

SPEAKING OUT

Using an Organisational Perspective to Intervene When Disaster Strikes: Learning From Experience Following the Terror Attacks in Norway on 22 July, 2011*

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Abstract

The tragic events of the terror attacks in Norway in July 2011 were politically motivated and aimed at the Labour Party. While the public focus has mainly been on the terror attacks themselves and how these affected and were handled by Norway as a nation, the way the Labour Party as an organisation was affected and how it coped with and managed this crisis situation has remained unrecognised. The organisation still had to function both during and after these tragic events. At the same time, the crisis situation needed to be handled with appropriate sensitivity and efficiency. This paper describes the author's experience of working in a consulting role with the senior management of the Labour Party.

Key words: organisation in crisis, role, collaborative work, organisational perspective, grief and loss.

BACKGROUND—THE TERROR ATTACKS

On 22 July, 2011 there were two terror attacks in Norway. A bomb exploded in the centre of Oslo and thereafter there was shooting for about seventy minutes directed against a youth camp run by the young division of the Norwegian Labour party. Altogether seventy-seven persons were killed, eight at the government buildings in Oslo and sixty-six persons on Utøya. In addition sixty-six of the youngsters were severely hurt.

In this paper I will share experiences from working with the headquarters of the Norwegian Labour Party and how we prepared for visiting Utøya again.

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I will also share reflections upon the dynamics of this collaborative work on different levels and finally share some hypotheses about the dynamics of the Norwegian Society in the following years.

In this context the organisational perspective is based on both organisational psychology and knowledge about reactions on crisis for individuals and organisations.

When people are killed and there is serious damage, there will always be a great challenge to different rescue systems in society. International reports point to some vulnerable areas, such as: alarm routines, management, leadership, coordination, and the transmission of information. In Norway a commission report was delivered on 13 August, 2012, a year after the attacks, which revealed several weaknesses along the same lines:

- The attack on the government buildings could have been avoided. There was a delay in the official system that prevented the building of barriers.
- The official systems broke down and were not able to protect those at danger on Utøya. The police could have been on the island much earlier and could have stopped the killer.
- It might have been possible to take more secure actions to prevent new attacks after the bomb exploded in Oslo.
- Health and rescue personnel took care of those involved in a satisfactory way.
- The communication from the government to the people was good. The Departments were able to continue their work in spite of the fact that most of the offices were damaged and they had to move around in the city to other sites.
- A better method of investigation might have contributed to revealing the identity of the terrorist before he attacked his targets. But there is no evidence to say that the secret services could have prevented the terror attacks.

The report of the commission did not mention a single word about how the organisation of the Norwegian Labour Party managed the situation and how the leaders contributed in the crisis situation. Since the political values of this organisation and the democratic values of the nation were the targets of the killer, the organisation was in a special situation. In addition Utøya was the symbol for recruiting to the nation's social democratic political values. That was the argument used by the killer.

The commission interviewed such political leaders as: the Prime Minister, the Minister of Health, and the Minister of Justice, but they did not interview the management at the headquarters of the party organisation. Apparently the commission was not aware of the difference between political leader roles and the management roles of an organisation. The headquarters of the party had direct contact to every county in Norway through the party offices with employees. An organisation built on political values is also run as an ordinary organisation. The Prime Minister was the leader of the whole nation but the top manager at the headquarters was running the organisation of the Labour Party.

WORKING WITH THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE LABOUR PARTY

I was asked to consult to the Labour Party and when I came to the headquarters on Wednesday 27th, five days after the terror attack, they expected a clinical psychologist to take care of all those employees who were affected by the traumatic event. Many had lost close friends; many had been on Utøya and had just left when the shooting started. They got phone calls from the island. Many had been working in the office at headquarters when the bomb exploded at the government buildings, about 100 meters across the square from the headquarters' building itself, which is the national heart of the Labour movement. Windows were blown out and offices were damaged.

The top manager, the General Secretary, Raymond Johansen, said in our very first meeting:

As a leader it is my responsibility to be aware of my incompetence, and is my responsibility to admit when I need complementary professional competence. I will be asked for advice in difficult decisions by the government and the Prime Minister. Certainly not everything will be right, but I need to discuss and get professional, documented advice from you. Maybe I am putting a heavy burden on your shoulders, but are you willing to take on this role?

I accepted and was quite convinced that it would be a lot of challenges ahead of us, but this first meeting promised confidence for valuable cooperation (Bugge, 2013).

This meeting and contract between the consultant and the leader illustrates an agreement to focus the work on offering support at the level of the system rather than the individual.

I very soon realised that I had to keep a focus on the organisation of Labour Party as the client. That means to keep a focus on the

organisational perspective and not on the clinical aspect of persons suffering. This was right from the beginning a challenge: to keep a double task in mind. I was going to meet groups of employees for psychological debriefing. The focus was on supporting them in their roles as employees and not as patients.

We, of course, worked on their traumatic experiences and their relationship to those who were killed, but still the focus would be to support them to get back in role and function.

However, possibilities were also provided for individuals to get clinical support. The party deputy provided resources, both a room, time, financial resources, and personnel, by hiring an assistant for me. She could take care of all kinds of individual and group appointments. She also made phone calls to every party office throughout the country and made arrangements, so that assistance by psychologists was available. For these tasks, we used a professional network that was well known within the field of crisis psychology. She was also well known as a party member and had confidence within the organisation. We worked very closely together and established routines of communication and reporting, because I needed to know what was going on within the organisation since this clinical part of the work was one of my responsibilities. Our microsystem was a temporary organisation that was created because of the extraordinary situation.

The concrete reality that the management provided necessary resources also gave the signal that the organisation accepted reactions of grief and loss. At the same time it was obvious that it was necessary to get back to work as usual—in spite of the fact that nothing *was* as usual.

Example

The general deputy with responsibility for running the office and taking care of all administrative matters said: “What am I going to do? Many of our employees are deeply affected. When one bursts into tears all the others run to comfort them, with the result that none of them are delivering any kind of work that has to be done. Do you think I should bring those who are able to work together to the floor next to my office, and house the others on another floor?”

He told me later that he was quite shocked when I answered: “Tell your employees that it is OK to let the others cry. They do not have to comfort every time it happens. Let everyone take their own steps. The most important signal from you as leaders is that the reactions are

accepted, and that everyone is welcome to the headquarters with the resources they are able to offer". But this also meant that the management had to provide resources and give a predictable structure. We reflected together to find a solution and ended up offering a time-out room in the main board meeting room, provided with a hostess, a social worker who usually was a deputy at the Parliament.

WORKING WITH THE PARTY ORGANISATION THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY

So far I have given a glimpse into the inside situation at the headquarters itself, which at that time had thirty-eight employees and six extra persons to prepare for the election. But there were many more employees in the organisation of Labour Party. Throughout Norway there are nineteen county offices with twenty-four county secretaries, and there were sixty-three deputies from the party at the Parliament, and fifty-two persons working in the administration at Parliament. The management at headquarters felt a serious responsibility for all these people. A gathering was arranged for all the county secretaries when they were in Oslo to attend the memorial ceremony arranged by the Labour Party itself on 29 July, 2011, one week after the attacks. They needed support to decide how to meet all the youngsters who were gathering at the offices throughout the country. At that time all the material for the forthcoming election was ready. We thought it might be a good idea to give the youngsters some meaningful work by packing all this material. In a small way, this also reflected the hypothesis that support to get into function and role might also be a coping strategy, together with a structure that gave some predictability. Traumas and overwhelming crises that affect peoples' function and role within an organisation will also have to be worked with in role within the frames of the organisation. This differs very much from defining those suffering as patients.

This was also the focus when the administration for representatives of the Labour Party in Parliament asked for support for the sixty-eight delegates, including the President of Parliament. The challenge they wanted to work with was: how to balance between the role of being a political delegate representing the people of Norway and how to protect privacy when they went home, because everyone at home wanted to get in contact with them to get information. In this group there was also a need for knowledge about crisis and stress reactions and how to meet people in crisis when everyone individually and the whole nation were deeply affected.

BACK TO WORK—PREPARING FOR UPCOMING CHALLENGES

I mentioned earlier that there was going to be an election in Norway in September 2011. All the material for the election had already been prepared with presentations and pictures that included many of those who had been killed on Utøya. The Norwegian law for elections prohibited changes in the material after a certain deadline, so these presentations and pictures could not be taken out of the material. After some reflection the decision was made to give every bereaved family a phone call to inform them that the pictures of their killed son, daughter, brother, sister, or grandchild would appear in the campaign material.

It was also necessary to prepare those who were going to distribute election material by home visits and on the streets. What to say when voters started to ask about Utøya, whether they had been there. Some material was developed as a support in how to answer and to prevent becoming involved in personal questions, but rather to keep a focus on their role as distributors of election material. It was important to strengthen their political role and minimise their role as victims from Utøya.

At the same time, the editor of the Labour Member journal started to prepare for the September edition. But how to design the lay-out and the content of the journal? It was useful to contribute with reflections based on both crisis and organisation psychology. The journal could give a message to party members on how to deal with the terror actions and the pain and grief they caused. Looking back on this process of creating the September volume, the party organisation took on a consultant role for its members and gave an example of how to deal with the terror actions, the pain, and the grief, but also that there would be some glimpse into the future. The journal turned out to be a part of the coping strategy on an organisational level.

The journal was structured into three parts: first part focused on the tragic events, a nation and a party organisation in deep shock and grief. In this part Jens Stoltenberg wrote in his role as the political party leader. In the middle of the journal there was an interview with the General Secretary. He also focused on the tragedy and the attack on important democratic values, but then he very carefully started to formulate thoughts about the future. The front page of the journal showed a picture of the organisation in deep sorrow, at the memorial on 29 July, only a week after the terror attacks. Every hand was holding up a red rose, in this situation a sign of deep grief. The last front page from April showed a happy political organisation rising red

voting cards. The use of symbols that could be recognised gave a deeply felt meaning.

So far I have described some of the work and decisions that had to be made within the organisation of the Labour Party. The challenge was all the time for the leaders to keep a focus on the crisis situation, but also to keep routine work going that had to be done.

The leaders/managers also realised the need for support in areas other than just inside the organisation.

CARING FOR THE BEREAVED

During the first week after the attacks all those killed were identified. Several names were released in the afternoons. The General Secretary felt the responsibility to contact every bereaved family, since their youngsters were killed on a summer camp arranged by the young branch of the Labour Party. He shared this task with the leader of the Labour Party deputies in Parliament and the political deputy leader. They were all personally affected, since they knew many of those who were killed and their families. In the preparation for the phone calls they needed support in their role as leaders. They were not making the phone call as private persons. Further it was necessary to talk through what kind of reactions could be expected, both grief and reactions of loss and anger.

Experience from other major disaster situations in the western world has shown that frustration and splitting might develop among those bereaved. One hypothesis might be that when there is frustration about information and lack of communication then it will develop into splitting. When chaos and emotions are involved there is a strong need for predictable structures. When this was presented to the management, steps were taken right away to establish a board for those bereaved and affected. Afterwards, the further development of this support was handed over to the Norwegian Red Cross.

COLLABORATIVE WORK ON DIFFERENT LEVELS—THE POLICE IN PARTICULAR

Many departments and organisations were involved in the crisis situation of the nation. On the national level a forum was created for the coordination of all the decisions and tasks that had to be made on different levels. The deputy at headquarters was a member of this group, representing the organisation that was the target, and also the organisation that had a direct link to the government. He brought back some of the questions for which a solution had to be found, and used our common reflections to give advice for the benefit of the whole nation.

The following year to come we had four collective weekend gatherings for bereaved family members. These gatherings provided the possibility to meet others who had lost their loved ones under the same circumstances. (Dyregrov et al., 2014)

Example

At one point it seemed that the police were about to make the decision that all the equipment that had been left on the island should be destroyed, because it had already been damaged by heavy rain and mud. I could say how important it could be for bereaved family members to get back the equipment and clothes from those who were killed. It would be important that those bereaved and the survivors got the chance to decide for themselves what should be taken care of. After this, the decision was made that everything that could be identified should be taken care of.

The police asked for advice on how to handle the situation and then did a tremendously important job. They took care of everything in several containers, hired a factory hall, bought hundreds of laundry frames and asked for assistance from the civil guard. Every single piece that could be identified was taken care of. Then it was packed into bags and suitcases with a list of the content and the name of the owner. Pieces that could not be identified were kept together with information about where they had been found. Bags and suitcases containing the belongings of those who had been killed were kept separate.

I met police officers who said: "It has been so important to take part in this arrangement. It feels like a reparation process at least to contribute in this way, when I was so helpless on the 22 July."

I also think it was important for the police officers to take part in preparations for going back to Utøya. I was invited to join the technical director and the police to examine Utøya after the police had concluded their investigation. The police had done the cleaning job themselves, and I talked with one police officer in one of the rooms where many youngsters were shot. She also said: "It is so meaningful to take part in this process. What happened can never be undone, but at least it gives me a chance to contribute." My hypothesis is that it restores confidence in the role when you have a chance to make meaningful contributions to repair earlier failure of the system you are representing.

FOCUSING ON THE BEREAVED AND SURVIVORS: THE RETURN TO UTØYA

The Minister of Justice gave responsibility to Directorate of civil defence to establish a project group to prepare for the return to Utøya.

In my role as consultant to the Labour Party as an organisation I was invited to join their representative in this project group. In this role it was possible to give some important inputs. There was, for instance, a suggestion that several smaller tents should be set up on the island, creating a little village where people could meet, wait, and gather. But instead we advised them very strongly to provide a big enough tent for all 1000 expected visitors. It was important to provide a predictable structure that would keep those affected together instead of splitting them into small groups.

A place where everyone could stay also made it possible to use symbols, such as sixty-nine roses, one for each person who had been killed.

The large tent was used for formal gatherings and as a waiting room for those waiting for the police investigators who led them to the place where their dear ones had been shot. Food, water, tea, coffee, roses, and candles were also provided, in case someone wanted to bring one of these with them when visiting the places of their death. We expected that many would like to light candles and we provided plates of sand to stick the candles into.

Many families used this possibility and had their private mourning ceremony at the place where their beloved was shot. The holes from the bullets were visible. Being confronted with reality provides a possibility for coping and mourning. We also used this knowledge to prepare those returning to Utøya mentally, by taking pictures of the island to show what it looked like at the time of the planned visit.

We went out with a photographer and took a lot of pictures outdoors and indoors and displayed them on the quay and in the foyer of the nearby hotel. The survivors in particular were drawn to these photographs. They pointed to the pictures and recalled where they had hidden and where they fled. For them it was a mental preparation, a kind of taking in what it looked like now. The sight of the pictures provided a kind of mental carpet that covered the traumatic pictures they had on their mind from that horrible afternoon when their lives were in danger.

When preparing for returning to Utøya the leader of the project group brought a message that it had been decided that the police should not dress in their working uniforms. The professional argument given was that the sight of a police uniform would re-traumatise

the youngsters who had survived, since the killer had worn a fake police uniform. With a background in crisis psychology I could argue instead that this would be the safest place for the youngsters to see police at work in their uniforms, instead of meeting them unexpectedly on the street. The decision was changed. It was also important that the police were not anonymised, that they could take up their role in uniform, as a symbol of one of the pillars of our democratic society.

NATIONAL MEMORIAL CEREMONY

On the national level the government started to prepare for a memorial ceremony. Two quite different expressions of professional advice were provided. One was that it would best to wait till the nation was back to its usual everyday routines after the summer holidays and the upcoming election. Let the youngsters get back to school and university. Our counter-argument was that it would be important to have the national memorial ceremony before the election, while the wounds were still open, instead of breaking up everyday life later during the fall in September. The memorial ceremony was held on 21 August, 2011 three weeks before the election on 12 September.

The Prime Minister, Jens Stoltenberg, asked the other parties to agree to postpone election campaigning till after the national memorial ceremony, but the other parties did not agree to that, and started to campaign on the 13 August, 2011, but Labour Party started after the memorial ceremony on 21 August. Jens Stoltenberg acted in the role of Prime Minister but never as political leader of the Labour Party during this time of waiting. These decisions underline how important it was for both the management at the Labour headquarters and the political leadership not to try to take any political advantage from the terror actions on 22 July, 2011

REFLECTIONS

In this paper I share with you some glimpses from a severe and dramatic period in the life of the nation of Norway, when important democratic values were attacked, and the assault justified by right-wing populist arguments and convictions. Anders Behring Breivik wanted explicitly to destroy the basis of recruiting young leaders to the Labour Party. That was his reason for using weapons against the young people attending the summer camp. I am sharing with you the experience of working with the Labour Party as an organisation that gave me insight into the values and culture of this organisation. The

Labour Party was the client organisation and the effects of the cooperation with the managers/leaders had national consequences.

To stay in the consultant role during those weeks, it was important that I received good feedback and maintained structured communication with my organisation, the Center for Crisis psychology through its director Atle Dyregrov. Because of the emotionally challenging nature of the work it was also important in my role to have a good supporting structure that acted as containment for me in that role. Applying Wilfred Bion's concepts of pairing (Bion, 1961; French & Vince, 1999; French & Simpson, 2015), I think in this context it turned out to create constructive working relations at two levels: first in the alliance between myself as the consultant and the General Secretary and his deputy as leaders in the client organisation; and second between myself and the director of my own consulting organisation. I am filled with gratitude and am very humbled by the experience of working together in these constellations.

Both working relationships were based on hope and creativity and became a tool to cope with destructivity and lack of hope.

It is a great challenge to provide support in such a way that individuals, communities, and nations do not lose their dignity. Hence it is important to encourage individuals and communities to use their own authority to stay in role as leaders. The most significant challenge is to establish trust within and between organisations on different levels, including on individual, group, organisational, and national levels. It is also vital when coming from an outsider's perspective to keep in mind the definition of the task that has to be accomplished and the functions and roles that have to relate to each other. If this is forgotten, it will encourage fragmented work and even splitting in organisations (Bugge, 2002).

I think that experiences from working on group relations conferences combined with crisis psychology helped me to understand the importance of certain key concepts, such as primary task, function, boundaries, and roles. For example, the leaders needed support in staying in two different roles, being leaders of an organisation in crisis that was also acting as a temporarily crisis organisation and, at the same time, having to keep in focus the ordinary work and strategic thinking of the organisation—a double task for real! When this double task focus gets lost, there is a risk that the organisation turns into a crisis organisation instead of continuing with its primary task. To deal with the resulting tensions and pressures, it was important to create structures and give predictability so that the organisation and its employees were able to use their remaining functional abilities and their capacity for work. Organisation and structure become tools for

coping with the crisis situation. As a result, the employees were strengthened in their role and self-confidence in the short term, which may also have contributed to the longer term recovery.

Containing functions

When looking back, the picture is of a severely chaotic situation where many different organisations at many levels had to find a way to cooperate in order to minimise the chaos. The organisation of the Labour Party through its leaders very early on took a role of coordination and initiative that had consequences for the whole nation. The General Secretary, Raymond Johansen, had an important role in giving advice to ministers and to the Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg as the leader of the whole nation. It was important that the nation could identify with him as a leader in difficult times. He took that authority and he was able to inspire trust that he would stay in that role. Stoltenberg kept the nation together by saying: "The principles of solidarity and decency must lead our way forwards."

Later on in April 2012 when the trial started and went on for ten weeks the role of the court also had a containing function. A lot of information was given in advance to prepare the Norwegian people for the trial, with judges and lawyers explaining their roles and the principles of the trial process. It was run according to the usual procedures for a Norwegian trial: *every man has the right to be defended and to be treated with respect.*

After the trial was ended and the nation waited for the sentence, the report of the Gjørv commission was published, containing severe criticism of many of the rescue systems. The report came at a time when there were no longer any containing systems left. So the way was left open for the government and the Prime Minister to become the focus of blame. All of a sudden Stoltenberg was no longer the leader of the nation, but a political leader who had failed to make the right decisions. It might seem that he was used as a scapegoat for everything that did not function effectively. I think that this was partly the result of the timing of the report when none of the containing functions that had been in place remained. Now it was back to reality and ordinary political roles. This also indicates that the nation was beginning to return to normal, but it also says something about confidence in roles and systems. Criticism of systems and leaders is part of a democracy.

Some research on contemporary social political science has concluded that the Norwegian people have a very strong confidence in their societal systems (Skirbekk & Skirbekk, 2012). This might explain

why little anger was expressed during the months after the terror actions. The Prime Minister acted as representative for the whole nation, the government took remedial actions and decisions; the court trial was respected and had a containing function. But when the ordeal was over and the investigation commission gave its report there were no more systems left that could contain the nation's frustrations.

The General Secretary, Raymond Johansen and I have had several meetings. We reflect on what has happened since 22 July, 2011. I will mention two hypotheses:

- The Labour Party lost the election for Parliament in 2013. Of course there will be political reasons for that, but an additional factor may have been that the leaders of the organisation and the political party were very clear throughout the crisis about not taking any political advantage from the terror actions. This in spite of the fact that the values of the Labour Party were specifically attacked. This attitude by the leaders might have contributed to making the political party anonymous in the public arena, because the political dimension was absent.
- It was often commented during the election campaign that the leaders of Labour Party seemed tired by taking up governmental positions. However, the reality was that they had lost so many of their potential leaders through the killing, and they were still filled with grief and sorrow and lacked the energy to fight for a new period.

These are reflections that focus on the political party organisation. But there are also some important challenges at the national level that are related to combining the past with the future.

Combining the past with the future

The youth branch of the Labour Party—AUF—is an autonomous organisation, and owns Utøya which has a very strong symbolic function in recruiting and educating young members through its summer camps. It was important for this organisation to proclaim that they wanted to “take the island back”. Plans for tearing down the buildings that had been site for the killing were presented together with plans for rebuilding. These awoke very strong negative feelings among the bereaved families. Many felt that AUF did not respect the grief of those who had lost their children. Some of the bereaved families expressed the very strong opinion that they did not want Utøya to be a place where youngsters should behave as if nothing had happened.

Being an observer to this process without any consultant role, I think that it was very sad that the organisation presented these plans much too early. There seemed to be a lack of knowledge about grief processes, both from an individual and an organisational perspective, and the result was frustration and anger. Three and a half years afterwards a new architect's plan has been presented that integrates the terror actions on Utøya. The symbol of sixty-nine pillars, the number of those killed, will carry the roof of a new building, where also parts of the killing sites will be kept. I think this process is an example of how frustration and anger can be provoked when there is a lack of organisational perspective and lack of understanding of the dynamics created by any actions that are taken. In this process the focus shifted too quickly to the future without integrating the past. This is an example of a quite different process from the one that was initiated when creating the first edition of the party journal after the attacks, where the organisation integrated both perspectives and contributed to an integrating and healing process both in a short-term and long-term perspective.

National memorial site

There has also been a discussion about a national memorial site that combines both the shooting on Utøya and the bomb explosion at the government buildings in Oslo. The proposal is to create an "open wound" in nature on Utøya by cutting through the island and erecting the stones that are removed at a memorial site in Oslo. This will combine the two terror actions.

The discussion about this national memorial site on Utøya has turned out to be so filled with frustration and anger that the whole project now has ended at government level. There is very strong opinion among the local inhabitants that they do not want to look at that kind of open wound in nature. They do not want to be reminded constantly of what happened. These are the people who rescued many of the young people by going out with their own little boats, while the police were waiting for security clearance and did not take action. Among those protesting are also tourists at the caravan site who do not want to have this kind of memorial close to their vacation site. The perspective has changed from focusing on a national tragedy to groups in conflict over their own interests. It has gone so far that there even have been attacks on local politicians, especially the mayor of the community.

I think much of this frustration has developed because the local groups were not taken appropriate care of during the time close to the

shooting on Utøya. They were at risk, and their families were afraid. The camp site was closed because of the investigations. They ran short of food because they were not allowed to leave the site—and now they are expected to tolerate looking into the scar in the nature when looking out to Utøya.

My hypothesis is that lack of consideration for the situation of the local people has caused the frustration over the memorial. It has turned out to be a discussion about who has the right to own the site—those who are living there or the bereaved families—and who has to tolerate most pain and grief, the local people or those who have lost their dear ones.

Thinking back to how aware we were of the need to prevent frustration and conflict when the support group for those bereaved was established, it is clear now that there was obviously a gap: the local people were not well enough taken care during those first days, and probably also not in the time since. They had no channel for expressing their disappointment and frustration before the concrete plans about this memorial were presented. As a result, those proposals became a concrete focus for their unvoiced frustrations.

I am including this development at the national level to show how important it is right from the beginning to have the macro-organisational perspective in order to identify which groups are affected and need to be given attention by the authorities. It is obvious that those bereaved are highest up in the grief hierarchy and need support and containing structures. They have to live with the loss for the rest of their lives. However, other affected groups have to live with their memories, for example, of the time when they put their own lives in danger and were terrified for their family members out in their little boats attempting to rescue those swimming for safety when the bullets came across the water.

We missed this perspective when the focus was on those killed and on the survivors from Utøya. The focus was also on the target organisation of the Labour Party, and on the nation, but not on the helpers during those dramatic hours.

When disasters strikes a community or nation a structure is required that also takes care of analysing on an organisational perspective which groups are affected beyond the bereaved families, the survivors, and the main target organisations (Bugge, 1993; Dyregrov, 2002).

SUMMARY

In this paper I have described the different levels and areas that have to be taken into account when a disaster strikes. In my role as

consultant to the client organisation by the management of the Labour Party, it was possible to give contributions both inside the client organisation and to the whole nation since there were such close links to the Prime Minister and the government. In the consulting work it was very useful with experience from group relation conferences and to have in mind such concepts as primary task, double tasks, role, and function, but also to be aware of time. Through all the work it was important to support the functional capacities that remained, both on an individual and an organisational level.

And through all this work it was of the utmost value to establish and maintain the good working relationship with the General Secretary and his deputy and with the head of my own organisation, the Centre for Crisis Psychology.

At the national memorial a heart was used as a symbol; let it be a symbol for all of this work.

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their leadership skills. Paolo is also a member of Ariele, the Italian Association of Psychosocioanalysis.

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