

## AN ORGANISATION FOR PROMOTING UNDERSTANDING OF SOCIETY (OPUS)

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



Encouraging The Reflective Citizen

The listening post was organized in the Technical Engineering Association's offices. The event was organized by Juan Miguel Ruiz and Oscar Fresán organizational consultants. 15 people were invited to event, among others a journalist and president of the local rugby federation, an educator of unemployed people, a school janitor, an architect, a regional government worker, a communication freelancer, a retired couple, a member of the PSOE party, the Technical Engineering Association's director, an entrepreneur in electronics, a renewable energy company worker, a business man and a workers union leader.

#### **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.

After a round of presentations, each participant told a significant event that happened to them in 2014 besides commenting they view on the happenings of the year.

#### **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 interrelated themes:

The group was divided in three. The groups brought up the following topics:

##### **Group 1:**

1. There are no leaders because of lack of recognition
2. Lack of responsibilities, lack of self criticism, collective or individual

3. No assumption of one's own mistakes
4. There is no global thinking for local action
5. There is no role assumption

#### **Group 2:**

1. Tiredness
2. personal change
3. corruption
4. nationalism
5. we are more sceptical
6. depression, inaction
7. moral integrity
8. leadership
9. participation
10. work overloading
11. individual responsibility
12. activation in social media

#### **Group 3:**

1. Lack of self criticism
2. Nationalism
3. Pesimism
4. Individual – Collective dichotomies
5. Higher social concerns
6. Machismo remains present
7. Money concentration

### **Part 3. ANALYSIS AND HYPOTHESIS FORMATION**

The three groups came again together and tried to formulate some hypothesis on the topics that have come up.

#### **Hypothesis 1. Identities**

Identities are in crisis: nationalism, Europe, people's own identities, working identities, classes differences increased. The feelings of belonging and belonging to what are changing. There is a crisis of glottalization, states are turning to themselves. There is a crisis of leadership and a quest for new leaders. There is a change of interest from a paternalist and patriarchal leadership to a possibilistic leadership. There is a change of focus from the peoples' outer to the inner world but at the same time the lack of identity results on a search outside ourselves.

## **Hypothesis 2. Emotional state**

We faced difficulties to find out a hypothesis that would take into consideration all the emotions described. On one hand, some participants were pessimist because they saw people increasingly depressed or suffocated by forces and wills out of reach. On the other hand, some participants see people happier despite the ongoing difficulties, either because of new opportunities opened up or because people were becoming satisfied with smaller things than before. Some people in this second group point out that they find successful people hiding their situation. It was said also that "People is breaking down the problems in smaller pieces", meaning that, faced people with big issues like the economic crisis, high unemployment, or cuts in social services, people would be reacting by solving one little issue at a time in their personal lives or in society.

## **Hypothesis 3. Crisis of formal education**

The group agreed that the role of formal education in our society was in crisis. Young students see no sense to study anymore after years of high rate unemployment, people with higher studies are unemployed or living abroad. The value of formal education, its methods and contents are at stake. The group did not agree however on what is the concrete problem in the educational system or in its place in our societies.

**Conveners: Ignacio Garcia and Manuel Seijo**