"Poland and the World at the Dawn of 2011"
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 identify the major themes emerging from Part 1. We have identified the following themes:

- Conformity and lack of reflection; matters don't relate to me; shame of being visible even in dangerous situation

- people remaining silent even if they do not agree with particular matters

- people waiting for someone else to take care of everything

- hospital 'does not want' a patient; procedural disorder; rules not clear; patient bears emotional costs

- lack of trust to various institutions that are supposed to support

- blur of responsibility 'from the top' — politics; having distinct opinions does not pay off

- the only institution trusted are fire brigades

- police seem to have a positive image — nice but not effective

- solutions being made in isolation from the reality; changes that actually does not change anything people have to 'break through'tons of information to get to the point; lots of extreme attitudes towards one event

- changes not systemic but fragmentary

- demotivating relationship between salary and effectiveness

- as years go by, people are more and more disappointed with the world; trust to others decreases, distance increases

- people not looking for new people to meet — appreciating and noticing the ones they already know

- a positive side of nepotism (versus bureaucracy) — I want to hire someone I trust

- I trust people similar to me

- decrease in importance of more distant family members — relatives being replaced by friends

- although there are regions where families regularly celebrate together

- young people leave their families and start living independently early

- lack of personal treatment by institution members/administrative officers at the university; administrative officers taking advantage of their power — although there are helpful persons as well

- the employees of institutions do not face consequences of their incompetence

- lack of work ethos in public institutions

- university regulations don't apply to everyone

- feeling of being manipulated by information in mass media — line between facts and comments not very clear; comments presented in for example TV news often biased

- people have to 'break through' tons of information to get to the point; lots of extreme attitudes towards one event

- it can be seen as what we have to pay for the democracy; excess of information plus lack of certainty have an effect of insensibility

- cruel indifference — a catastrophe can be seen as more of an interesting fact

- people do not actually feel sorrow concerning tragedies if they don't relate to the ones they are close to

- people are not able to represent big numbers (for example number of victims of a tragedy)

- reality is grey and unclear, it is not possible to reach the truth, we miss 'the only truth', we are not comfortable with ambiguous reality

- baby death rate — false beliefs on other nations

- people feel totally helpless when facing huge systems, that are not easy to change

- people are open and nice in public means of transport

- elderly ladies begin chats with young men

- deserved trust vs. default lack of trust

- lack of trust to media and information

- insensibility, powerlessness (manipulation of information, excess); lack of reflection

- alienation in institutions (me alone versus the world)

- enclaves of happiness (my group)

- diffusion of responsibility (let someone else take care of it)

- need for systemic solutions/attitude

Part 3. ANALYSIS AND HYPOTHESIS FORMATION

In this part of the Listening Post members were working with the information resulting from Parts One and Two, 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.

Enclaves. Because the world is full of information (excess), too complicated, we close ourselves in small worlds — enclaves. Being in an enclave is connected to being surrounded by similar people, and not allowing diversity.

Errors and bad solutions concerning institutions are too significant. It leads to feeling of helplessness and lack of influence.

In face of common not taking responsibility (no one feels fully responsible for cases), there is legitimization of not taking actions.

Egoism and necessity to resign from comfort makes me not want to fight for a change.

Because of disintegration and the fact that I'm not sure if the whole community share my values *I do not undertake struggle with the system*.

There is no assembly that would be ready to undertake important systemic issues. Lonely fight without support.

Difficulty building network of trust and responsibility. Difficulty with passing responsibility to others

Society does not reward for taking responsibility, people are not raised to do so.

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