AN ORGANISATION FOR PROMOTING UNDERSTANDING OF SOCIETY (OPUS)

Portugal and the World at the Dawn of 2015
Report of a New Year's Listening Post

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.
Themes were not easy to summarize, however they can be grouped as the following:

a) Social instability and uncertainty;
b) Strong performance pressure;
c) Lack of labour opportunities;
d) Lack of an identity self sense. People feel lost and don't understand "the point" anymore";
e) Insecurity facing the future, and the possibility of developing a family;
f) Lack of trust in banks, hospitals and social institutions;
g) Social concerns (e.g. relating the same gender marriages and its consequences towards homosexual adoption);
h) Need for a chance to show what people are worth off, a need for an opportunity to be and have an existence.

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. The resulting analysis has been distilled into the following two interrelated hypotheses:

Analysis and hypothesis 1

In the present, people feel like the economic situation is taking too long, people feel like taking in it for too long, and there's no light in the end of the tunnel. There's too many graduated people with no jobs, no support, and with not a hope of someday having a stable "normal" life. The normal nowadays is becoming thirty with no sense of progression, depending on their parents, living with them, and not having the choice of construction a family of their own. People feel like they have no choice, although at the same time, feeling that remaining like this can no longer be an option. What contributes in a real sense to great anxieties, diffuse identity, depression and lack of self identity, because people can no longer define their identity by their career and their professional success. The pressure is, if anything else, a basic and survival one nowadays, once young generations can't be independent anymore. At the same time, older generations are feeling the pressure of having to ensure the basic needs of younger generations that are not being able to make it on their own.

People feel like they have been betrayed with the false ideology that if they were good enough they would be ok. And in this sense, people feel lost, not recognising themselves in the role they're playing in the society.

This feeling of "betrayal" arises parallel with an increasing distrust on the Portuguese institutions, banks are going into bankruptcy, hospitals and schools are not being able to manage their needs, public institutions are being sold, and there's a sense of secrecy and hypocrisy surrounding the society.

Hypothesis 1

Due to the Social instability and uncertainty; Lack of labour opportunities; there is a lack of trust in the future. So, young generations are feeling lost, disillusioned with themselves of not being able to fulfil their personal goals and projects, by a society that cuts all their possible chances. People end up feeling lost and insecure. At the same time there's a great pressure to be independent and constitute they're own personal family projects, to lighten up older generations. This creates a cycle of pressures between generations within the society. Both of them struggling with their new roles in this new society.

Analysis and hypothesis 2

While there is a sense of lack of identity self, and a lack of faith in this society, people seem to get stuck in social questions in order to believe and identify with something. In a way we can observe that while the economic crises seems frozen, there is a strong pressure to move forward, towards innovation and a great justice. And in this sense there is a sensation of a hard pace and speed in social life and a strong pressure to go along with the speed of social changes that almost seems like social "acting-outs", actions that need to be seen, and done, instead of being thought. We could see that when it came to gay marriage, and its approval. People were immediately fighting fiercely for the gay right to adopt or not adopt, demanding a fast response. People were not interesting in the advantages or disadvantages, neither in possible supreme well-being of the children to be adopt, their only concerns were towards to decisions being made. People act and react without insight and inner vision.

Hypothesis 2

Due to a lack of trust in the future and in this society, people are feeling the urge to feel that something keeps moving forward, so they can too. In this sense, as a defence we can see a lot of "social acting-out's" as a projection of our inner anxiety, insecurity and lack of identity. Trying to bridge our lack of selves with a social one that needs to keep developing and growing, so we won't feel as lost.

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