

Deliberative Democracy in the Basque Country

8th high-level meeting of the
expert group on public
administration and
governance



Basque region - context



- 3 territories: Gipuzkoa, Bizkaia, Araba.
- 251 municipalities
- 2 181 278 habitants
- 7 234 km²
- Own culture, language
- Community involvement & participation



Arantzazulab

**Governance
Innovation centre**



Our final aim is to...

Institutionalise Deliberative Democracy

1. Develop local capabilities and knowledge
2. Introduce deliberation as a stable democratic approach in Basque institutions





2 Citizens' Assemblies



1. Tolosa Citizens' Assembly

Theme: emotional health and wellbeing
Gov level: local council

Promoters:



Expert support



2. Gipuzkoa Citizens' Assembly

Theme: climate crisis and rural development
Gov level: provincial council

Promoters

Gipuzkoako
Foru Aldundia
Diputación Foral
de Gipuzkoa



ETORKIZUNA
ORAIN
Es futuro



Expert support





Following the good practice principles

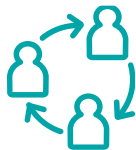




Designing and implementing the following



Framing the question



Governance



Content management



Civic lottery



Sending letters, sign-up and follow-up



Deliberation sessions



Evaluation



Communication



Follow-up on recommendations



Gipuzkoa Citizens' Assembly

How can we guarantee agricultural activity in Gipuzkoa in order to face the climate emergency?



formazioa

ZEROTIK ez gara Pasten... TOLOSAN

garikoitz lekua

aktiak



TOLOSAN ENSKOLA IREKIA

Tolosa Citizens' Assembly

What can the City Council of Tolosa do through public-community collaboration to achieve a Tolosa that improves the health and emotional well-being of all?

etx ZER da osasun eta ongizate emozionala?

agoretti Soraa

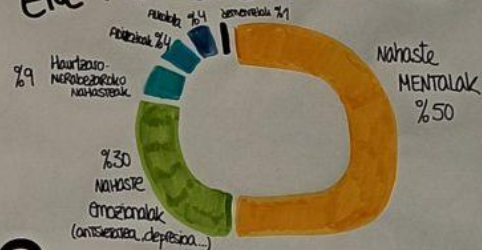


OSASUN OSOTASUNA

E-motion

energia kidetasuna
Hasererra · Phezerra
Tristura · Beldurraz

COVID19 eragina eta Tolosan... 2021ean



LAGUNTZE



Tolosa Children's Assembly

- 40 children selected by a civic lottery
- 4 Fridays
- Training on emotional and mental wellbeing
- Recommendations for decision-makers





Close collaboration to design and make it happen





"This process has helped me to think about the needs of the collective, the needs of others and not just my own individual needs"



"It has been many years since I arrived in Tolosa, and this was the first time I felt part of something"





Evaluation key findings



Tolosa Citizens' Assembly members, promoters and experts

The process has had an impact on people, who, after participating in it, show **greater confidence in politics (politicians), democracy and participatory processes.**

Assembly members emphasise the **importance of deliberative processes and their binding character.**



Evaluation key findings

- **Financial compensation** has enabled the participation of social sectors that are traditionally absent in these processes.
- **At the end of the process the knowledge of assembly members increased** on public institutions' work and the subject covered in the question.



Gipuzkoa Citizens' Assembly members



Key lessons learned to take into account in the future

1. **A mandate more focused on a dilemma (or several dilemmas) – Framing a “Shared” dilemma:** build consensus among diverse actors since the beginning and identify a values-based / trade-off question.
2. **The Governance of the process** to ensure a multi-stakeholder ownership and an efficient development
 - **Involve key stakeholders since the beginning:** cross-department engagement of the public institution (political representatives and civil servants) and interest-groups/stakeholders/other political parties.
 - **Connection and coordination between groups** in the Governance. Clear roles.
3. **The connection with the *maxi-public* :** Involve the wider community in the conversation (through means of transparency & self-organised processes)
4. The importance of connecting the assemblies with a **broader governance strategy in Government.** Institutionalisation. Permanent Assemblies





Key lessons learned to take into account in the future

5. **Accessible content:** create content that is easily understood, involving roles such as: content manager, scientific journalist, visual designer, information architect
6. Designing deliberation sessions and **adapting activities** based on the group. **Facilitation is key!**
7. **Inclusive training** - Explore new ways to **share information in deliberation sessions**
8. **Evaluation** gives **legitimacy** to the process. And it is important to capture **lessons learned** and the generated **impact**.
9. Following up the **implementation of the recommendations** – designing the process.





Next steps in Deliberative Democracy in the Basque region



- **Institutionalise Deliberative Democracy in the Basque region:**
 - Develop local capabilities and knowledge
 - Design the structures and conditions.
- **Activating and designing new Citizens Assemblies:**
 - Basque Climate Assembly (Basque Government– Permanent Assembly)
 - Regional deliberation process on the energy transition.

**“Transforming Basque society, placing
people centre stage, and building a
more humane future”**

Arantzazulab



Arantzazulab

GIZARTE BERRIKUNTZA
SOCIAL INNOVATION



lone Ardaiz

lardaiz@arantzazulab.eus