

# Democracy Innovation: What Can We Contribute? An international perspective and dialogue

**25<sup>th</sup> of June, 9:30 – 14:00**  
**Arantzazulab, Gandiaga Topagunea**

We are living in a concerning time marked by a growing authoritarian wave that challenges liberal democracies worldwide. Discussions about a "crisis of democracy" have emerged, reflected in widespread distrust of democratic institutions, political dissatisfaction, civic disengagement, the rise of totalitarian and individualistic attitudes, and the inability of public institutions to address social challenges with their current structures and tools.

At a time when democracy is increasingly under threat, we believe in the need to reaffirm our commitment to it and to deepen democratic culture.

In this context, there is a clear and notable commitment in our country's institutions to strengthening democracy—an effort that is not common in today's world. Various strategies have been launched to promote political innovation and new forms of governance within government structures, political parties, and public institutions, with the support of different social actors. The Basque context, with its strong tradition, institutional leadership, ongoing research efforts, and initiatives led by various social actors and democratic innovation groups—including institutions like Arantzazulab—has drawn international attention.

At the same time, many individuals, organisations, and progressive governments worldwide are working to deepen democracy and develop innovative responses to its challenges. This course aims to bring together these perspectives, highlighting the contributions that our own value system can make to global debates on democratic innovation. To this end, we will host internationally renowned experts who will provide a comparative perspective on the contributions we seek to make in this field.

Ultimately, this course aims to identify key insights for achieving qualitative advances in democratic renewal and governance transformation.

## Course Objectives

- Explore the strategies and initiatives of local institutions and key actors in fostering democratic culture and community building.
- Deepen our contribution to global debates on democracy innovation by grounding it in our value system and engaging in dialogue with local and international experts.
- Gain insights from international experts on strengthening democratic practices.
- Highlight the importance of deepening democratic culture in Basque society, bringing it into public debate, and encouraging institutional engagement in these dialogues.

## Program

**9:00 – 9:30** Registration

**9:30 – 9:45** Welcome and introduction by the course directors

**9:45 – 10:40** Keynote speech – Hélène Landemore (Yale University, USA, Professor and Researcher in Political Science): *"The market, the forum, and the jury: revisiting models of democracy"*

**10:40 – 11:35** Keynote speech – Michael Saward (University of Warwick, UK, Professor and Researcher in Politics and International Studies): *"Challenges of Democratic Design"*

**11:35 – 12:00** Coffee break

**12:00 – 12:45** Round table: Strategies and experiences of local institutions in deepening democratic culture and strengthening the sense of community.

- Asier Aranbarri, Presidency – Basque Government; Director of Social Innovation and the 2030 Agenda
- Xabier Otxandiano, Department of Governance, Digital Administration, and Self-Government - Basque Government; Deputy Minister for Institutional Relations
- Iosu Arraiz, General Deputy's Area - Provincial Council of Gipuzkoa; Director of Strategy and Etorkizuna Eraikiz director
- Ainhoa Arrona, Orkestra; Researcher
- Naiara Goia, Arantzazulab; Managing Director

**12:45 – 13:30** Round table: "Variations, scenarios, and opportunities for democracy in the 21st century". A conversation among the leaders of research and experimentation initiatives promoted by Arantzazulab.

- Andoni Eizagirre, Mondragon University
- Arantxa Mendiharat, Deliberativa
- Julen Mendoza, Kogarri
- Maria Ajuria Hernandez, Farapi & Co-creation Ecosystem promoted by Arantzazulab
- Beatriz Belmonte, Better Public Services and researcher in the "Democracy in the digital age" research promoted by Arantzazulab
- Ione Ardaiz Osacar, Arantzazulab

**13:30 – 14:00** Summary and closing remarks (Keynote speakers and course directors)

**14:00** Lunch at Gandiaga Topagunea Hall (cocktail-style to encourage participants networking)