



## Encouraging The Reflective Citizen

### Part 1. THE SHARING OF PREOCCUPATIONS AND EXPERIENCES

In this part of the Listening Post participants were invited to identify, contribute, and explore our experience in our various social roles. This part of the evening was largely concerned with what might be called, 'the stuff of people's everyday lives,' that relating to our social context.

### Part 2. IDENTIFICATION OF MAJOR THEMES

In Part 2 the aim was for us to collectively identify the major themes emerging from Part 1. The following represents some of those themes.

#### **Theme 1:**

##### ***Social Deterioration – Distortion of Reality***

LP participants begin with the exchange of views and experiences directing their attention to the current economic and political situation. They express their fears of the strong attack on individual freedom: There are clear threats to those who raise their voices against the government. This is evident in the resistance of some people to participate.

One of the major concerns is the social climate which marks an increase of violence. The popular support is through assistencialism: the government provides to the people with less economical resources with 'work plans' without asking for nothing in return, meaning that the current government keeps a lot of people without work. This creates an adhesion that later will be transformed into votes without thinking about the benefits of working beyond economic terms.

#### **Theme 2:**

##### ***Crisis of Representativeness – Collapse of Leadership – Doubt the Future***

Participants, especially those represented by the younger ones, reported that they are feeling lost in the course of the future because of the lack of political leaders with whom they identify, not with third sector leaders, whose leadership style prefers to stay apart from the areas of power.

Since there is no connection to the common good.

Welfarism vs work culture.

#### **Theme 3:**

##### ***Deterioration of State Policies – Collective Hopelessness***

Toward the end of the meeting LP participants begin to wonder:

Where it has been our common good of society?

What happens to the society that is asleep? Increased social violence, may be is a reaction to the onset of distortion of reality?

### Part 3. ANALYSIS AND HYPOTHESIS FORMATION

In this part of the Listening Post the members were working with the information resulting from Parts 1 & 2, with a view to collectively identifying the underlying dynamics both conscious and unconscious that may be predominant at the time; and, developing hypotheses as to why they might be occurring at that moment. Here the members were working more with what might be called their 'psycho' or 'internal' world. Their collective ideas and ways of thinking that both determine how they perceive the external realities and shape their actions towards them.

### **Hypothesis 1**

Because of the abdication of much of society to take responsibility, messianic leadership takes hold, and people does not intervene with fear generated by this messianic leadership.

People are afraid to express their opinions freely, some for fear of reprisals, others because they do not feel heard by the government/ political leaders, having to accept the distortion of unrealistic statistics and generating violence in the social climate.

This creates a crisis of values: a sharp drop in the historical and traditional ones vs. dissatisfaction with the new ones emerging, clearly marking a transition period where uncertainty reigns. This crisis of values is related to problems in the education system and promoting individual over the group benefit, among others.

### **Hypothesis 2**

Because of a serious crisis in the representativeness of our leaders and the deterioration in the quality of institutions, citizens feel lost when it comes to planning for the near future. They cannot find identification with a way of life that seemed to be holding so far. In other times, our parents and grandparents built a "to-come" as immigrants, now there is a deterioration, not only in the quality of life, but also in what is going to come, ranging from magical realism and utter hopelessness.

### **Hypothesis 3**

Because of the bid for power and the exercise of naked power the state is disappearing. Who has more power in the struggle between parents and children when children seek independence? If the president is a woman identified as the mother, in this case the absent mother, who abandons the children growth through their acts of assistance, treats the citizenship as babies who cannot work and go out to earn a living, creating isolation and dependence on it, instead of providing a social space as a place for the free development of their independence.

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