

**"Peru and the World
at the Dawn of 2009"
Report of a Listening Post
held in January**



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 their experience in their various social roles, be those in work, unemployed, or retired; as members of religious, political, neighbourhood or voluntary or leisure organisations, or as members of families and communities. This part was largely concerned with what might be called, 'the stuff of people's everyday lives', that relating to the 'socio' or 'external' world of participants.

Part 2. IDENTIFICATION OF MAJOR THEMES

In Part 2 the aim was to collectively identify the major themes emerging from Part 1. From several presented these have been drawn together under the following four interrelated themes:

1. The monster of Globalization is waking us differently

Globalization was assumed to be the main subject. It contained various ways to question identity, which we are and what we represent now for the world. As a poor or third world country, in the middle of the financial crisis, we undervalue our culture. We imitate Miami Malls and there is less and less space for tradition. People in the centre of the country don't have food but the mayor will create a Town Plaza that look like a special ship. We look to the outside with no self-esteem. We forget our identity. We are running after a monster that it is not even working. The financial model is crashing and we continue looking to it as an example. Since the Spanish conquered we repeat a model of superposition of cultures that leads more to imitation than social transformation.

2. The moral crisis

We are reinforcing the 'viveza.' The one that breaks the law is consider 'cool.' The culture is showing patterns of lack of punctuality; pass over other people in order to get what you want. Moral crisis is touching all social classes. There are non-examples to be following for further generations. There is a lack of clarity between what is right or wrong.

Media and communication are reinforcing the moral crisis. The promotion of personal drama in the news takes place of spaces that should be promoting culture. The Peruvian wants morbidity. We promote what we see. Media should be having a different role in society. There is no space for media education. Sensationalistic news is taken too much space in media without acknowledging media role in socialization program. When media

has the opportunity to impact in a constructive way society they hardly cover the necessary spaces. Certain communication medias are mentioned as an example of serious communication programs, but it is pointed out that it can only reach the elite leaving the population in a marginalized position regarding public information.

3. Prozac for the population

Population is facing a difficult moment. Peru is facing a deployment of complains with not many transformative actions. Compulsion to repetition is characteristic of the way the country is being led. Members admit to never have the experience of a 'good government.' Lack of accountability we are all writing the story that is now of accountability is characteristic of the '*hi-story*' we are all writing. Many references are made to the way Peru was exploited by Spaniards, and how entering into a globalised economy has opened different doors to foreigners that end up leaving the country in non favourable conditions. A pattern of submission to corrupt authorities seem to be associated as a consequence of the way conquered was exercised. Peruvian industry is vanishing in the context of the open economy.

The main subject was the case of the 'petroaudios' that mobilised members to remember previous experiences of corruption after Fujimori's government. Petroaudios are illegal phone records of private conversations taken between public servants, the former minister of economy and a foreign petroleum company. These records that are themselves obtained in a corrupted way are admitted as preliminary evidence for a national corruption case.

"One more time Peru saw resigning their leaders, the minister team due to corruption." "You steal an apple and you go to Lurigancho, you steal half the country and you are a Gentleman." Reference to a group of well known and 'respected' business men that are now at jail due to corruption cases that were discovered through recorded videos or phone conversations in Fujimori and Montesinos government.

4. To change the country is the job of the youth

Elder members were lecturing a group of young participants around how changing the country is the role of the youth. "For us, is too late, it is your responsibility to make a difference." The eldest representative emphasizing that it is not his generation role the one in charge of changing the Peruvian culture. He was claiming the responsibility of the youngest members and telling them how important is for them to learn and work as professionals with integrity to make it right for the mistakes of his generation that is now associated with corruption in the three last governments.

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.

Analysis and Hypothesis 1

The perception of a 'Globalization Monster' is both a way to avoid talking of the emergent need for 'Global Awareness' and the local problem of centralization.

Analysis: In an attempt to understand the meaning and feelings associated towards Globalization, it was acknowledge that there is a tendency to develop awareness on problematic aspects of social aspects instead of looking to its potential. Technology and experience can also offer new ways to nurture society. The statement “We are citizens of the world, that were born in Peru by accident.” Acknowledging of interconnectedness offered a new face to understand globalization. How we should all be aware of the impact we have in the globe? Subjects as Global Warming are mention as crucial. Why our self-esteem is so low when we have one of the biggest lungs of the world. The importance of the National Resources, our bio-systems, climate and ecosystem are reinforced in their role for the planet sustainability.

Why do we focus so much in our problems that we don't value our different resources, our culture, and our land? Why are we more ready to talk of detach and external problems instead of share the most moving experiences that we are encountering as individuals and in community? We are more likely to focus on negative aspects of our context that in the increasing number of Peruvians that are coming back to the country after processes of immigration. Peru offers hundreds of micro cultures to understand. The focus on weaknesses and lacks doesn't enable a clear perception of our social context and the universe of opportunities and potential to transform it. One member acknowledge that her focus on globalization could be a defence to not connect with the problems that centralization has brought to his life as a representative of the provinces. Emotions normally associated to this experience are depression, loneliness, dependence and competition.

The fear of the other, easily projected into a globalised world is actually covering the need to get in touch with our own identity. The call for identity have all been awakened by the emergence of ‘caudillos’ charismatic leaders following the role model of Hugo Chavez, Evo Morales and others in the regions. The question is how to understand what these movements are expressing of our society instead of entering in a reactive position of social classes shocks.

Hypothesis: Faced with an awareness of the impact that process of globalization has in the development of Peruvian society there is a claim to stop a process of imitation on foreigner processes in order to face the numerous emotions that are held due to the social, political and economical centralization in the country. The acceptance of interconnectedness and call for sustainable development invites to a deeper contact on the local country and therefore frees the exploration of the inner world. Who is the foreign Peruvian? What does it mean to be Peruvian? What is the ‘caudillo’ within myself? Strong emotional expressions take place when members refer to political uncertainty and the need to get more in touch with the local society and then their inner worlds. The challenge is to liberate themselves of the ‘should’ and ‘musts’ that are incorporate to external or foreign models. A sensation of uncertainty is linked to the exploration of the local culture. The tendency to split groups and individuals in ‘social acceptable’ or ‘social unacceptable’ get in between to contain and understand the need to listen to their own inner experiences.

Analysis and Hypothesis 2

Transformation is a task for the youngest generations: Delegating transformation as a way to not deal with ones accountability in society.

There is a phenomenon of the individual responsibilities and choices being taken away from the citizens and being delegated to a faceless external power, which in turns

provokes the feeling of alienation. What used to be the accepted notions of civic-polite-correct-righteous was taken away from the personal consciousness/ determination; it was confiscated from the individual and now belongs to a European power, the European Parliament. This is, according to a participant, a kind of “moral outsourcing” and a form of “identity alienation”. This happens, in part, because people need not being responsible and feel relieved when they are irresponsible; responsibility is projected to the formal powers and the bureaucratic regulations.

Analysis: The analysis around this hypothesis was lead by the youngest members. Youngest members struggled to find their voice and challenge the way in which accountability was being deflected into them by members of an elder generation. Eldest members were representing the lack of hope in society and desire of preservation of the systems they are part of while paradoxically they will be active actors during phase 1 and 2 on the need for transforming the main social concerns that were identified.

The conflict emerged when one member express that transformation is a responsibility of the youth's. He described his generation as ‘fritos,’ an expression used to describe a position with no hope or possibilities. Affects of abandonment and despair are expressed after a clarification of what is behind the expression of different statements making financial comparison of investments in the capital versus the provinces. Social movement is connected with the increasing enrolment of students coming from the provinces in the capital universities.

The main reflection is around what is the nature of a resource? If accountability is delegated to the youth, where is the space for the experience coming from eldest generations? How can individuals identify themselves as part of a generation that they considered have failed and stilled confront the system towards the need for change? How to understand the lack as an opportunity? How to understand a problem as a gift to transform a social structure? Natural resources as bio-system as well as the youth and the media are resources for transformation; the crucial question is how we can integrate all this resources in the construction of a social identity instead of delegating on their conceptions the possibility for change.

Hypothesis: Our depressive position is a way to reinforce the status quo and not be confronted with ones accountability and the power of interconnectedness. The desire to receive an external treatment as the metaphor of ‘Prozac for the population’ needs to be challenge for the potential work in understanding the healing resources from within.

Members of society are struggling to define their identity as a country that has politically, economically and physical replicate the conquest and discriminate the local communities for more than 500 years. There is the need to rediscover the Peruvian identity paying attention to its inner dynamics in order to construct social systems that can offer better opportunities to the country as a whole and promote transformation instead of revolution.

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