind is in a truly healthy place, the body would be as well and so we could change our physical health by changing our minds".³¹

From this perspective of mind/body unity, is normal to have a different view regarding the ageing. As the same professor Langer (and her collaborators) said: „The physical and social

³¹ Paul Irving, *The Upside of Aging: How Long Life Is Changing the World of Health, Work, Innovation, Policy and Purpose*, Published by John Wiley and Sons Inc. HobokenNew Jersey, 2014p.5

environments of the elderly tend to encourage mindlessness. The mindless individual is caught in a cycle that is quite vicious, even deadly: when s/he is in various ways told that s/he is no longer competent (that his/her responses no longer influence desired outcomes), the individual mindlessly accepts the negative image, loses feelings of self-worth, and, consequently, make little or no attempt to disprove the label. Instead, s/he supports the notion of incompetence by becoming unduly helpless and ill, often terminally so".

As Langer shows: „we consulted leading geriatricians to find the definitive biological markers of age to measure our results. Astonishingly, we were told there were (and still are) none. Without knowing someone’s chronological age, science cannot pinpoint how old someone is".

Also, she shows that „mindful health is not about how we should eat right, exercise, or follow medical recommendations, nor is it about abandoning these things. It is not about New Age medicine nor traditional understandings of illness. It is about the need to free ourselves from constricting mindsets and the limits they place on our health and well-being, and to appreciate the importance of becoming the guardians of our own health. Learning how to change requires understanding how we go astray. The goal of this book is to convince you to open your mind and take back what is rightfully, sensibly, and importantly yours".

In order to have an adaptive, productive and creative brain / mind, to be mindfully, we need to keep ourselves mentally and physically active, to interact with others on a daily basis, and of course, to get proper nutrition and plenty of sleep. Above all else, keep learning. Never stop learning! Every day do something to use your brain in a new and novel way, and you can enjoy ageless mental agility".³²

There are also other multiple challenges faced by global aging societies, between which we include identifying measures to meet the demographic changes of intergenerational communities, and multi-cultural populations. Also, there are ethical, ethnic, legal issues, age discrimination, and new alliances that bring many important factors to the decision tables. Allocation of economic and financial resources to ensure safe and quality lives for all is a major concern world-wide. Yet, these factors that change the landscape can, also, bring new perspectives and different nonconventional solutions to future global societal problems.

The emergence of “silver economy” - silver economy 1.0

During the last decade the concept of 'silver economy' has emerged, as a response to ageing demographics. It is generally characterized by a focus on the opportunities arising from ageing, in terms of new and growing markets to meet the needs of the increasing number of older people. More innovation, knock-on benefits to the wider economy and potential for mitigating pressure on public spending from ageing are typically cited. Direct benefits to older people themselves, for example improved opportunities and support to remain active, or the potential for goods and services better adapted to them, also feature"⁸

Concretely, the concept of "Silver Economy" is defined as the economic opportunities arising from the public and consumer expenditure related to population ageing and the specific needs of the population over 50⁹. We see from this definition that normally the ageing people are seen as consumer, as people to take care of them. In countries in which the retirement systems are primarily based on intergenerational public pensions support, and as long as there is a normal ratio

³² R.G. Wetzel, *Limnology Lake and river ecosystems* 3rd Academic: Press, San Diego, 2001 Irving, ed. 2014, *Op.cit.* p 17

between the contributors (active people) and beneficiary (retired people), the system works. But in EU more and more countries become ageing counties and the ratio is deteriorating quickly, so that the situation is becoming unsustainable.

The concept of silver economy^{ll} (what we call silver economy 1.0) is a hype concept^{ll} an en vogue^{ll} one. In the EU and many EU member countries (France, Germany, UK, Sweden, Finland etc.) there are a lot of policies, white papers, programs, strategies, projects, even laws, etc., in an incipient phase, that treat fairly well the issues of ageing people by an all encompassing concept "silver economy".

Silver economy roughly means economy (old or new products, services, experiences, etc.) developed by enterprises (working people) for ageing (retired) people.

But this concept (silver economy 1.0) and its approach are not enough. Other concepts, such as relationship economy^{ll}, have been proposed. The relationship economy (Scott et al., 2008) is presented as the people and things we are connected with in our personal networks, who or that distribute or consume our capital, which in turn influences our individual production outputs.

So we need to complementary enlarge the silver economy 1.0 concept by another concept to include creative-innovative products, services, experiences, transformations, etc., developed by enterprises (especially social enterprises) and senior entrepreneurs which put into value the unexpressed creative energies and passions of ageing people, and so to further continue and develop the ageing people contributions to the needs of their families, communities and society. We call this enlarged concept as silver economy 2.0.

As professor Langer¹⁰ shows in her scientific papers and in different conferences, mindlessness is an inactive state of mind characterized by reliance on distinctions, categories drawn in the past: 1) the past over-determines the present; 2) trapped in a single perspectives; 3) insensitive to context; 4) rule and routine governed. In contrast, mindfulness is an active state of mind characterized by novel distinction-drawing that results in 1) being situated in the present; 2) sensitive to context and perspective; 3) rule and routine guided; 4) phenomenological experience of engagement. Noticing novelty reveals uncertainty, and this simple proces of noticing new things shifts the mind from a mindlessness perspective to a mindfulness one. (Langer, 2014)

Normally, as Langer further said, possibility opens up when we recognize the difference between uncontrollable and indeterminate. If we are not able to control something now, it doesn't mean we won't be able to do it in the future.

As all of us know, by paying a little attention and by being a little aware of what happen with us, we acknowledge that mindlessness is pervasive most of the time. Further on, professor Langer¹¹ says that we don't see what is right in front of us; we think we know but we don't. In fact, concluded professor Langer, 'we're frequently in error but rarely in doubt'.

We also know that, when we do something we love, something we are passion about, we become mindful, and we enjoy what we are doing.

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