

baketik

In search for peace

Herritarren erantzunak soberan gainditu ditu Baketik-etik sortutako parte-hartze aurreikuspenak. Zentro plurala, laikoa, ez konfesionala eta autonomoa da, eta urrian jarri zuten martxan Arantzazuko monasterioarekin batera, bakea bilatzeko adiskidetze sare soziala.

Last October a center associated with the Monastery of Arantzazu (Gipuzkoa) opened its doors for the sole purpose of promoting peace. The center is called Baketik ("coming from peace" in Euskara) and is promoted by the Franciscan Arantzazu Foundation. Its most immediate objective, which was to train a thousand so-called "reconciliation partners" by 2008 in order to create a "social reconciliation network," has been far exceeded, with nearly 2,000 people signing up for a course on the Ethical Conflict Management.

The center is open to people from all walks of life; it is non-secular, non-denominational and autonomous; its sphere of influence includes the family, schools, university, business, emerging social conflicts, internal

politics and external strife. It is a school aimed at teaching and promoting ethical ways to face all types of conflicts, using tools for prevention, mediation and reconciliation, based on courses and other activities.

The initial program and core of the center's proposal is the "Bider Mila" Project (multiplied by 1000), oriented towards educating society in peaceful co-existence and reconciliation. In this way, Baketik aims to reach out on a massive scale to teach the "basic notions of destructive conflict prevention, mediation and reconciliation by designing courses on ethical conflict management and creating a broad network of reconciliation agents." The people working with Baketik underscore that when they speak of conflicts, they not only refer to major political, international or religious disputes, but also – and very particularly – closer conflicts encountered in our own daily environment.

Snowball effect

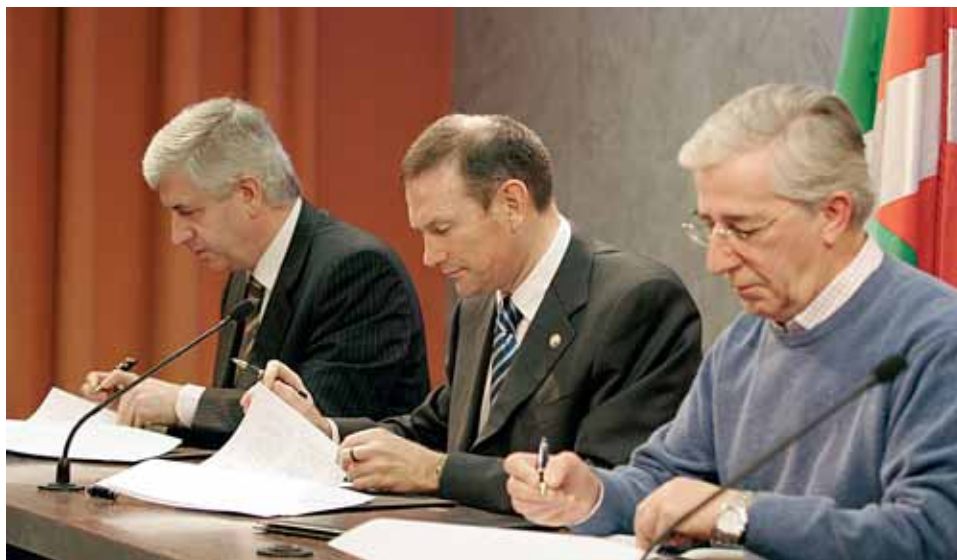
Bider Mila is hoping to create a "snowball effect for coexistence," according to the center's director, Jonan Fernández, in addition to "giving more and more



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Inauguration of the new Baketik Peace Centre in the Gandiaga Topagunea auditorium at Arantzazu.

Representatives of Baketik, the Basque Government and Eudel sign the agreement.



people the chance to acquire basic training in reconciliation." The training program consists of six- or ten-hour courses on the ethical management of conflicts distributed in three modules: prevention of conflicts, mediation, and reconciliation. Upon completion of the course, students are accredited by the center as "reconciliation agents." Fernández explained that after finishing the course and earning the diploma, "participants and others making up the network are not required to do anything extraordinary, other than making an effort to resolve conflicts ethically and staying connected to a network of information, documentation and experience sharing for the purpose of creating a culture of peace in their environment."

The initiative is planned to cover four large sectors. In education, for primary and secondary school teachers; in the university, both instructors and students; in local administration, aimed at mayors, councilors and municipal technical personnel; and in the scope of civil society, aimed at people who make up the network of associations. In the same way that it is good as many members of society to know how to properly render first aid in an emergency, the Bider Mila project sets out to provide a growing number of people from all walks of life with basic training in peaceful co-existence and reconciliation.

Baketik is offering a series of activities for 2007: In January and February, a pilot experience in the prevention of violent and racist behaviors in the school setting, using theatre as a tool; In March, a series of seminars on emerging conflicts; From June 4-10, a Week on Africa, the invisible continent, and in

July, a World Congress on Peace Education, in collaboration with the Columbia University Teachers College, New York.

Experts in dialogue and the culture of peace

Jonan Fernández, who for 13 years spearheaded Elkarrri, the Movement for Dialogue and Agreement, is now the director of Baketik. He is convinced that citizen participation in the search for peace is not only a matter of "having the right to give our opinion and make decisions," but that we must also "to learn to deal with conflict in an ethical manner and to commit ourselves to creating a culture of peace." Also involved in this project as members of the Advisory Committee are former General Director of UNESCO, Federico Mayor Zaragoza, and President of the Culture of Peace Foundation, author, and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, José Saramago.

This year the Peace Center signed an agreement with the Basque Government and Eudel by which they will receive 60,000 euros and 20,000 euros respectively. The agreement also includes "reconciliation" seminars geared towards mayors, councilors and local management authorities to address formulas for resolving conflict in their respective communities. The agreement was signed by Lehendakari Juan José Ibarretxe; the President of Eudel, Karmelo Sáinz de la Maza; the President Fundación Arantzazu, José María Arregi, and the Director of Baketik, Jonan Fernández. The initiative is connected to the agreement signed in January by Eudel and the Basque Government to promote public participation in building peace and achieving political normalization in the Basque Autonomous Community, Navarra and Iparralde, with an eye to reconstructing social dialogue following the end of the ETA ceasefire.

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