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**Using an organisational perspective to intervene when disaster strikes: Learning from experience following the terror attacks in Norway on 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 2011.**

The tragic event of the terror attacks in Norway in July 2011, which specifically targeted the Labour Party, was clearly politically motivated. However, the focus since then has been on the attack as an assault on the nation of Norway, which has obscured its impact on the Labour Party as an organisation. They had lost a lot of young members, the staff at their head quarters had lost close friends, and the whole value system underpinning their political convictions had been attacked. And yet this organisation had to continue to function despite being so affected. How to provide space for pain and sorrow and still support individuals in their roles so that they could provide the work that had to be done? The head of the organisation, the party secretary, was asked for advice by the government that would affect the whole nation. The attitude of the leadership in this crisis situation opened possibilities for reflecting together on decisions that had to be made. The working relationship between the party secretary and myself, in my role as consultant, became very important as it involved interventions on many different levels within the organisation and the nation.

In the time that has passed we still meet to reflect: Where were the most important decisions made that made a difference for further development? How to understand the dynamic in Norwegian society in the following years?

In this paper I will reflect upon how the organisational perspective was an important tool to support the leaders and all those working in the organisation – and even to support the nation in working with the impact of the terror attacks. Part of this work involved a series of follow-up gatherings for those bereaved as a result of the deaths of the 69 people who were shot on Utøya.

In all of these situations, and on all the different levels of intervention involved, it proved particularly helpful to keep in mind an understanding of primary task, role and structure.