DESIGN THINKING IN 25 SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ORDER TO FOSTER PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN DEMOCRATIC LIFE. THE CASE OF GAZTEEN GIPUZKOA

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Abstract

Societies are undergoing great socio-economic, cultural and political transformations. The nature of these wicked problems (Buchanan, 1992) requires the deployment of a new model of governance based on contemporary relationships between government and the citizenry. Schools have a critical function regarding developing skills and abilities related to democracy and the old ways of teaching are no longer useful for this end.

While design thinking has been included in numerous initiatives within the classroom in Gipuzkoa, often achieving promising results, linking this to foster democratic values remains a largely underdeveloped area of work.

This paper investigates the design and implementation of design thinking to foster democratic values in 25 secondary schools of the territory of Gipuzkoa which have participated in the Gazteen Gipuzkoa Project, within the Etorkizuna Eraikiz Initiative.

With this article, we seek to respond to some questions regarding, first the role of design thinking in the promotion of youth participation in democratic life, second, the utility of design thinking in developing innovative competencies in students and finally, questioning the value of design thinking as an effective tool for developing a critical citizenry.

The structure of this article is as follows. After introducing to the reflection about the crisis of the democracy, we analyze the way in which young people are participating in politics (Section 2). In section 3, the article continues with presenting the relation of the design thinking approach to foster democratic values. Section 4 describes the Gazteen Gipuzkoa project emphasizing specifically the design and methodology used with the students in the classroom to reflect about challenges of the territory and propose solution to them. Section 5 presents some main results obtained from the different experiences carried out by the schools while section 6 presents the results from the impact assessment of the project and finally Section 7 provides key insights from the project.

Keywords

Public sector innovation, design thinking, democracy, innovation in politics, Collaborative governance, Etorkizuna Eraikiz, Gazteen Gipuzkoa, Education for Democracy

1. INTRODUCTION

The economic and financial crisis of 2008, its duration and consequences as well as the weak response of the governments in coping with the complex problems which arose has provoked questioning of the democratic system and has also contributed to a major gap in the public perceptions about it.

Over the last three decades, trust in institutions has precipitously declined across Western Europe. So has the confidence of citizens in political parties and parties membership. Instead, populist parties or movements as well as antisystem parties have started to gain momentum. Many scholars acknowledge that "government legitimacy,"

or support for particular governments, has declined. This statement is supported by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance affirming that "there is evidence of a growing disconnect between politicians and the electorate. Transnational challenges related to inequality, migration and globalization are complex problems that challenge democratic institutions to respond effectively to public concerns, causing a decline in trust and legitimacy in democratic governance" (IDEA, 2017)

Three factors are prominent with regard to these disaffections, these are:

- Decrease in electoral participation as well as a poor perception of the political class as reflected in the opinion polls. Disaffection of the citizens towards the democratic system still remains a big concern of the European countries. In the Basque Country according to the University of the Basque Country, 70% of the citizenry express to be dissatisfied with the performance of the democratic system (UPV/EHU, 2019).

- The eruption of non-traditional social entities that has changed the nature of the representation of the citizenry.

- The existence of social mobilization through social movements that use different ways of public questioning as a way of socio-political participation.

These above three elements are creating a distance between the citizenry and Politics, in its traditional sense, as well as casting doubt upon the genuine possibility of participation in the political decision-making process, as a result of all this, citizens do not want to engage more in politics (Hibbings & Theiss-Morse, 2002).

Besides all this, we are immersed in a century, the XXI century, which is characterized by a wide range of complex and multifaceted social challenges, also known

as wicked problems, to which simple, traditional and unilateral solutions are difficult to pinpoint.

In this context of the crisis of governability and with the outbreak of the wicked problems we can say that democracy faces many challenges (Parvin and Sanders, 2018). Up to date it is increasingly prominent the need to find new ways of connecting Society and Government.

The complexity of governance in societies (Koiman, 2000, p.163) represents fertile territory for the promotion of new theories about Governance, understood as a political strategy undertaken by governments to establish a new relationship between Government and Society that overcomes the limitations of the traditional form of citizenry-participation in political affairs, beyond mere electoral participation.

Contrary to a concept of Governability that represents only the capacity of governments to generate and apply policies that merely respond to social problems, Governance, understood as a wider concept, seeks the inclusion of a diversity of actors, both social and private, in political decision making, and thus embracing a broader and more systemic notion of Governance (Aguilar Villanueva, 2016). While the former idea defends the strengthening of institutions, that is to say, it puts the emphasis on the powers of governments, the latter puts forwards a new form of Government-Society relationships based on collaboration that simultaneously promotes the creation of institutionalized mechanisms of exchange and the definition of shared solutions to public issues, that steer itself away from a top-down approach to develop a more connected and networked one.

In sum, as a respond to government's inability to adequately address social complexities and against a background of mistrust, collaborative governance (Emerson,

Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2011; Lathrop & Luma, 2010; Sorensen & Torfing, 2012 cited in Barandiaran X. & Luna A., Unceta A., 2017), emerges as a way of collective action through which the goals and the means to achieve the common expected objectives of society are defined. This new approach has been for almost two decades pushed forward by the European Commission ((Barandiaran & Luna, 2018) to whom it represents a key pillar for an inclusive, peaceful and prosperous democracy (Vesnic-Alujevic, et al., 2019).

Listening and serving the needs of the citizenry demands transforming the traditional ways of relationship between Government and Society, the modes of participating in the public arena and also the forms of involving within the community, in sum, a new way of governing ourselves (Rhodes, 1996 cited in Unceta & Barandiaran, 2019).

Therefore, the Provincial Government of Gipuzkoa is calling for the creation of a new model of transformative governance, that is more open and collaborative. It is within this Governance approach that the Etorkizuna Eraikiz Initiative – *Building the future in Basque language*-has been founded and is its *raison d'être*. It creates a new political landscape in which new actors are incorporated in a joint effort to reshape the future challenges of the territory by developing a new way of designing and implementing public policies. And all this, without abandoning effectiveness and efficiency which are criteria associated with governability. As such, Etorkizuna Eraikiz is gaining momentum as an innovative way of doing politics towards a co-responsible decision-making process in which all the actors in the territory (including the citizenry) decide and face its own challenges following a set of shared values, norms as well as principles (Barandiaran & Luna, 2018).

Moreover, the government of Gipuzkoa strongly believes that the solutions to the current challenges of our societies are closely linked to a set of human, technical, knowledge and relationship based resources that are interacting in the territory and thus forming a real ecosystem (Official Gazzette of Gipuzkoa, March 15. 2018).

In this framework, according to the Bertelsmann Foundation, design thinking may offer a great opportunity to rethink the relationship between political leaders and citizens, to create opportunities for inclusive and innovative co-creation of public policy and thus closing the widening gaps dividing our societies (Niersbach, St. Gallen Symposium 2017).

2. YOUNG PEOPLE AND PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS

Participation is an essential element of citizenship in a democratic society. In recent years we observe an increasing disinterest of young people in politics as well as in engaging in political parties. Gipuzkoa institutions and organizations repeatedly emphasize the importance of youth participation to foster active citizenship.

In 2014, the Association des États Généraux des Étudiants de L'Europe carried out research in order to illustrate the main barriers to real political participation of young people. According to this research, "the dissatisfaction with politicians, together with the lack of trust towards governments, is seen as the strongest barrier to participation that young people face; around 40% of the respondents expressed that this is their main obstacle to participation in democracy" (Position Paper on Youth Participation in Democratic Processes, 2014). This leads us to reflect how politicians have disconnected from the young people by not listening to them and no considering their specifics needs and demands (Fahny, 2006; Delli Carpinni, 2000 cited in Garcia Albacete, 2014).

While some voices denounce the fact that young people have been turning away from established forms of democratic participation, other voices support the idea that young people are participating in politics through alternative or innovation forms of participation that replace the traditional ones. This does not mean that young citizens reject democracy and participation as such but we are witness to New and innovative forms of youth participation in the decision-making processes. The way of understanding political spheres does not remain the same as it was in the traditional way. The mode of living politics among young people is becoming "increasingly diverse, non-exclusive and incompatible with traditional modes of engagement" (Kopert, et al., 6 November 2013). However, voting is not the only unique way of participation in the Democratic arena. Following Fernando Pindado's reflection "there is another dimension of the democratic system that does not consist only in voting" (Pindado, et al., 2002). There are multiple activities in which young people can participate and involve themselves in the design of the future societies they live in. For example, they can participate in a "deliberative and dialogical dimension" in which young people can share opinions, formulate ideas and figure out solutions that could be incorporated into public policies. Supporting this idea, there is a firm consensus regarding the scope of participation that goes beyond the single action of participating towards the notion of influencing on the decision making process to help building a better society (IDEA, 2017).

Within the framework of Etorkizuna Eraikiz and responding to its founding principles, young people are considered as key agents of change. Having the participation of youth in the decision-making processes strengthens the democratic system and the development and progress of societies (International Institute for State of Democracy and Elections, 2017).

The recognition of the school as a space for socialization and training in citizenship for democracy is promoted by the Etorkizuna Eraikiz initiative. Specifically, this understanding of the importance of the school in boosting democratic values is reflected in the regulatory basis of the 2018 Call for Innovative Projects. This document establishes one of the categories eligible for subsidy, that is: "promoting the participation of people of school age, and in general, of young people in the reflection and collective construction that Etorkizuna Eraikiz represents" (Official Gazzette of Gipuzkoa, 2018, n° 53, p.2).

Moreover, the Provincial Government of Gipuzkoa shares the standpoint that young participation involves both where young people can express their views and opinions but also opportunities for decision makers to listen to those views and opinions and to take them into account.

But democracy is an issue that must be learnt. Many scholars agree that in order to foster democracy "it is important to have informed citizenship and build capacities for participatory and deliberative practices (Vesnic-Alujevic, et al., 2019, p. 21). Thus, this opportunity should be used by the education system to teach students how to operate in the democratic arena and how to debate and propose policy solutions to contemporary issues. Education has a key role to do more than prepare students for the world of work. It needs to "equip students with the skills they need to become active, responsible and engaged citizens" (OECD, 2018).

In order to do this, design thinking has emerged as a value methodology to include citizen opinions into the policy formulation system, shifting paradigms and creating a new decision making process. Furthermore, it is also capable of improving the quality of democratic institutions and procedures that frame and regulate our lives as citizens. And

finally, design thinking addresses the opportunities for citizens to participate in democratic processes breaking "the gap between what governments deliver and what citizens expect from governments" (Mintrom & Luetjens, 2016).

3. DESIGN THINKING AND ITS RELATION TO FOSTERING DEMOCRATIC VALUES

In this section, we are giving a short overview and definition of main concepts and debates around the design thinking methodology and its relation with democracy. Our goal is not to provide a systematic literature review, but to present and define key issues that are important to understand the context in which Gazteen Gipuzkoa emerges.

The origins of the design thinking can be traced back to the 1950s and more specifically rooted in the work of John E. Arnold who described design thinking as a systemic problem-solving methodology (Fiell & Fiell, 2019).

Thus, originally it was firstly coined to refer to creative strategies implemented by designers to develop new products, and after it was linked to an innovative way of thinking used by many actors related to the business field to fulfil customer's needs. In recent years, design thinking has been incorporated into many fields such as Education. Healthcare (Mazzini 2015 cited in Vesnic-Alujevic, et al., 2019) or the formulation of Public Policies in government (Bason 2014 cited in Vesnic-Alujevic, et al., 2019) just to mention a few.

Many scholars of the Design Thinking research agree that there is not a single definition of design thinking. Sometimes it is defined as a mindset that focuses on how to look at challenges around us, helping us to be more open to innovation, at other times it is defined as a process while finally it can be defined as a toolbox (Brenner, et al., 2016),

(Koiko, J. 2015 cited in Bayle M, 2018) made up of a set of tools, methods, and processes that help us develop new answers to challenges. Tools used in Design Thinking come from different areas such as management, creativity, communication or ethnography, and so on.

What we can extract from all these positions is the fact that design thinking is characterised by some principles that are inherent to it, these are:

Design Thinking is a Human-Centred approach. Not only does it focus on creating products and services that are human centered, but the process itself is also deeply human (Carrol, 2014). Design thinking relies on the ability to be intuitive, to recognize patterns, to construct ideas that have emotional meaning as well as being functional, just to mention a few.

Design Thinking is a process for problem solving as well as for solution solving. Regarding the former it is important to have an accurate approach to the problem definition. Design thinking underlines the value of a well-defined problem. While concerning the latter, it is important to point out that in this space, ideas have to be transformed into practical and tangible solutions.

Design thinking combines divergent and convergent thinking. According to the Design Council in every creative process "a number of possible ideas are created (divergent thinking) before refining and narrowing down to the best idea (convergent thinking)" (Bayle, 2018). The former one is linked to "creating choices" while the latter is linked to "making choices" (Brown, 2009, p. 67 cited in Bayle, 2018).

Design Thinking is end-user orientation. It leads to solutions that are progressively reviewed by listening to end-users and engaging them in shaping decisions. It also

develops a process in which solutions are adapted according to the problems at hand. (UNDP. Global Center for Public Service Excellence, 2014).

Encourage a collaborative approach. Supported on the above idea, design thinking is based on collaboration. Therefore, teamworking and all the skills needed to promote collaborative working are key in training and teaching the methodology.

Design thinking is iterative. One of the more prominent features of Design thinking is not a linear or sequential process. Information has to be used over and over again in order to reframe the problem as well as to meet the best possible solution to the problem. Therefore, we have to avoid the idea of linearity and follow a circular logic of the process.

Concerning this paper, we will focus on the definition on design thinking offered by IDEO that refers to it as "an innovative and human centered mindset and methodology to problem solving and develop solutions to complex social, economic and environmental problems". We complement it with the definition offered by Kelly to whom design thinking in education is "an orientation to learning that encompasses active problem solving and marshaling one's ability to create impactful change. It builds on the development of creative confidence that is both resilient and highly optimistic." (Kelly, 2012, p. 225). Thus, by merging these two definitions we want to embrace the idea of design thinking as a mindset, a process and a toolbox, depending on how it is being used, but we emphasis also in the idea of design thinking as a methodology that is based on collaborative work as well as on the generation of confidence.

As with the definition, there is also not common agreement on the number of steps included in the process of design thinking. Since the 7 steps model of Herbert Simon, many have been its variants, covering a range that comes from 3 to 7 (Bayle, 2018).

Among the most popular models we can find the 5-steps proposal (Empathise, Define, Ideate, Prototype and Test) of the d.school[1], and a similar model supported by IDEO[2] to whom design thinking is developed through 5 steps these are: Discovery, Interpretation, Ideation, Experimentation and Evolution (IDEO , s.f.). In 2004, the Design Council created the "Double Diamond" model makes up of 4 phases that are quite similar to the previous ones (Bayle, 2018). This model is based on the 4 Ds (discover, define, develop and deliver) and puts emphasis on the iterative nature of the design thinking.

Indeed, what all these models have in common it is he understanding of design thinking as a no linear model in which problems and solutions are repeatedly being questioned, incorporating the feedback to improve the ideas.

In this sense, we can state that design thinking has been proven as a useful tool to cope with the complex challenges of our societies.

4. GAZTEEN GIPUZKOA PROJECT

The Gazteen Gipuzkoa project was submitted and approved in 2018 within the framework of the third call for innovation projects of the Etorkizuna Eraikiz initiative. The project was carried out by the 25 secondaries schools of Gipuzkoa, and was supervised by the University of the Basque Country and the Provincial Government of Gipuzkoa. It was also funded by both, the Etorkizuna Eraikiz initiative as well as the Erasmus Plus programme, by its key action 3. The purpose of the project was to develop skills for citizenship inside the school, and, thus, promote the definition of current challenges of

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[1] D.school is the popular name of the Hasso-Planner Institute of Design.
[2] IDEO is a global design company committed to creating positive impact.

the territory from the youth's perspective using the design thinking methodology. Unlike other similar projects and initiatives, this new approach aimed at building and managing the entire project based on young people's input and participation.

In addition to this, the project included other objectives related to the development of skills in young people, such as communicative skills (written, oral and digital): functional skills, critical thinking and the capacity for reflection; as well as technical skills, such as "living together" skills and other "life-skills".

The project was aimed at students of secondary schools from the following types of schools: public, "ikastola" (a Basque language school) and semi-private schools in Gipuzkoa. Over 506 students, aged 15-18, of 25 schools in Gipuzkoa participated from April to December 2018 in the Gazteen Gipuzkoa project that examined the following questions:

- From your perspective, what are the main challenges of our territory?
- What could be possible solutions to tackle these challenges? How do you imagine Gipuzkoa in the following years? How Gipuzkoa could look like in 2026 (and beyond)?

Therefore, this project constitutes a relatively new idea of developing an innovative experience to involve students in the formulation of the challenges of the territory. In the following lines, different aspects of the design, methodology and main results of the project are presented.

4.1 The Design of the Gazteen Gipuzkoa Project

The Gazteen Gipuzkoa project started in February 2018 and finalised in November 2018 therefore it was implemented along 10 months. In order to accomplish it, the project was carried out through three phases, these are:

Phase I Awareness. A first presentation meeting was held. This meeting was organized by the Provincial Council of Gipuzkoa and developed in the "Foral Palace". Subsequently, 5 meetings were held to present the project with the participation of students and teachers from those schools interested in being part of the project. In all these meetings, a total of 454 young people belonging to 25 schools in the territory took part.

Phase II. Analysis of the challenges and preparation of the proposals. In order to carry out each project, each school organized four sessions in which the students could have the opportunity to develop different skills, such as:

- Identification of the challenge or challenges. Analysis of the context, identification of the challenges and solutions, reflections, analysis of the motivation for research, definition of tasks and teamwork

- Team building. Collecting data and teamwork to take advantage of the skills and competencies of each team member.

- Decision making about the challenges and the solutions. Definition of the methodology of the project and the final type of work that would be shown as well as, evaluation of the work.

- Execution. Carrying out of the works to be presented.

Phase III. Exhibition of the works. Once the previous phase has been fulfilled, 8 meetings to present the works were organised in the Etorkizuna Eraikiz Gunea (a

laboratory to design public policies) in which around 506 students from 25 participating schools took part.

4.2 Methodology of the Gazteen Gipuzkoa Project. A design thinking methodology in order to meet the challenges and provide solutions for the territory.

Before describing the Design Thinking approach used by the Gazteen Gipuzkoa project, it is important to point out that specific methods and tools were used while going through the process steps.

As stated above, the design thinking process is best thought of as a system of overlapping steps rather than a sequence of phases, and so it is the design thinking process adopted by the Gazteen Gipuzkoa project. As such, the preferred approach to social innovation is an example of design thinking in action.

Design thinking results from a number of essential components that follow a process of empathizing, co-creating, scaling, prototyping, experimenting and testing. In the case of Gazteen Gipuzkoa, the processes have been adapted but follow the same logic. Thus, a six-steps methodology of Design Thinking was applied as it is shown on the image below.

Figure 1. Gazteen Gipuzkoa's processes

1. Knowledge Integration

2. Searching options

3. Prototype

4. Searching the best idea

5. Socializing within the team

6. Public Presentation

Source. Elaborated by the authors

The first step is Knowledge Integration. The aim of this step is to integrate the diverse and different knowledge of the participants. Students are asked to investigate about the challenges of the territory and to look into possible solutions. Students were introduced to a situation, that required further analysis. They had to understand what the real and concrete problems are, how they can evolve in the future and then try to figure out solutions to them.

In this phase, in which students had to explore and understand insights from the community was characterized by a mix of qualitative methods such as interviewing or and quantitative methods such as surveys.

Following the philosophy of the project that encourages creative thinking of participants, students were given to choose a realistic problem rather than a pre-defined one. However, due to the fact that some of the participants found this first step difficult to accomplish and that was considered risky for the future of the project, a broad range of topics were offered as a reference and guide.

In this first step, the project brings students to both problem finding and problem solving, so students had the possibility to conduct their own research to propose real solutions to both contextual problems and global problems.

Framing the problem correctly from the start was a pre-condition for the effective unfolding of the following steps.

The second step is Researching options. Once the challenges have been identified and have been completely informed by the factors that affect them, it starts the Ideas Generation Activity through which several solutions are proposed and analyzed. Participants after the research work, started a process of synthesis to distill what they experimented, observed, and gathered into insights that can lead to solutions or opportunities.

Once the students have collated all their research, they must organize and make sense of it all. Again, in the case of Gazteen Gipuzkoa, after the students have gathered all the research about the problems they need to figure out what to do with that information.

It is in this phase when the divergent thinking evolves towards converging thinking by bringing together those divergent aspects and prioritizing ideas. In this sense, the methodology of the project set the user-centered design at the core of the implementation.

Subsequently, the third step is Prototyping the Solution. In this step, the different groups of students transition into brainstorming exercises in order to generate a varied range of ideas first to clearly select the challenge and second to figure out two or three possible and adequate solutions to the challenge which could be tested, iterated and

prototyped. This exercise allows students to identify unforeseen and unintended consequences of the undertaken solution, and therefore, making them acknowledge the importance of prototyping public policies.

The fourth step consists of Searching for the Best Solution. In each school, the different groups of students applied a methodology to select the best idea. At this moment, students have experimented with the iterative nature of the Design Thinking methodology. Projects may loop back from knowledge integration to prototyping. Therefore, students must be open not just to redefine the initial idea but also to explore new directions. For the first time this step was observed as one of the most difficult aspects of the methodology, at time resulting in chaos, but over the life of the project, participants understood that Design Thinking implies a non-linear way of thinking towards problem solving.

Step number 5 is Socialization within the groups. A sort of Peer-review assessment was undertaken in each school. The different groups of students within the same school offered public presentations of their works to their fellow students. The aim of this activity is to put in common the challenges and proposals identified, apply improvements to the works and thus promote a mutual learning process.

Step number 6. Public presentation of the proposals. In this step, each group of students present the challenge as well as the identified solutions within a set of public sessions.

In Gazteen Gipuzkoa project, learning happened throughout the processes, from the early research phase to the final presentation sessions, and thus supporting the idea that design thinking is not a linear model. This allowed students and teachers to focus more

on the processes to gain a range of knowledge, competencies or experiences than on the development of the product.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that design thinking and social innovation have a close relationship. The former is usually used for the development of many social innovations. In this sense, we can state that in the case of Gazteen Gipuzkoa students were trained with both approaches from social innovation as well as design thinking.

5. MAIN RESULTS AND FNDINGS OF THE PROJECT

High rate of participation of schools, teachers and the students. This is the first time in which a project of these characteristics has been developed in the territory. Although at the beginning of the project, it was very difficult to engage schools in it, all the participants have shown great commitment to the aim of the project. 25 schools, around 506 students, aged 15-18, of which 56,8% were female, 39,4% male and 3,5% did not indicate the gender. In the project also participate more than 50 teachers supervising and giving technical support to the students. The participating schools responded to the following typology: 7 from the semi-private schools, 9 from ikastola and 10 from the public school.

Diverse topics. Asking for the choice of whether giving predefined topics or a broad range of topics was challenging for the project. Some schools found it difficult to encourage students to make a prospective exercise and imagine the challenges of the territory while trying to find out solutions to them. Therefore, we offered some general and broad topics as a way of helping students to integrate themselves into the project at the introductory stage, although in order to encourage creative thinking of students we didn't want to force students or restrict their choices.

As a result, many issues were presented by the students but all of them reflected the main concerns of the territory about the future, with topics regarding sustainability, social and economic issues as well as cultural concerns. 25 topics covering 40 challenges were proposed by the students which were grouped in 7 categories, these are: Relationships, housing, environment, social issues, environment and work, ageing, education and work. Thus, the works included topics such as: climate change, reduction of consumption of energy, treatment of waste, the future of the labour market, the ageing of society, gender issues (domestic violence), the future of education or the lack of housing, among others. As observed in the figure below, Social Issues represents the category with the highest number of topics because it covers issues that are close to the local reality such as migration or the problem of substance abuse.

Figure 2. Categories of topics developed by the students
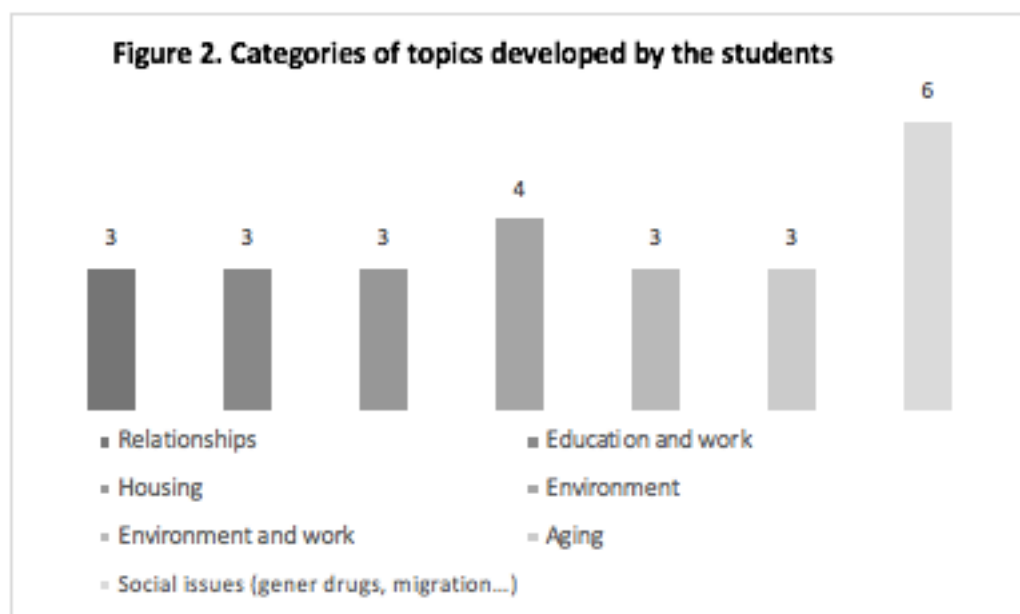
Source: Elaborated by the authors

Regarding the Gazteen Gipuzkoa project, as stated above, giving students options to choose a realistic problem was challenging for them at the beginning, once this initial

reactive phase was overcome, we observed and acknowledged from experience that it was important that students take the responsibility to find the topic and choose the right solutions. That is, the closer they feel to the problem the better the solution designed.

Diverse typology of works in the class, the students came up with a series of projects with increasing complexity in order to learn the process of design as a tool to help them address the challenges. The outputs of the design work were presented as the making of several short-films to highlight each topic; theatrical performance to illustrate concerns and propose solutions; and photo gallery presentation about the topics, and so on.

Commitment of the students to the democratic life. Students at the beginning of the project showed their dissatisfaction with the way in which democracy was being developed. Specifically, they showed their lack of trust in political institutions. The project has supported a new commitment from the students to the future of the territory. In their opinion, this project has been very challenging and has awoken their interest about participation in the future design of Gipuzkoa. Some values like freedom, justice, equality, tolerance, the respect for others' opinions, the value of the word among others have been strengthened by the project. All these values have been exhibited in all the works the students have developed.

In addition to this, the students had the chance to experiment with democracy. They were encouraged to define their own projects, from the selection of the topic to be investigated to the definition of the format in which the work would be presented. To do this, they had to reach a common understanding within the group, as well as developing learning modes for tolerance and coexistence.

Supporting this idea, some students expressed the following statements:

" with more time , naturally it could figure out more and better solutions". Student of La Salle of Irun.

" the project was very interesting and it allowed us to start thinking and creating the future". Student of the high school of Zumaia.

" I am really pleased for participating in this project and also because our opinion to build the future of the territory was requested. I felt now my voice was listened".

Student of Toki Alai School.

Acquisition of skills. The students attested they felt satisfied with the project because they learnt a lot by developing capabilities such as reasoning and communication skill or research and critical thinking. Thanks to the project the students had the opportunity to acquire skills such as:

- Research skills**.** The students were asked to identify a problem in their communities and to develop sound projects about causes, consequences and the proposal of solutions to tackle the problem. In order to fulfil a whole process of the research project, students had to learn how to identify the problem and the challenge, how to approach the community to apply research methodologies such as questioning and interviews, and finally how to develop critical thinking to select useful information for the project.

- Team building skills. In each participating schools the students were divided into smaller groups in order to develop micro-projects about a topic. The students through this experience could learn how to deal with differences, how to make the most of each one (identifying the strengthen of each member of the team) and how to develop mechanisms of tolerance and trust.

- Communication skills. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages speaks of communicative competences of the language, which include linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences, and which -in turn- are integrated into the general competences of the individual, which are the following: knowledge (general knowledge of the world, sociocultural knowledge, intercultural awareness); know-how (skills and abilities); know-how (existential competence: relative to attitudes, motivations, values, beliefs, and so on; and the knowledge to learn (Naval, 1998). Regarding the results, it was noted that the activities within the classroom which promoted the development of communicative skills were oral presentations, collaborative learning and the preparation of essays.

Dissemination of the Works. Once the students finished their works, they were presented to other students in public presentations. Within this project, 8 sessions were organized in which in average 3 schools participated. It is noteworthy that all the sessions were carried out in the Etorkizuna Erakiz Gunea that is a space for testing and experimenting public policies created by the Provincial Government of Gipuzkoa.

In this way, they had the opportunity to contrast and work with each other. These works led to great knowledge transfer as students learnt from each other and had the opportunity to discuss their findings and experiences with their fellow peers. The results of this project will be shown to others schools that have not participated in this edition but could be part of following editions.

6. IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT

Special attention has to be offered to the findings provided by the impact assessment conducted within the project. Therefor these findings are being presented in a separate section.

The monitoring and assessment measurement of the project was developed through the implementation of and **Impact assessment Questionnaire** delivered to the students after each edition of the public presentation. The assessment aimed at gathering both quantitative and qualitative information about the experience of the students regarding their participation in the project. 370 students out of 506 answered the survey offering their opinions about how to improve the process of the project, obtaining interesting recommendations related mainly to the duration of the project, its presentation (regarding motivation to participate), the methodology and solutions to facilitate greater participation of young people in this kind of initiative. The main intention to conduct this assessment was to understand better if the Design-Thinking Approach was beneficial to foster greater interest in democracy and public participation of youth in the process of policy-making.

The gender distribution of the young people participating in the project survey, as shown in the figure below, indicates that 56,22% (in red) of the evaluation forms were completed by women while 39,73% (in black) were completed by men. 4,09% (in green) of the participants did not define their gender.

Figure 3. Gender distribution of respondents to the survey

56.22%

4.05%

39.73%
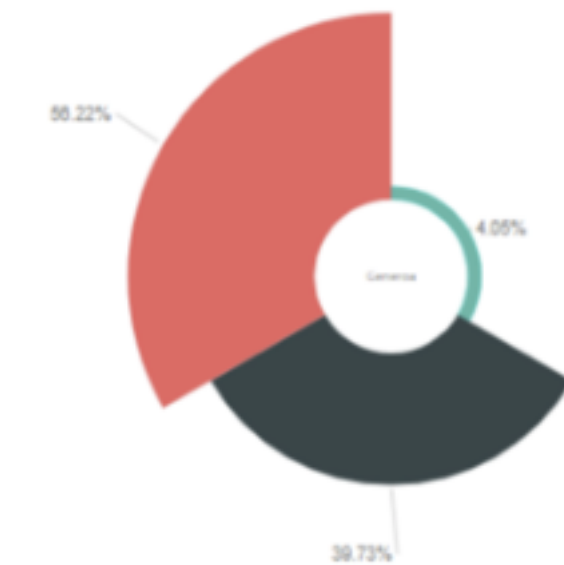
Source: Elaborated by the authors

With regard to the evaluation of the schools, 23 schools out of 25 completed the surveys. The two missing schools belong to the group of "public schools". The highest number of surveys completed was 35 by Mariaren Lagundia School while the lowest was 1 from Arizmendi Gaztelupe.

In the following lines, the data is grouped in order to respond to the following three questions:

1. In general, what is the level of satisfaction of the students with the project?

2. What is the overall assessment of the students about 8 specific dimensions regarding their experience in the project?

3. What is the overall assessment of the students about 6 more specific dimensions regarding the development of the works? (It is important to pint our that this question is closely linked to the evaluation of the Design Thinking methodology and the skills developed by it)

6.1 Level of satisfaction of the students with the project

On scale of 0 to 10, the satisfaction of the students with the project obtained a mark of

7,12 as observed in the following table.

Table. 1. Satisfaction with the project by gender

GENDER	AVERAGE MARK	# OF SURVEYS COMPLETED
MALE	7,13	147
FEMALE	7,12	208
OTHER	6,68	15
Average	7,12	370

Source. Prepared by the authors

This table also shows us results by gender from which we can extract the

following:

There are not any significance differences between the results presented by

women (7.12) and men (7.13). However, the most notable point regarding the evaluations

is presented by the "Others" with an average mark of 6.68. The reason for this low score

may be due to the fact that this group just completed a total number of 15 surveys.

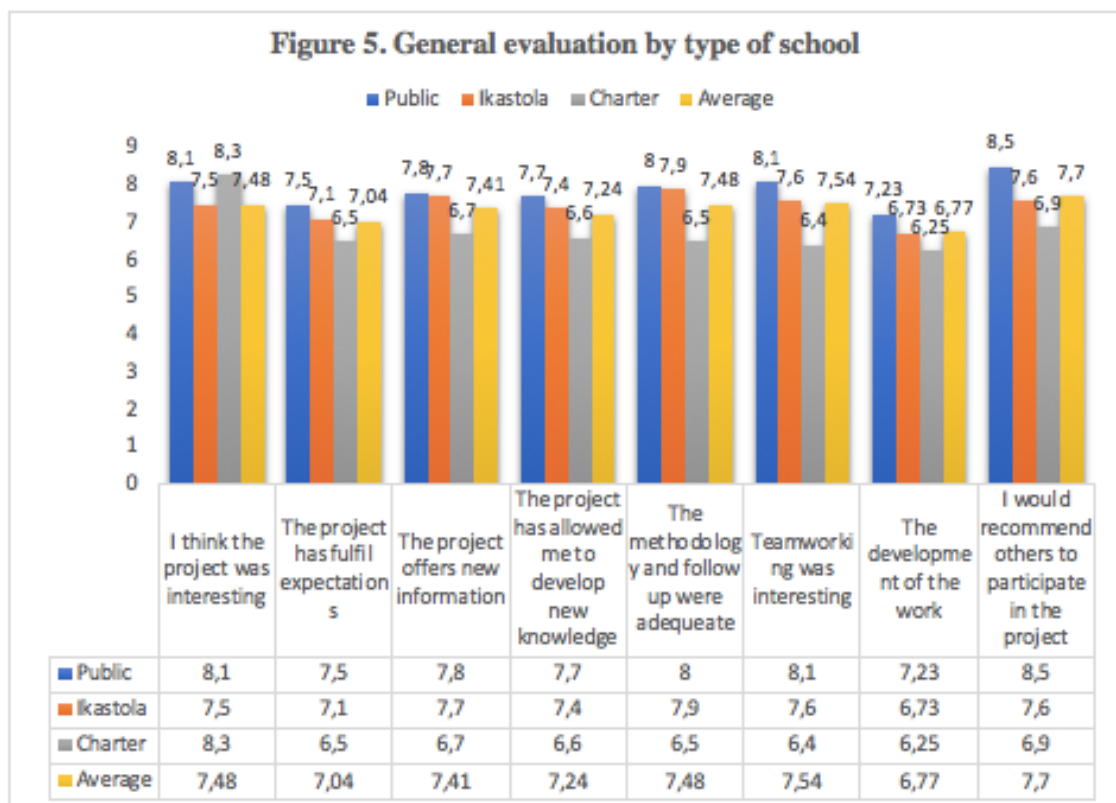Figure 4. Satisfaction with the project by type of school
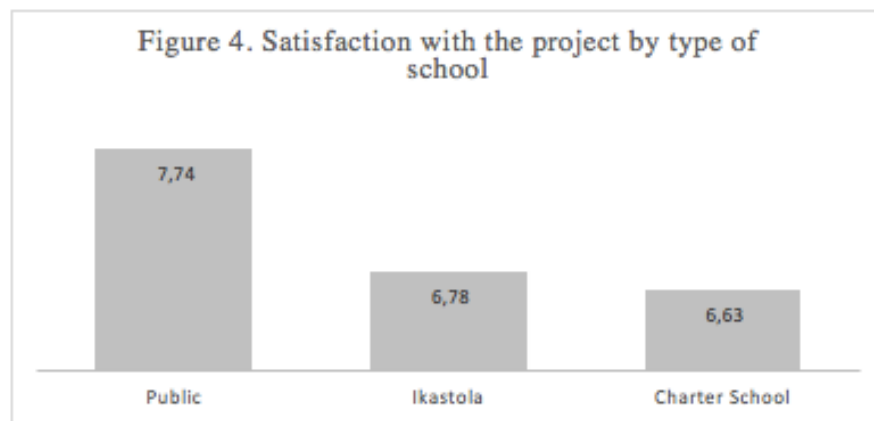
Source. Prepared by the authors

With regard to the evaluation of the general satisfaction with the project by type

of schools, results show in the figure above allow us to conclude that students from the

Public schools showed that they were more satisfied with the project that they peer from

the ikastola and charter schools. The average score given by the first ones was 7,74 while 6,78 was offered by the peers from ikastola and 6,63 by the students from the charter schools. Moreover, it is remarkable the good result obtained from the students of the public schools with a mark clearly above the average of 7,12 while the marks given by the ikastola and the charter schools were slightly below the average.

6.2 Overall assessment of the students' experience within the project

The students were also requested to answer about 8 dimensions regarding different interesting dimension such as: interest of the project, fulfilment of expectations, information offered, knowledge obtained, methodologies explained, strengths and weaknesses identified with regard to completing the works, the level of learning from experience, and recommendations for future editions.

Figure 5. General evaluation by type of school

	I think the project was interesting	The project has fulfil expectations	The project offers new information	The project has allowed me to develop new knowledge	The methodology and follow up were adequeate	Teamworking was interesting	The development of the work	I would recommend others to participate in the project
Public	8,1	7,5	7,8	7,7	8	8,1	7,23	8,5
Ikastola	7,5	7,1	7,7	7,4	7,9	7,6	6,73	7,6
Charter	8,3	6,5	6,7	6,6	6,5	6,4	6,25	6,9
Average	7,48	7,04	7,41	7,24	7,48	7,54	6,77	7,7

Source: Elaborated by the authors

The figure shown above provide us with several information that will be further described in the following lines. In general terms, results obtained from the figure support the next conclusions:

- 7 out of the 8 dimensions were highly valued with a mark above 7.

- No dimensions obtained negative value or what is to say under 5.

- "Recommend others to participate in the project" and "Team working" are the most valued dimensions. The former obtained the highest evaluation scores of all dimensions with an average score of 7.7 while the latter was the second-best rated dimension, with an average score of 7.54. This leads us to affirm that the project was positively evaluated by the students and that they also considered it very interesting working collaboratively with their peers.

- At the other end of the table, the "Development of the work" dimension received the lowest overall rating with a mark of 6,77. This score suggests that the students need to be continuously monitored and assessed by their teachers. However, it cannot be stated that this is a negative value. Quite the contrary, this score supports the idea that the project allowed the students to develop functional, technical as well as communicative skills. Due to the fact that this dimension is made up of 6 other criteria could result in this low mark. (These criteria will be presented later on in this section).

- In the range of 7.4, three dimensions could be found, these are: "The methodology and the follow-up have been adequate" (7.48), "the project is interesting" (7.48) and finally "The project offers new information" (7.41).

The same figure allows us to make a more in-depth analysis of the eight dimensions enabling us to identify differences between the values given to each

dimension by type of schools. Summarising the relevant information obtained from the analysis of the figure number 5 it can be stated that:

- Public school students valued the project very positively as they score the project with a mark between 7.23 and 8.5. Therefore, between its highest and lowest mark there is a deviation of just 1.3 points. These students also stated that they would recommend others to participate in a project like this. They granted this criterion with a mark of 8.5 because they think they the project is very interesting which rated with a mark of 7.23.

- Meanwhile, students of the Ikastolas, although they also valued very positively their satisfaction with the project its marks were in average slightly lower. Contrary to their fellows of the others type of schools, students of the Ikastolas granted "methodology and the follow-up" criteria with the highest mark, that is an average grade of 7.9 while the lowest mark was given to the "Development of the work" criteria.

- Finally, students of the charter schools expressed their satisfaction with the project giving a mark of 8.3 to the criteria "the project was interesting". This mark was the highest among the three types of participating schools that is somewhat surprising considering that the rest of the marks were notably below the average. As is the case for the Ikastolas, the lowest mark was grated to the "development of the work" criteria with a mark of 6.25.

6.3 Overall assessment of the students regarding the development of the works

As observed in the above section, the "development of works" dimension was evaluated with the lowest mark although still receiving positive values from 6.25 of charter schools to 7.23 of Public School, thus obtained an average mark of 6.77. The reason for this could

be explained by the diverse of criteria that were included into the dimension. Contrary to the remaining 7 dimensions, this dimension was made up of 6 more specific questions regarding the development of skills and the methodology, as follows.

- Learning team working

- Learning to respect others' opinions

- Learning to identify problems

- Learning to propose improvements and changes

- Learning to use statistics

- Learning to organize projects.

The figure 6, shown below, offers interesting information about the strengthens and weakness of the methodology.

- A first glance to the figure shows us a slight difference between the criteria. Specifically, regarding Learning to respect other' opinions, this category obtained a score of 7.3 while the category Learning to use statistics was not so well evaluated receiving a mark of 5.89.

- As stated in other section of this article, team working is a challenging task that has to be considered. It is at the core of the design thinking methodology due to its collaborative nature and therefore should be tackled accordingly since the beginning of the project. In students' opinion, at the initial stage it was difficult to learn how to work with others but at the end was a task that they evaluated very positively (6.6).

- Regarding the other two important categories for Design thinking that are Learning to identify problems and Learning to propose improvements and changes, students expressed that the project helped them to develop those skills,

specifically by developing critical thinking. Both categories received practically the same score (7).

In this sense, we can conclude that students felt satisfied with the skills developed by the project, specifically with the functional and communication skills (in close relation to the development of democratic values) while they felt disappointed with the development of technical skills, such as, learning the use of statistics, that from their perspective were sparsely addressed.

Figure 6. Criteria of Development of the works
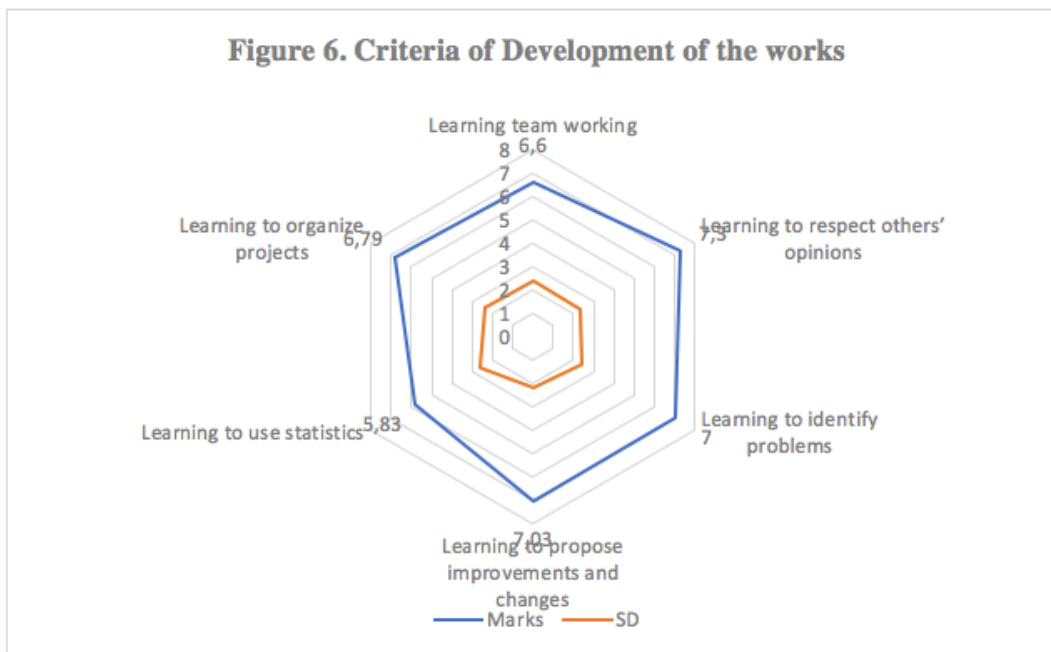
Source. Elaborated by the authors

7. CONCLUSIONS

Drawn upon the key insights and evidence gathered in the Gazteen Gipuzkoa project, the purpose of this section is to stress the main points emerged from the project first but also from the works themselves carried out by the students from February to November 2018. **The dialogue between politicians and young people must be encouraged**. An initial and noteworthy evidence from this project suggests that the dialogue between young

people and institutions should become a priority that should be cultivated further, in order to understand better their concerns, as well as to improve trust of young people in the democratic system. Through the life cycle of the project in each school, we witnessed the willingness of many students to participate in diverse deliberative sessions and share their opinions. This has been also stressed by some students who showed their support to this kind of project as expressed below:

"More projects like this should be promoted because we are the future". Student of Nazaret school.

"Thanks to the participation in this project our voice has been listened by politicians". Student of Zumaia High School

Design Thinking might result in an effective way to re-engage young people in democracy and policy making. Societies are continually trying to respond to the quick changes and transformations that are affecting them. This respond includes new methodologies, tools and learning resources that enable an innovative environment for creative thinking and innovation. Design thinking has emerged as an innovative and human centered approach to problem solving. From designers to public officials, this methodology has been used for both designing tangible as well as intangible solutions to the so-called wicked problems (Jones, 2010).

The Gazteen Gipuzkoa project used Design Thinking to provide the Etorkizuna Eraikiz initiative with input from the young people that might shape the future of the territory. The project represents an attempt to connect through the Design Thinking the challenges of the territory to the needs and expectations of the young people and therefore to involve them into the policy making process.

Design Thinking may well increase the ability of the young people to use their voices to improve their situation and support building the future of the territory. There is a general feeling among the young people that their voice is not heard by policy makers and that their opinion does not count. Thus, at the beginning of the project there were many resistances to participate in it as well as high distrust about its real value.

One of the findings of the Gazteen Gipuzkoa project is that the Design Thinking methodology tends to force students out of their comfort zone, which may lead to some initial resistance towards the project on the side of the students. That indicates that students are rather used to play a passive role as recipients of content-driven teaching.

Naturally, the fact that the project was designed to actively involve the students, forcing them to utterly engage in the respective topics, posed a challenge in the beginning. Still, the findings show that such a practical approach and the chance to positively contribute to building the future of the territory are huge motivators to the students.

Design thinking supports participants in understanding the complexity and ambiguity of challenges, and in reframing these challenges to support innovative responses, positioning participants as co-producing the future, for example by designing and implementing prototype interventions.

Design thinking promotes innovation, problem-solving, creativity as well as collaboration. Design Thinking helps students to understand the importance of focusing on the value in creating something that is beneficial for the users and is also something that they want to share and come back for.

Design Thinking helps students to be more curious about why things happen and are the way they are and also helps them to be observant and not just looking at things at the surface level. Both, curiosity and observance will ultimately lead students to see problems from new perspectives.

In the Gazteen Gipuzkoa project, Design Thinking also helps students to develop empathy, allowing them to open their minds and get an understanding of user's mental models and how the real world looks from the others' perspective. Thus, in students' opinion the methodology has promoted innovation, problem solving, creativity as well as collaboration.

Citizenship Education should be strengthened because citizens must be educated in democratic values. New literacies will be needed for the future. Futures literacies are needed to enable citizens to participate in anticipatory decision making, recognizing the context of uncertainty and complexity and building up individual and societal resilience to work collaboratively to address these.

Critical thinking should be nurtured, through the education system and beyond in the workplace and civil society, including understanding digital media but also other aspects of people's lives.

While Design Thinking has been included in numerous initiatives within the classroom in Gipuzkoa, often achieving promising results, linking this to foster democratic values remains a largely underdeveloped area of work.

The findings and recommendations resulting from the project are intended to inform the Etorkizuna Eraikiz program. In sum, the Gipuzkoa Gazteen project's main objective was to bring young people closer to both, politics as well as democracy,

facilitating the much-needed transformation of politics. More specifically, the project was expected to offer young people a space to contribute with their ideas to the construction of the Etorkizuna Eraikiz initiative. And therefore, to collaboratively design the Gipuzkoa of the future through a scientific approach by helping design the challenges of the territory and to create solutions according to reality.

Even though this project has generated successful results, the foremost challenge for the Gazteen Gipuzkoa project is how to put into practice the proposals of the students into the policy making process. Most challenging is the weak strategic approach to engage youth people in types as such as well as find sustainable ways to incorporate their voices in the formulation of public policies.

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