



SOCIAL INNOVATION LABORATORY FOR DIVERGENT TRANSFORMATION

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this article is to present and contextualize the experimental project GizarteLab, designed and developed by Eusko Ikaskuntza - Sociedad de Estudios Vascos (EI-SEV) under the sponsorship of the Provincial Council of Guipuzcoa and the collaboration of several City councils (Legazpi being the most outstanding), with the aim of supporting the divergent transformation of the Basque Country municipalities that face the need to confront important transitions of a socio-structural nature. It is a laboratory for intervention and accompaniment characterized by a theoretical-practical approach based on three fundamental analytical principles:

- **The social innovation perspective.** We understand social innovation as a process of searching for intelligent, innovative or potentially valid alternatives to tackle social and environmental problems and crises. It is a political tool that is being applied by public, private and civil society actors with the purpose of promoting social transformation in a "socially desirable" direction. Social innovation initiatives and programs aim to create lasting links between actors whose purposes are primarily social so that structures and spaces for ongoing collaboration can be created. Accordingly, public sector institutions (universities, local development agencies, government bodies, public companies or public services), third sector agents (social movements, NGOs, foundations, associations, etc.) and private entities (companies, businesses, social entrepreneurs) tend to increase their collaboration for the promotion of social change, often stimulated by organizations that drive social innovation processes, such as citizens laboratories or social innovation centers that have proliferated in different countries and regions. GizarteLab seeks, precisely, to dynamize social innovation processes at a local level by involving key people and actors so that they can foster transformative processes in a sustained manner over time.
- **Taking an active part in transitions.** There is a growing international academic endeavor to analyze and explain how to move towards more sustainable ways of living that meet current social needs. Social transitions are processes that have some particular characteristics, and these pose a challenge for social sciences. These processes are multidimensional and long-term, involve various levels of social reality and have an evolutionary character that oscillates between situations of stability and moments of change. They lure multiple actors with different resources, capacities, beliefs, strategies and interests, who dispute which innovations and transition trajectories are desirable. Periods of socio-economic instability and increased uncertainty have a major influence on transition processes as they accelerate socio-structural change and constantly bring new issues into public agendas. Transitions therefore require a decisive commitment on the part of public institutions to

determine the direction of transitions and to establish the normative sense of the transformations to be promoted. This does not exclude the fact that transitions often involve shared leadership in the form of transition communities that face the task of foreseeing, planning and managing transitions with the tools at their disposal. In fact, the GizarteLab aims to promote the creation of local multi-agent transition communities with the capacity to manage the transformation processes required by their municipalities.

- **The key role of the local level.** Studies on transitions as well as studies on social innovation have pointed out the wholly central role the local level acquires in tackling the challenge of managing transitions. Global phenomena and issues such as the instability of the economic system, climate change or social inequalities all have specific local manifestations that require a particular and specific approach. Insofar as the management of transitions requires practical and shared orientation by multiple actors, the local level constitutes the ideal context to implement community and collaborative dynamics based on social interaction and shared effort. In fact, local environments facilitate deliberative processes for the development of alternative ideas, for knowledge sharing or for reaching consensus on visions of the future, as they are the geographical scale with the highest level of institutional trust in the Basque Country. Local environments are also suitable spaces for the development of specific action-research practices (experimentation, prototypes, transformative actions, transition experiences, etc.), while facilitating the conception of new social relations and public-private collaboration to promote a sustainable transition. There are a multitude of highly meritorious and significant local experiences, but with clear difficulties in altering meso- and macro-social structures in a democratizing sense. The methodology applied by GizarteLab favors institutional learning precisely because it enables the accumulation of knowledge contributed by different municipalities in the Basque Country.

2. General characteristics of GizarteLab

GizarteLab is a Social Innovation laboratory designed and developed by Eusko Ikaskuntza to address the management of the challenges associated with different key transitions that today's societies must face. At a territorial level, there are three major transitions for Basque society: a) the energy-ecological transition; b) the digital transition; c) the demographic transition. There is no doubt that these are large-scale issues which are closely entwined and which generate very visible and significant effects today. The anticipatory perspective raised by the idea of transitions is key for Basque society to be able to design realistic future scenarios. It is about creating knowledge and developing smart practical solutions to phenomena and problems that require innovative responses.

The three central areas in which GizarteLab works refer to demographic transition, energy-ecology transition and life projects. The three transitional processes differ in terms of subject matter, but are convergent from the point of view of competences.

GizarteLab is structured as a social innovation network that promotes the empowerment of citizens at local (municipal) level to promote transitions within the framework of collaborative governance processes (institutional and social). The empowerment process, which strengthens citizens' transition competences, consists of three complementary phases. The first focuses on the acquisition of theoretical knowledge about the different Transitions.

The second phase focuses on the development of social and transition competences. The third is aimed at the development of transition communities that offer a space where citizens train citizens.

The GizarteLab workshops provide a conceptual and theoretical framework, but they are eminently practical and encourage the acquisition of essential skills to successfully face transitions. The tools and resources used in the GizarteLab workshops are the following.

Conceptual and methodological framework. GizarteLab creates a social innovation model to manage the demographic transition, the energy-ecological transition and life projects at the local level. The GizarteLab model combines the active ageing paradigm of sustainability and active aging with transition theory. In this way, GizarteLab offers three new conceptual contributions:

A) Situated and shared knowledge: which seeks to understand the local conditions of transition challenges. The local dimension is essential in the GizarteLab model. By identifying local conditions and encouraging the design of pilot actions, it seeks to contribute to the generation of transformative ecosystems in small cities.

B) Transition competences. This concept emerges to explain and foster a set of competences that combine emotional, social and anticipatory intelligence, thanks to the generation of experiences. The key to these competences is to create the habit in citizens of capturing the experience of the present and contrasting it with probable and desirable futures.

C) Experimental governance. This concept refers to the creation of cooperative environments (between citizens and City councils) based on training and experimentation. There is cooperation in the experimentation itself. So, GizarteLab seeks to broaden the conceptual and methodological field of local active ageing.

Competence Training. GizarteLab offers a methodology and a training path based on a set of key competences to structure the transition towards active ageing. Training citizens, through a simple but effective methodology, in transition competences will be key for the ageing scenario in 2040. Therefore, just as people must develop their anticipatory competences, so too must town councils (which are jointly responsible for promoting policies and supporting services in the field of active ageing) improve their anticipatory capacities. The expected impact of GizarteLab is that people gain autonomy and social capacity to self-organize around pilot actions. By working on transitional competences in citizens, GizarteLab contributes to the promotion of transitional processes at territorial level from a participatory and transformational perspective.

Transition communities. The experience of transition competence training finds its continuity in the Transition Communities that constitute the next phase. These communities operate through the exchange of good practices and experiences with the support of Eusko Ikaskuntza professionals, but with the aim of becoming autonomous communities in the medium term. GizarteLab offers a methodology to continue training at a higher stage: the dynamization of a learning community. It is a space of development for people who feel committed to active ageing and who do not have a space for intervention. The Transition

Communities is a modality to guarantee social inclusion (the perspective of the present and future user) and at the same time they are platforms to promote Pilot Actions (citizen spin-offs).

City Councils and Citizens. GizarteLab structures a dynamic modality, an interface between City Councils and Citizens, around a complex social problem, namely population ageing. Competence training, the creation of Transition Communities are dynamic ways of connecting policies and citizens, present and future.

Furthermore, the GizarteLab laboratory is clearly aligned with Eusko Ikaskuntza's mission in three strategic lines of action

Line 1. Empowering citizens.

GizarteLab aims to empower citizens through the development of transition competences. Based on the development of transition communities, local transition micro-projects are promoted (whether for demographic transition or energy transition) that function as key elements of collaborative governance for the design and development of local policies.

Line 2: Fostering a new approach to the Welfare State

GizarteLab aims to promote social welfare from a citizen's perspective. Accordingly, GizarteLab understands public policies as transition policies (energy and demography). On the one hand, it explores public policies from a transitional perspective. The transitional perspective involves three processes: design of futures, social mapping and the design of initiatives. On the other hand, it explores public policy as a process of local development and impact. What is local has precedence in the development of the welfare state.

Line 3: Promoting a new model of governance.

GizarteLab offers a model of collaborative governance. The laboratory is structured as an interface mechanism between citizens and local institutions for the design of citizen initiatives (micro-projects).

3. Theoretical contextualization and state of the art

GizarteLab is based on the transition management model which promotes a collaborative governance strategy that conceptualizes transition as a system of learning and experimentation at different levels (micro-meso-macro) to drive, facilitate and guide the transition to sustainable regimes (Kemp et al., 2007; Loorbach, 2010; Nill and Kemp, 2009; Raven et al., 2010).

The model is structured around four principles:

- a) Multi-agent governance: Transition management promotes the participation of different actors concerned by transition in order to integrate different views on change and its consequences. The approach favors bottom-up perspectives supported by the public sector (collaborative and institutional governance) (Fri and Savitz, 2014; Loorbach, 2010; Rotmans and Loorbach, 2008; Sutherland et al., 2015).

b) Long-term vision: Transition management structures short- and long-term visions as a horizon to guide discussion and consensus on present actions (Fong et al., 2005; Fri and Savitz, 2014; Kemp et al., 2007; Meadowcroft, 2009).

c) Learning System: Transition management drives the development of experimentation niches and models the learning that occurs in these environments. Innovation niches are structures of interaction in which radical innovations are designed to drive incremental changes (Bubolz, 2001; Kemp et al., 2007).

d) Policy design: Transition management supports decision-making and facilitates the structuring of complex challenges by promoting transition agendas based on innovation, anticipation and reflexivity (Rotmans et al., 2001; Sutherland et al., 2015).

Based on these principles, the transition management model explains the transitional process as a multi-level (micro-meso-macro) innovative interaction. Thus, the dynamism of the model occurs at the micro level (innovation niches). Innovation niches are experimental spaces where it is possible to propel radical innovations to produce incremental changes (transition policies). Radical innovations exert pressure to modify the strongly established patterns of operation that make the regime function (meso) in unsustainable conditions. In the long run, radical innovations of innovation niches permeate and destabilize the regime, gradually modifying cultural, social, technological and institutional patterns, driving the whole system towards change (Loorbach, 2016; Rotmans and Loorbach, 2008).

a) Niches (micro): Niches are experimental spaces for the design and testing of radical innovations. At this operational level experimentation is generated and learning takes place by trial and error. Niches are designed to challenge the established and routine trends and dynamics of the regime. Innovation niches are configured as a generator of transition experiments, and are generative of new transformation expectations (technical and social sustainability of solutions), innovation networks (partnerships for the sustainability of a system) and learning processes (accumulation and reconversion of knowledge) (Loorbach, 2010; Loorbach et al., 2007; Rotmans and Loorbach, 2009; Schot and Geels, 2008).

b) Regimes (meso): Regimes are less flexible than niches as they condense the weight of the trajectory (cultural, institutional, technological) and are inert. Regimes express patterns of development that align territorial actors through cognitive routines, operating rules, regulations and assigned roles that enable a territorial system to function and express the limits and driving forces of its innovation. This is a tactical level for transitions since it is at regime (meso) level that policies design (and protect) innovation niches, and develop the infrastructures and supports for transition. It is at this level that barriers to transition as well as their driving forces coexist (Loorbach, 2010; Loorbach et al., 2007; Rotmans and Loorbach, 2009; Schot and Geels, 2008).

c) Panoramas (meta): Panoramas are intangible structures consisting of social values, political beliefs, institutional norms and world views. This level is strategic, and its transformation only takes place in the long term (even from one generation to another). Transformations at this level occur through the social diffusion of evidences generated in innovation niches (where radical ideas for change permeate social perceptions) (Loorbach, 2010; Loorbach et al., 2007; Rotmans and Loorbach, 2009; Schot and Geels, 2008).

Transition management is explored on the basis of four processes:

A. Transition Challenges (territorial vulnerabilities)

Transition challenges are explored in terms of territorial vulnerabilities (social, technological, institutional, economic and cultural). Vulnerability refers to the relation between the degree of exposure of a group of people/territory/ecosystem to a variety of threats (economic, social, institutional, environmental) and the capacity to cope with these threats (Castro-Spila et al., 2016; Cutter et al., 2003; Smit and Wandel, 2006). This is a dynamic assessment; it is not about assessing societal challenges but about assessing barriers to transition. For this reason, the assessment is carried out from a perspective of future scenarios rather than present scenarios.

B. Experimental Projects (Learning by experimentation)

Experimental projects are radical commitments that seek to create evidence based on testing new ideas and experiences that facilitate or drive transition. This involves the strategic management of experimentation niches focused on experimental projects (participatory prototyping, parallel experimentation, trial and error). A radical project is not defined by the radicality of its ideas, but by the capacity to drive a chain of impacts towards transition (short and long chains). The impact chain always suggests a level of connectivity between experimentation, scaling and policy generation (European Commission, 2011), based on a model of anticipation and social responsibility of innovation (RRI) (Owen, Macnaghten, and Stilgoe, 2012).

C. Transition Innovations (Territorial Capacities)

Experimental projects have the capacity to drive transitions (chain of impacts) to transform the conditions of the territorial regime (break inertia). A single project cannot carry out this process unless it connects with others, generates interactions, is inserted in an innovation niche (experimentation niches), where interactions are managed, and experimentations and their results are deliberately connected. In driving transitions, independent funding models are avoided, expecting random outcomes to generate impacts. In the transitions model, the management of experimental niches (Caniëls and Romijn, 2008), based on models of clustering of results and territorial learning, is encouraged.

D. Transition Policies (Transition Agendas)

Transition policies are structured around two key dimensions. The first concerns transition partnerships (governance). Multi-level and multi-actor governance is structural to transitional processes, involving agreements on present conditions and future scenarios. The latter refers to policy instruments (incentives for experimentation, not innovation) that allow radical solutions to be tested in order to structure incremental policies. This is structured around transition agendas (not to be confused with innovation agendas).

4. Aims of the GizarteLab laboratory

Overall aim:

The overall aim of GizarteLab is to develop transition competences in different citizen profiles in order to support the shared design of a local public policy agenda in the field of

demographic transition and ecological transition. Transition competences are developed through two central instruments: a) the development of competences, b) the promotion of transition communities.

Specific objectives

S.O.1. Implement and consolidate the transition competence training model (training workshops) to empower 50 people linked to the demographic and ecological transitions through pilot experiences.

S.O.2. Design and implement transition communities to promote Pilot Actions at local level led by citizen.

S.O.3. Design and develop an evaluation model (concepts, tools and indicators) to measure the local and social impact of the GizarteLab Program.

S.O.4. Design and carry out transformative experiences together with one of the Transition Communities, acting as a guide and support for its members.

5. Methodology and implementation

Resources.

The resources to implement a GizarteLab can be summarized in four distinct types:

Information. GizarteLab prepares relevant information on the competence training program, its working modality, type of participants and the operating model of the Transition Communities. Dissemination materials are available for this purpose.

Funding. GizarteLab requires funding to promote training in transition competences, design Pilot Actions and support Transition Communities. The funding is devoted to the development of materials for the training of competences and human resources support (facilitators).

Facilitators. GizarteLab provides the facilitators for the program. These are people with diverse backgrounds in transitional issues, workshop facilitation, impact assessment and prototype design (Pilot Actions), as well as policy design. The facilitators have four main functions: a) to collaborate in the analysis of local conditions for the development of the transition to healthy ageing (support for local studies) or the ecological transition, b) to design, adapt and dynamize the competence training modules (elaboration of materials, design of dynamics, evaluation of learning), c) to design and support the workshop participants in the elaboration of the Pilot Action, d) to design and support the Transition Communities.

Materials. Working materials are the support for Transition Competence Building activity. The materials are used in workshops and training dynamics (documents, videos, etc.). The materials vary according to the dynamics and training objectives.

Planning

Model. GizarteLab sets out from a conceptual and methodological model based on transitions. The model establishes the principles of the transitional strategy and develops the implementation methodology (techniques, timelines and impacts). This information is shared with City councils and program users in order to ensure a common vision on demographic transitions towards healthy local ageing or ecological transitions towards more sustainable models. The materials generated by GizarteLab offer a clear and simple vision of the transitions model.

City councils. GizarteLab is a service for the design of Pilot Actions for the promotion of local transition strategies. This service for City councils involves local studies on population ageing or environmentally unfriendly lifestyles, dynamization of training and community support. The City Councils spearhead the launch of a GizarteLab.

Users. The groups of users are different depending on the phase of the Laboratory or the subject matter; in the case of demographic transition workshops, the users are citizens between 45-55 years of age who participate in the training of transition competences, design of Pilot Actions and leadership of the learning community. To participate in the Program users must meet certain characteristics which are established by the Experimentation Protocol. In the case of the Ecological Transition workshops, users will preferably be young people.

In all cases, the aim is to guarantee the plurality of participants, considering socio-economic, gender, race and origin variables.

In addition, in the case of online workshops, territoriality and gender are taken into account, fostering an equilibrium among participants.

Protocol. GizarteLab has a laboratory functioning protocol that structures the agreements made with the City Council (studies, training, evaluation, support for Transition Communities) and with the users (ethical requirements, participation requirements and mode of operation). The protocol also establishes the objectives, timeline and impact of the local GizarteLab.

Work phases and planning

1. Start

When a city council or other institution expresses an interest in setting up a GizarteLab, the specific challenge to be tackled within the Transition's general scope of activity and the criteria for selecting the people to participate in the laboratory are defined together. Once the group has been set up, an introductory and preparatory meeting is held.

2. Preparation

Prior to starting the workshops, the methodological adaptation to the specific local challenge agreed with the city council or organization is carried out, as long as it responds to a transitional theme. Simultaneously, a small diagnostic analysis of the population is conducted in relation to the challenge to be tackled, ongoing initiatives or programs, difficulties and local peculiarities.

3. Development of the workshops

Training workshops on transition competences, whether demographic or ecological, are developed over 4 or 5 eminently practical sessions in which experiential learning takes precedence. Although there is an established methodological basis, the programs may be subject to variations in order to adapt to the transitional challenge adopted in each case.

4. Evaluation

Tools are implemented for internal evaluation by the team and self-evaluation by the participants. In addition, achievement indicators such as the number of participants (segmented), number of initiatives generated and degree of competences acquired are taken into account.

5. Socialization

This phase is extremely important. On the one hand, it is one of the expected returns for both the participants and the organization (city council or other) organizing the GizarteLab. On the other hand, it allows the experience and its potentialities to be adequately disseminated, promoting future implementations of the project.

Diagnosis

A level of diagnosis is necessary for the development of the training modules. Below is a description of a systemic model of diagnosis-action on the conditions of local transition. The diagnostic phase is driven by the City Council with the collaboration of Eusko Ikaskuntza.

Problem Structuring: Setting out from an analysis of demographic/ecological trends and available resources, a workshop is designed and implemented with local stakeholders to explore the local ecosystem and define the tree of problems that the ecosystem possesses.

Strategic vision. Design and implementation of a workshop with local stakeholders to design probable and desirable futures of the transitional process (agendas). Working on the problems identified and the designed futures, a long-term vision is explored, including concrete actions for its development (arenas and experiments).

Transition agenda. The transition agenda is the result of the previous actions (problems, priorities and futures). The agenda defines more clearly and precisely the actions and strategies to be followed, including the experiments to be carried out. The Transition Agenda is validated and co-designed with stakeholders linked to local active ageing.

Competence workshops

In this phase of the GizarteLab, the transition competences training modules are implemented. The working groups have been selected according to the implementation protocol and with the support of the City council or the institution itself.

Module 1.

Life Maps. Using the life-mapping technique, participants understand what transition competences are, what the fields of application are, and how to promote them. The module

offers an experiential perspective, and this model also presents the results of the local active ageing diagnosis carried out by the City Council and local stakeholders. Its conclusions are discussed and visions are contrasted.

Module 2.

Social Maps. Using the social mapping technique, participants explore what the social supports for active ageing are. They also design support maps (family, friends, etc.) and activators of active ageing. This is experiential work on the importance of social bonding and the competences for its development (tolerance, etc.). This module deals with topics such as care and immigration, unwanted loneliness and social relations, community supports.

Module 3.

Futures mapping. Using foresight techniques, requiring work of projection and shared vision of the future, participants explore the probable and desirable futures of a local active ageing strategy. This module explores the dynamics of anticipation, futures evaluation, evaluation of current practices and transition planning.

Module 4.

Pilot Action. Using rapid prototyping techniques, participants design a Pilot Action to address a local social challenge. This module incorporates the experiences of the previous modules and uses these learning experiences for the design of the Pilot Action. Pilot Actions have a short-term objective, are achievable and assessable and are capable of being sustained by a learning community.

Evaluation tool

The GizarteLab program incorporates a system of self-assessment of the competences developed by the participants in the various workshops. The competences evaluated are: leadership, problem analysis, problem solving, sense of initiative, teamwork, tolerance of differences, effective communication and anticipation. The form is filled in by each participant both at the beginning and at the end of the process so that the evolution of each participant can be assessed.

Impact

The impact of a GizarteLab can be considered at various levels. On the one hand, there is the impact on the individual person participating in the laboratory, who is armed with a new theoretical approach and acquires or reinforces those transition competences that are key to their personal future. On the other hand, the community created by these people is directly interpellated and empowered, so that it becomes an active subject and object of initiatives that seek to successfully meet the transitional challenges.

Another level of impact is produced in the organizing institution (city council or other) which, evidently, sees its relationship with citizens improved and its perception of the latter enhanced with the aim of improving aspects such as alienation towards the political class and

collaborative governance. At the end of the day, GizarteLab functions as an interface between citizens and public institutions.

Ultimately, and in the medium term, there is a wider impact on local society itself, insofar as the results and experiences of the laboratory, in which the participants themselves are the protagonists, are disseminated.

Impact indicators

- Number of people involved in the workshops
- Degree of competences acquired
- Narrative created by participants
- Number of Pilot Actions designed
- Number of transition communities generated

Transition Communities

Design of the Community.

Instructors. The people who lead the Transition Communities have undergone a first experience of transition competence training. The leaders of the communities are invited to promote the implementation of new training experiences in their locality (with new users) (replication).

In this case, GizarteLab supports this new experience in which the leaders participate in the dynamization of the workshops. They have already had the experience, know the local diagnosis, and seek to expand the impact of the agile laboratories. The ultimate goal of this action is for the leaders to gain experience and to promote local active ageing development strategies autonomously and securely with the support of the City Council. The aim is to strengthen citizens' competences in order to promote their effective participation, creating a new interface mechanism between the City Council and citizens. GizarteLab facilitators provide conceptual and methodological support and advice to the communities to stabilize this mechanism.

Activators. The people who get involved in the community as instructors are encouraged by GizarteLab to activate Pilot Actions at a local level. This includes offering support to the leaders to obtain resources (public/private) in order to implement Pilot Actions (wholly or partially). In this case, GizarteLab supports the creation of social spin-offs, led by citizens, that get involved in developing the local ecosystem of active and healthy ageing. GizarteLab facilitators provide conceptual and methodological support and advice to promote Pilot Actions.

Potential impact

Bearing in mind that the GizarteLab model, for the most part, acts locally, one might think that its impact from the communication point of view would also be local. However, as the

program develops and the network of local laboratories grows, the impact of both the program and its communicative actions will tend to be increasingly greater.

Moreover, the participatory, experimental and dissemination effect of the program itself deliberately seeks word-of-mouth among citizens and among town councils and supra-municipal institutions.

6. Evaluation and closure

Evaluation model and indicators

Three dimensions are used to evaluate GizarteLab:

a. Social impact

- Number of participants per GizarteLab (by gender, and other variables)
- Number of communities generated
- Narratives that emerged
- Degree of development of transitional competences
- Degree of user satisfaction
- Number of Pilot Actions designed

b. Institutional impact

- Number of agreements with City Councils
- Degree of transformation of local transition policies
- Degree of transferability of Pilot Actions

Tools

- Transition Competence Assessment Questionnaire
- Degree of user satisfaction questionnaire
- Assessment of the degree of institutional integration of the transition policies (interview questionnaire of local council leaders)
- Assessment of the transitional potential of the solution bank (potential impact questionnaire).

7. Final reflections

The GizarteLab program began in January 2019 and has been developed in various municipalities in the Basque Country (Legazpi, Laudio, Deba, Beasain, Arrasate and Donostia-San Sebastian) thanks to the sponsorship of the Basque Government and the Provincial Council of Gipuzkoa. In addition, during the confinement caused by the Covid 19 pandemic, two GizarteLab laboratories were carried out in their online format.

As the program becomes more far-reaching and shows a high level of complementarity with other initiatives and actions carried out at provincial level, for example, by the Provincial Council of Gipuzkoa through the Adinberri reference center, it is constantly evolving. It has been characterized as favoring a greater connection between local leaders and citizens, as well as favoring the shared definition of new local agendas capable of tackling social and environmental challenges and problems previously overshadowed by political conflict and violence.

One of the most innovative aspects of the GizarteLab program is precisely the theoretical-practical approach adopted on transitions based on theoretical and academic knowledge and on the practical knowledge provided by local and community agents. GizarteLab connects perfectly with Eusko Ikaskuntza's founding objectives aimed at placing academic reflection at the service of the development of public policies and citizens' needs. In short, the program is committed to the development of transition communities at a local level, involving expert knowledge, but without renouncing the experiential knowledge provided by the citizens themselves.

However, the GizarteLab program assumes that transition management is not a simple or problem-free task, due to its wholly political and conflictive nature. In fact, the momentum of transitions invariably confronts those sectors that strive to maintain the status quo and the pre-established order. Although they are guided by the hope and aspiration for social improvement, transition initiatives very often clash with conservative inertia, which tends to delegitimize the proposals put forward, especially if they present radical innovations on the margins of hegemonic practices. For this reason, GizarteLab seeks to activate on-going negotiations at the local level of *top-down* institutional actions carried out by municipal governments and democratizing community initiatives that promote *bottom up* social transformation through social mobilization and political subjectivation.

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