THINK TANK

Process of deliberation on new political culture: Working Document No. 16

THE THREE PROJECTS OF THE NEW PHASE: WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF LA 27e RÉGION?

(24 November 2021)

Introduction

This working document is the third of the documents from the 2021-2023 phase, and it sets out the reflections of the deliberation group on 24 November 2021 after analysing the experience of La 27e Région and work on these reflections.

In methodological terms, the session focused on learning from external experiences, continuing the work begun in previous sessions of learning from expert inputs, frameworks and concepts.

The comments from the session are included in the report, so they will not be repeated in this document. However, for readers who were not present at the session, it may be helpful to have a reminder for reading this working document.

After listening to the presentation by the speaker, Stéphane Vincent, the members of the group shared the lessons they thought were of most interest for the three projects proposed in this phase. These three projects are set out in Working Document No. 14 and are entitled:

- Provincial Government internal transformation process
- Territorial mapping process
- Influence of the think tank on the territory

The following sections describe the contributions received for each of these projects, which will be summarised at the end.

LESSONS FOR INTERNAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF GIPUZKOA

a) DEFINITION OF APPROPRIATE GROUPS/SPACES (17)

The most frequently mentioned item in the contributions was the need to establish appropriate groups or spaces and also to work on how to attract people to these spaces and how to get them involved. There has been discussion on finding volunteers and the role of 'ambassador' civil servants, as well as the need to overcome a silo mentality when working.

- It is necessary to create the right administrative structures/teams: What is the equivalent in our case of the laboratory Stéphane mentioned?
- Simulate in 1.5 years the process of having a laboratory within government (train and involve a diverse group, volunteers / training in actions / cross-disciplinary approach)
- Design a team within the Provincial Government that will not only work on a current project, but will be in charge of transformation of the administration

- What is an in-house laboratory? What is its relationship with the think tank?

- Search, training and involvement of volunteers
- Special work needs to be done on human resources and staffing
- Technical staff, civil servants involved in the process.
- There must be real availability of agents from within the organisation
- Trust
- Development of trust in the context of teams

- I found the idea of the ambassador civil servant interesting; it is a reference point
- The work of ambassadors, knowledge needed for interaction

- It is important to over come the silo mentality. It is necessary to have a system that does this, a systemic vision
- Complementing multiple disciplines
- Teams need diversity
- Overcoming the logic of silos and taking on board the single system
- Engaging future users

b) WORKING METHODOLOGY (10)

There were also numerous contributions on the working method. As well as experimentation and reflexivity, the importance of learning from action and experience was also emphasised, with reference to action research as well. The importance of documenting the process was also mentioned.

- Experimentation as a path
- Spirit of experimentation
- Working on reflexivity, linking theory and practice
- Questioning is important
- It was proposed that the Ekintza research programme should be developed (in programmes of use to a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 10 local bodies)
- Through action research, we carry out the process,
- From planning to experimental thinking, trial and error
- From an idea of excellence to practice
- Learning by doing
- Prioritising documentation of the process over communicating the work carried out

c) ROLE/DEVELOPMENT OF THE ECOSYSTEM (9)

Despite the internal transformation in the Provincial Government, there was also a lot of mention of the importance of the ecosystem, and it was proposed that internal and external

ecosystems should collaborate. In particular, the academic sector and local governments were mentioned as possible agents. The importance of double agents, or agents acting in two areas of the ecosystem, and the possibility of enhancing it through the webinar, was also mentioned.

- Cooperation between internal and external ecosystems
- Territory, overview
- Right environment (support from the ecosystem)
- Integration into the ecosystem in order to avoid isolation

- It is necessary to work with different agents
- Collaboration with different agents: academic sector...
- Possibility of local government being a partner in the laboratories

- Webinars can be organised to recruit allies
- Role of double agents, a tool for working together on public service and democratic innovation

d) TIMING / PROCESS DEADLINES (8)

Another lesson that was mentioned a lot involvement the management of deadlines and the timing of transformation processes. The most common remark was about the importance of understanding that these processes are long-term.

- Profound cultural change is long-term and scaled up; it is important to be clear about that
- It is a long road and it has to be travelled as a team
- Time management: Are these processes too long? What are the difficulties in this area?
- Methodological innovation takes a long time
- Adequate time management to work on time involvement
- Contextualising the action to be carried out in long-term schemes
- Need for the time required by trial and error. How to approach the process in times of crisis?
- Sustainability

e) TRANSFORMATION / RESULTS (6)

Along with long-term commitments, there was also discussion of the need to understand transformation properly and that we need new theories of transformation and should look for transformation beyond excellence. There was also mention of the excessive pressure to achieve results and the importance of managing participants' expectations.

- The need for transformation must be well understood
- We need new theories of transformation
- Incorporate new theories of change

- Work on transformation beyond excellence, asking questions about everything we do, questioning
- Too much pressure to obtain results
- The 'La Transfo' experience: What about the expectations of the participants? Frustration often arises from 'participating for nothing'

f) POWER AND HIERARCHIES (4)

The participants also commented on the importance of taking power and hierarchies into account.

- Might the hierarchies be different here and in France?
- For innovation in governance, as well as empowering employees, a transformation is needed in the sphere of power
- It is not enough to empower civil servants; we also have to empower and change power
- Shifting power and the way it is/is not shared

g) TRAINING AND TRANSMISSION OF KNOWLEDGE IN THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT (4)

The Provincial Government emphasises the importance of carrying out training processes and sharing existing knowledge.

- The transmission needs to be worked on. If there is in-house knowledge (for example, there was mention of Sebas and Ander's knowledge and their laboratory), how can it be incorporated into the process? It must be managed
- The territorial development laboratory already conducted studies on the issues mentioned above, can we learn from them?
- Training for politicians should be encouraged
- Training of politicians in new governance models

h) IMPORTANCE OF SPECIFIC PROJECTS (3)

There was discussion of the importance of working on specific topics and projects.

- It needs to be manifested in specific projects, but you have to see the broader picture, to activate many projects, not just one
- Work on specific cases by establishing cross-cutting team processes
- Address specific issues

i) PUBLIC BODIES/GOVERNMENT (3)

Studies directly related to the institution and public administration were also shared.

- Creating requirements, internal legislation, procedures for government.

- Proposal for empowering public institutions from the perspective of social innovation
- Flexible adaptation of legislation on bureaucratic rituals (vs. legal certainty)

j) USE OF SITUATIONAL AWARENESS TESTS (3)

There was also interest in the surveys conducted as part of the project presented.

- A general survey could be conducted at the Provincial Government: What is Etorkizuna Eraikiz, how do members of the Provincial Government see it?
- Collect information questionnaires on governance models to facilitate intervention for learning purposes
- Conduct surveys of all members of the Provincial Government

LESSONS OF INTEREST FOR COLLABORATING IN THE MAPPING PROJECT

a) ECOSYSTEM REVOLUTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF ECOSYSTEM COLLABORATION

In the mapping exercise, there was a strong stress on the importance of working on participation, shared responsibility, governance and joining forces. Some difficulties also came to light when considering governance as the axis of this process. Finally, the importance of different agents was highlighted, with reference to the double agents and the municipalities, and reflections were shared on 'ownership' of the process and 'building [a sense of] the country'.

- Creating partnerships
- Co-responsibility
- Shared responsibility is interesting
- Solid governance
- A map is important for accumulating forces
- Fractioning the ecosystem will make our work easier

- They don't see governance as a problem; take a different approach.
- This example helps relate the problems to the issue of governance and to understand how to approach it
- Community practice to design new governance models

- Double agents + ecosystem
- What is the role of the municipalities in this relationship?
- Ownership of the process corresponds to financing of the process, not just mapping by Etorkizuna Eraikiz
- Find the link with civil society, look for new links in what we call *herrigintza* (building the country), to normalise this concept.

b) METHODOLOGY

There was also input on how the mapping process could be developed, looking at the steps proposed in the presentation and the dynamic approach. The importance of documentation and systematisation was also emphasised, and cross-disciplinarity was mentioned, with special reference to the roles of civil servants, ArantzazuLab and La 27e Région itself. In this context, there was also mention of the importance of working on a case-by-case basis.

- The steps in the process can be a source of learning
- Some of the methods and work processes proposed [are interesting]
- Innovation in governance: 3-step process (data collection, webinar, participatory surveys, collaborative action research programmes)
- Having an evolutionary approach to define the approach of the project, a process approach
- Don't work with static snapshots, but with dynamic ones
- We cannot seek to go directly from a situation of non-collaboration to one of collaboration; transformation must be scaled up

- Work on the role of documentation and storytelling, find new forms of communication
- Focus on systematisation (excluding marketing) to restore trust and credibility

- It will be important to pool cross-disciplinary profiles in this process

- Viewing Arantzazulab as a neutral agent can reinforce the process
- Willingness to get involved and renewal of staff members
- Develop collaboration with La 27e Région to learn from their reports
- Could we have La 27e Région in our ecosystem? (international cooperation)

- It is necessary to go to specific cases and map from them
- Working on concrete projects increases the chances of solid results

- Use of diverse techniques and qualitative methodologies to access citizens' narratives and motivations
- The challenge: to work on individual commitment
- Work on trust and credibility to enact the transformation in-house as well

LESSONS OF INTEREST FOR REINFORCING THE ROLE OF EACH PARTICIPANT IN THE ECOSYSTEM AND THE INSTITUTIONS OF EACH PARTICIPANT

RESULTS

It is a good idea to clarify the results we expect from this process. One proposed result is to create an Etorkizuna Eraikiz network.

- Results = test. What are results? How do we measure them?
- To create a Etorkizuna Eraikiz network, acting as an umbrella

PARTICIPANTS AND COMMUNITY NATURE

Reference was made to the recruitment of new people, with mention of cross-disciplinarity and key people, as well as the need to extend the role of the centres currently involved. In doing so, individual commitment and the collective level will be important.

- Interdisciplinary profiles
- Maybe attract other profiles to the groups
- General idea: to incorporate key people based on their ability to connect, interest, motivation, position...
- Where do we create the community character?
- Further work on the connection between the think tank and the research/experimentation centres: ALC, ArantzazuLab, Badalab, Sinnergias, Orkestra, Deusto, MU, UPV, etc. What is our role in the ecosystem?
- The main challenge is to work on individual commitment
- The collective is fundamental to our work

METHODOLOGY

It was explained that developing the methodology is a long-term process, and we wondered whether we can also take time for it. The importance of experimentation was mentioned. We also reflected on documentation, questioning its relationship with communication. The emphasis was on connections, on working on training and, once again, on working with concrete projects.

- They spent the time from 2008 to 2014 fine-tuning the methodology. Can we do something like this too?
- Taking into account the element of time
- From planning to trial-and-error

- Neutral place for experimentation
- Experimentation and logic of change with (civil service) personnel and collective intelligence

- Documenting vs. communicating
- Documentation, blogs, manuals

- Increase connections, links
- Training and skill-building
- Generate capacities to retrieve concrete results from concrete projects

SUMMARY

The above proposals were summarised in the form of questions to the participant in the deliberation group who was in charge of facilitating each project, with the idea that these questions will be answered throughout the sessions.

When preparing the summary, we compared the input from this session with that of the previous session (see Working Document No. 15), because there were some repetitions.

To the person responsible for facilitating the internal transformation of the Provincial Government of Gipuzkoa:

a) What is the **stable structure/space/collectivity** that will address the internal transformation within the Provincial Government (in the long term)?

b) What is the **diversity** like in this space? (political/technical personnel, people from different fields, from inside/outside Provincial Government)

c) Have you thought about the role of the **ambassador civil servant**?

d) What is the **specific project** that you are going to bring to the deliberation in the short term?

e) What are the **specific results** you expect from this project?

f) How and when can the following results be incorporated into **internal legislation/procedures**?

g) What role do you see for us in this project as agents of the **ecosystem** of the deliberative process?

To the person responsible for facilitating the mapping project:

a) Beyond drawing up the map, how are **partnerships, co-responsibility (beyond funding ownership, solid governance** going to emerge?

b) What **concrete steps** (dynamic approach) will be taken for development of the project?

c) How will **documentation, systematisation and story-telling** be addressed?

d) What is **the role of the municipalities** in this project?

e) Have you thought about the **role of the double agent**?

f) Will this project extend to **civil society**? How?

To the reflection team and the person responsible for facilitating reinforcement in this area:

a) What do we mean by the **result** of this process?

b) How are we going to create the group with **different disciplines, with key people?**

c) What is the role of ALC, ArantzazuLab, Badalab, Sinnergiak, Orkestra, Deusto, MU and UPV in the ecosystem?

d) How are we going to work on **individual commitment** and reconciling the **collective dimension**?

e) How can we improve **documentation and communication** of our work (blogs, manuals)?

f) What **concrete targets** do we set for our work to 2023?