Coming home: A story about company

2020

Norway decides to decriminalise drugs for personal use. Services like heroin-assisted rehabilitation is developed and offered to those who need it. New business opportunities pop up making services that test drugs before consumption available and the measures are working well.

2027

We see the consequences. The measures works, Norway drops from 3rd place to 25th place on Europes overdose statics. Drugs are less stigmatised and the criminal label is less associated with drug users than before.

This creates a rise in drug use among the population. The government sees this as a potential threat and decided to regulate the distribution of recreational drugs as an attempt to collect the tax revenue and to ensure that the drugs people are using are as safe as they can be in terms of purity and instructions for safe use. Over the next three years a model for drug regulation is developed.

2030

Drugs for recreational use was officially legalised in Norway. The legalisation came with a strict regulation model, to ensure safety for all users who decided to engage. This was part of a larger trend where regulation spread across the globe. Over time, as more places had some sort of regulation model, pharmacology companies saw a possibility to make money through development of new drugs. This created an ever-expanding variety of drugs, for all sorts of purposes with all sorts of effects.

At the same time, automation increased in the world, and more and more workplaces were replaced with different forms of automation. This led to a nation wide release of the workforce, and a rise in productivity for most companies. With the amount of people who were out of work increasing the government had to take action.

2042

A version of universal basic income was put into place for the people that didn't work saving a lot of people from living in poverty. And as that part of the population who didn't work grew, it also became more socially acceptable not to work. But being without work turned out to be very boring for a large part of the population and a growing minority started staying at home consuming various kinds of media. They find it boring, but still just entertaining enough to not seek other stimuli. People are slowly getting more and more isolated, and that isolated part of the population is growing.

2047

In 2047 the government officially declares an epidemic of loneliness and depression. Society is now seeking a solution to this epidemic, putting R&D funding towards solutions to the problem.

2054

One of the pharmacological companies that were developing drugs got on the bandwagon, they had been experimenting with a new way of administering drugs that would be less harmful to the user. The company engineered e-coli bacteria in a way that it would produce a dissociative effect that would make it harder for the user to make distinctions between real people and machines. At the same time the bacteria would stimulate production and release of oxytocin, making empathic connections easier to establish. The bacteria would become part of the users gut-flora and would be administered through a daily dose of drinking-yogurt. This drug would be paired with an artificial intelligence, that would serve as company for the user, giving the user someone to relate to, talk to and to generally keep them company, effectively curing loneliness.

2058

The product quickly became adopted, and the company that produced it made a deal with the government to provide it to people who were dealing with loneliness and depression.

2062 **SCENARIO**

Questions for dialogue

1. What are your gut reactions?

2. This scenario questions the border between medical and recreational drugs. What is the difference, really, between recreational drug use, and medical drug use?

3. What might happen if regulation comes through industry?

4. If recreational drugs are available, more people might use drugs to deal with their feelings of loneliness and depression. How might we support those people?

5. In this future, using drugs is more widespread, but when does it become a problem? For the user, for society (remember that productivity is not an issue)

6. In this future being lonely is no longer a thing, what might be the consequences of such a future?

7. What are our responsibilities, as members of our respective organisations, when it comes to helping people if the world takes a turn like this?

8. What systems and organisations that exist today will not exist in this future, and why did they have to close down?

9. The systems and organisations that are in place today and would survive into this scenario, how did they change to keep with the times?

10. What systems and organisations would need to exist in this future, what would they do, how do they work?

11. Would the organisation that you represent exist in this future? Did your organisation have to change? If so, how? If not, why not? (In character)