

THINK TANK

Deliberation process on the Work of the Future: working document 18

MEANING OF WORK: EXPERIMENTS IN COMPANIES

(19 May 2022)

Introduction

At the previous session (24 March), the working group discussed the challenge of governance linked to the promotion of the meaning of work. Among other topics, the participants discussed the role played by different business associations in raising awareness in companies as to the meaning of work and the development of this meaningfulness amongst the people in the companies. Ion Gurrutxaga presented different experiences related to the digitalisation process, with special mention of the methodology used, the roles of different agents in Gipuzkoa and the results obtained. The experiences related to this process were presented at the session of the think tank on the meaning of work, as a possible guide/aid.

However, participants in the think tank felt that we were lacking the results to be obtained in the pilot project on the meaning of work. Also missing was a definition of the characteristics of the methodology and general process that would allow the meaning of work to be disseminated in companies in Gipuzkoa. The aim of the session of 19 May was therefor defined as being: to develop an overview of the process of experimenting with the meaning of work, view the possible final results and reflect on the role that different agents in Gipuzkoa can play.

Overview of the Meaning of Work and presentation of results

The report from the session contains a more detailed account of the topics discussed and the subsequent reflections. This working document sets out some key points. Specifically:

- 1) Planned methodology: Following compilation of any relevant input on the presentation given by Ion Gurrutxaga (24 March) and based on the general steps proposed by governance at a provincial level, a preliminary general methodology was proposed at the session. Four different stages were proposed: (i) awareness-raising and/or preliminary diagnosis of the company, (ii) in-depth diagnosis of the company to establish different lines of work, (iii) empowerment of the company for development of these lines of work, and (iv) monitoring of the work process and lessons learned, before the cycle begins once more.
- 2) The lines of work to be developed in the company will focus on four themes of key relevance for the meaning of work: autonomy, capacity, relationships and purpose. There may be different methodologies and tools at the Provincial Government for developing these topics. It would be useful to make an inventory of these tools in order to offer them to companies.
- 3) Finally, reference was made to the results to be obtained at the end of the pilot project. Specifically, these were as follows: (i) development of the conceptual framework, (ii) diagnostic tool, (iii) experiential learning, (iv) general

methodology to develop the meaning of work in companies, (v) specific material for company awareness-building (which would also contribute to development of the preliminary diagnosis) and (vi) laboratory/simulation exercises to develop awareness of the meaning of work in the classroom.

Subsequent reflection and input

At the end of the presentation, the focus group was asked if they felt any results were lacking. After a brief reflection, some issues and comments were raised.

- 1) One group stressed the importance of awareness and diagnosis. They considered these to be quite achievable.
- 2) Another group reflected on the evaluations. They were clear on the issues of awareness, diagnosis and implementation. But what about evaluation? How do we go about evaluating? How should continuity be provided to the theme? They felt this was an important issue.
- 3) Another contribution was the vision of society, which was felt to be lacking. How does society view the meaning of work? What does society expect in this regard? Beyond what companies want, what expectations does society have about work?
- 4) Another group emphasised that the tool used should be consensual. It should be something created by everyone. Otherwise, everyone will interpret it in their own way. It is necessary for all actors to take part in developing the tool.
- 5) Another comment was that the session was too theoretical. A more practical vision was missing. The importance of being able to visualise the transformation.
- 6) Reference was also made to values. This is an idea that was raised several times in the group. People develop values before they enter the labour market. Thus, people's training has an impact on the meaning of work. That is where people acquire their values.
- 7) Finally, another group felt that developing the conceptual framework and concrete tools can be considered an achievement. However, they felt that there should be a reflection on teleworking, the way of working of the future. Teleworking requires training and discipline, and according to the group's members it is a topic that is not being addressed head on.

Summing up, the working session held in May was a first step in the area of results and methodology, framed within the reflections being carried out on governance. Therefore, in upcoming sessions, the pilot project and shared governance sessions will gradually converge in the same proposal.