THINK TANK

Deliberation process on the new political culture: Working Document No. 19

PROCESS TO ADDRESS THE INFLUENCE OF THE DELIBERATIVE TEAM ON THE ECOSYSTEM: THE ROLE OF INDIVIDUAL TRANSFORMATION IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF POLITICAL CULTURE

(23 March 2022)

Introduction

This deliberation group for elaboration of the new political culture has taken these two projects as a reference point for the co-creation of knowledge for 2022: the territorial mapping process and the internal transformation process of the Provincial Government of Gipuzkoa (DFG). However, the group also has a third objective, *the transformation of the deliberative group*, i.e. to increase its impact on the territory and, in particular, on the ecosystem of the policies of the Provincial Government of Gipuzkoa. The March session discussed this third objective.

As a starting point, one of the studies from the previous session was presented: the importance of people. If people have been so important in internal transformation, it was proposed that they should also be seen as being important when addressing collaborative governance in the province and in the transformation of the political culture. Each participant (each individual), therefore, is important in order for the deliberative group to have an influence in the territory. Consequently, the working hypothesis for the session was as follows: 'If we do not address individual transformation, we will not be able properly to transform the political culture around us. Transforming the environment requires skills and attitudes that we do not have today'.

Lessons contributed to the group

Hilary Bradbury participated in the discussion on this topic. In her presentation she shared the concept of action logics. Our action logics are patterns that we avail of in order to understand things, and they establish the patterns we use to identify what kind of actions we perform and what we are aware of (or not). According to the theory of adult development, which Hillary took as a reference point, people trace a path through life, internalising increasingly developed action logics. That does not mean that we never go back to the old forms of logic. Indeed, we use different forms of logic in our activities. However, current challenges (systemic approaches, complexity, etc.) require developed logics.

She described the main forms of action logic, given the proportion of population using each one, according to studies conducted in this area: Diplomat (13%), Expert (36%), Achiever (29%), Redefining (11%) and Transforming (5 %). Prior to the session, five members of the group completed a questionnaire to diagnose their action logic and to identify which logic is most prevalent in their actions.

Results of individual reflection

After sharing that vision, each group member answered the following questions: Is this idea suitable for understanding the transformation that this deliberation group should be seeking? If so, what can we do to address these competencies? And if not, how does the group think we

can influence the transformation of our environment? In this section, we study the answers compiled, in order to establish prospective criteria.

Based on the individual responses, the participants can be divided into three groups: (a) those who considered this work to be suitable; (b) those who thought it suitable, but had some doubts, and (c) those who considered it not to be suitable. The following are the contributions made in each approach:

<u>People who consider it appropriate to deal with personal development in the think tank and who consider that synergies are created naturally with collective transformation</u>

a) For me, yes. Because each person, as he or she transforms, 'radiates' his or her transformations and there are no changes that occur only at a macro or collective level.

b) Individual work does not only affect the think tank. Influencing our organisations contributes to the transformation of the ecosystem.

c) Yes. It is very appropriate to focus on people's attitudes. From the analysis of skills, it would be interesting to trace the trajectory of developments. However, not everyone is good at everything. Each person needs to do his or her part. Work structurally on people's development (training). In parallel, transforming the culture of the organisation. Provide an adequate framework for personal effort. Reward those who achieve it. Motivation is important. Use the stimulus.

d) Yes [Adequate]

e) Yes [Adequate]

<u>People who, although they consider it suitable to address personal development in the think tank, note this may lead us to abandon the collective dimension, or those who consider it to be insufficient:</u>

a) Yes. It is essential. But while personal transformation is necessary, it is not just an individual process. Group dynamics should also be encouraged.

b) Yes [I think it is suitable] for understanding it. Indeed, culture is developed and transmitted through interaction between individuals and is based on values and customs. So this dimension must necessarily be present in any collective transformation. Therefore, the capacity for transformation of the individual dimension differs for collective transformation in each case. In our group, I see the capacity for transformation of each person as being limited. I would not give up on establishing processes, tools and resources for achieving these types of skills. However, I have doubts as to whether this is a leading priority for the think tank (at least as I see it). So I'm a little sceptical. I have a lot of questions and few certainties.

c) Instead of answering with a definite yes or no, I would reply 'Yes, but'. It is not as easy to transform yourself personally and I would consider incentives as a variable.

d) I believe that as humans, we are made up of subjective and objective elements. There are also personal and social elements in the public space. I believe that there are two sources for transformation of the political culture. On the one

hand, you have the collective space and, on the other, reflection and personal transformation. I agree with the personal work. But I don't think it's enough. This approach requires an additional component.

e) I believe it is a vision that can enrich the process. But it must always take into account the reality of the system. Indeed, it is conditioned by the reality of this system to a large extent. Many people are conditioned by the system. The individual ends up growing accustomed to the system. Apart from people with very strong and special leadership, the rest end up getting acclimatised to and adapting to the system. That should be taken into account.

People who do not consider it suitable to work on personal development in the think tank:

f) Personal transformation is important. But I think it would be a mistake to include individual transformation within the responsibilities of collaborative governance. Collaborative governance is fundamentally a way of carrying out collaborative structures and political work. It is an instrument for coping with complex problems. But it is voluntary. If you believe in what can be achieved through collaborative governance, that should be enough to get things going.

The input on things that can be done to promote development can be summarised as follows.

Awareness:

a) Awareness. There are often difficulties and cultural scepticism in working on these 'soft' skills and attitudes. However, the means and positions that are put forward should be debated. How can we make a difference? How can we make these positive transformations?

b) Achieve the level of awareness. Feel it is necessary and reason it out. A level of awareness must be reached not only at a personal level but also at a group level.

c) We have to look at the aggregate to see how we can transform ourselves personally. We need to reflect on how to guide our individual change. What guides us? Usefulness? Hedonism? What should we do about contradictions?

d) Encourage high levels of self-awareness. In order to get to know each other personally, it is necessary to reflect on the action logics. That would make it easier to see whether we have the capabilities and attitudes required for transformation.

e) Each person must learn to analyse and explain his or her own learning. By offering spaces for internal reflection and developing resources.

Creating appropriate spaces and strengthening the group:

a) We should seek mechanisms for each person to become a member of the group. The real involvement of the individual in the group will make it easier to achieve.

b) We need the 'real' spaces'. In other words, we need a space where we can tell the truth calmly. If we want to tell the truth to ourselves and thereby drive change, this space must guarantee certain conditions.

c) Arranging/creating spaces for developing personal independence.
d) Dynamics and spaces must be created.
e) It is important to apply the latest logics of group management. Institutional engineering would also be helpful.
f) Structure learning processes by working together. Getting to know each other better. Going further in areas of cross-cutting competences (situated learning).

Training and development of competencies:

a) Skills must be generated for developing these competencies and attitudes.
b) Identify what the competencies are.
c) Training workshops might be considered, but taking into account the profile of the individual. Indeed, there are very different individual profiles. For this reason, it would be useful to classify individual profiles. The classification should be based on the type of person and his or her capabilities. The system itself should facilitate these exercises. The system should trigger these exercises. Or at least, it should not neutralise them.

Link to the think tank's actions:

a) These competencies are worked on more in practice than in theory. Currently, some members of the deliberation group are carrying out an action directly linked to the think tank, but not all of them. Two steps can be taken: 1) All of us could join the action. 2) These issues could be addressed through reflection on actions.
b) Implementing processes, projects, actions, etc. to carry out the aforementioned modifications.

Others:

c) It is also important for us to take our time. The individual and the environment do not change from one day to the next.
d) People's commitment is also important.

If the personal development is not considered adequate, we asked what other tools the group has to influence their environment. That question went unanswered.

Group reflection.

When the work done in groups was shared, individual opinions were partly repeated. However, there were some contributions that we consider important in defining the future path of the group:

a) 'Our group was the most critical about this issue [...] we think it is not something fundamental'.
b) 'Individual change is related to collective change and vice versa'.
c) 'This exercise has been important. But there has been some reluctance'
d) 'We also talked about some experiments. It would be something simple'.

Future developments

The participants' input show that the door has been opened to this issue, but some doubts and concerns have also been raised about what its priorities should be. At the same time, although some participants said that the individual and collective dimensions are indivisible, other participants felt that the two parts should be differentiated and were concerned that the time given over to individual aspects detracts from that given to the collective.

Consequently, in the process of strengthening the deliberative group, this individual work could be incorporated through a small experiment, but, taking into account the doubts that exist, it should not be the focus of the deliberative group's activity.