

**"Norway and the World
at the Dawn of 2006"
Report of a Listening Post
held on 11th January**



Encouraging The Reflective Citizen

Theme 1. Focus on human resources, training in exploring and recognizing resources in ourselves and in other people.

What does it mean to have a deeper understanding of including each other as human beings and as citizens? How can we deal with individuals and groups of citizens who we regard as outsiders - who are conscious or subconsciously excluded because of race, sex, ethnic background or religion?

Norway has a high living standard due to the oil resources in the North Sea. The citizens experience the transformation from a society built on community, to a society where the individual has impact, in a way our parents or grandparents never could dream about. There is a tendency towards "worshipping" the successful individual, the successful family, the successful exterior (look). To master the combination of working full-time and keeping a perfect home, is an ideal amongst the generation now in their thirties. We experience a more brutal work life and burn-out is a reality amongst many young people. There is a lack of time in our society and people experience a great deal of stress which nourish the quick comments, on the cost of reflection and changing perspectives. The citizens are in many ways exposed to organizations without boundaries.

The generation of citizens who built the nation after world war two, believed in the plan economy. They had a deep feeling of loyalty to the leadership of the nation. People were hard working and committed themselves on behalf of the community. The involving of workers in participating processes in work life became a symbol of the nation. "One for all and all for one".

In the 1990'ies there is a shift in the political and economic climate towards more market economy and liberalization like in many other states in Europe.

The intellectual capital has different ideas about their work than former generations had. Their attitude towards their kind of work and desire to be involved in working processes, representing themselves, create some challenges for leadership and authority. What about loyalty?

We will remember president Kennedy's famous speech, where he expresses:
"Don't ask what America can do for you, but ask yourself; what can you do for America?"

People also experience that the "winners" are citizens who master the political games of playing; Clarify three messages you want your audience to connect to you and your party. Media advising is a growing business. There is a tendency towards a lack of time

end interest to listen to complexity. To represent various perspectives in a case, challenges the human being of 2006 because our tolerance towards on what is wrong and what is right.

On the other hand we may regard the lack of complexity as an expression to avoid the unpleasant, having to take in other citizens perspectives. We need once more to deal with the individualistic society where our attitudes to work ethics is changed. There is a growing lack of will to take on a responsibility on behalf of the community.

Hypothesis

There is a lack of democratic processes, a lack of the will to see, explore and live with the differences of sex, ethnic background, age, education, but beyond that, a lack to see your neighbour as a human being beyond sex and races. There is a lack of empathy towards other people due to the growing narcissism in the society.

Theme 2. Power and responsibility, powerlessness.

There are strong opinions towards leaders who do not manage power in a secure way. How can we influence the war machinery all over the world to set an end to this horrible raping the enemies' women or stop killing children and young men as part of a war strategy? How can we raise enough voices around the world to engage themselves in other peoples destinies and say: STOP?

How can we mobilize enough voices in this world to create stronger ties of friendship across our national borders and work for a reduction of violence in all meanings of the word. Human rights are under heavy pressure in many societies.

How can we develop team where we train in loving each other instead of killing each other? The citizens need to master in a better way living between freedom and dependency. We need to make a space for those citizens who are not able to raise their voices towards powerlessness.

Convener: Brit Opjordsmoen