

# What is elkarri?

The social movement for dialogue and agreement, elkarri, was born on 20th December 1992. elkarri's aim ever since has been to work towards transforming the conflict and violent situation in the Basque Country into a situation of dialogue and agreement.

The idea adds a dynamic and realistic approach, which allows us to conceive of peace not as a static, isolated event, or as a magic formula, but as a constructive process. elkarri has been working since its foundation on the transformation of the relationships and structures which uphold the conflict and its violent manifestations.

Subsequently, taking dialogue and agreement as a starting point, we formulated the idea of social mediation. The struggle for dialogue and agreement required Basque society itself to become the active subject of this struggle, promoting dialogue and taking part in the construction of agreement. Basque society itself has become a mediator.

In its first stage, elkarri focused on spreading widely the idea of dialogue and agreement. Further on, it tried to put that idea into practice by putting forward actual proposals for development. In what we could term a third stage, this social movement is promoting participative processes on all levels to define spaces of agreement. It is, in a word,

about launching processes which allow the identification of viable scenarios for dialogue and defining agreement.

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# a plural, independent social movement with its own space

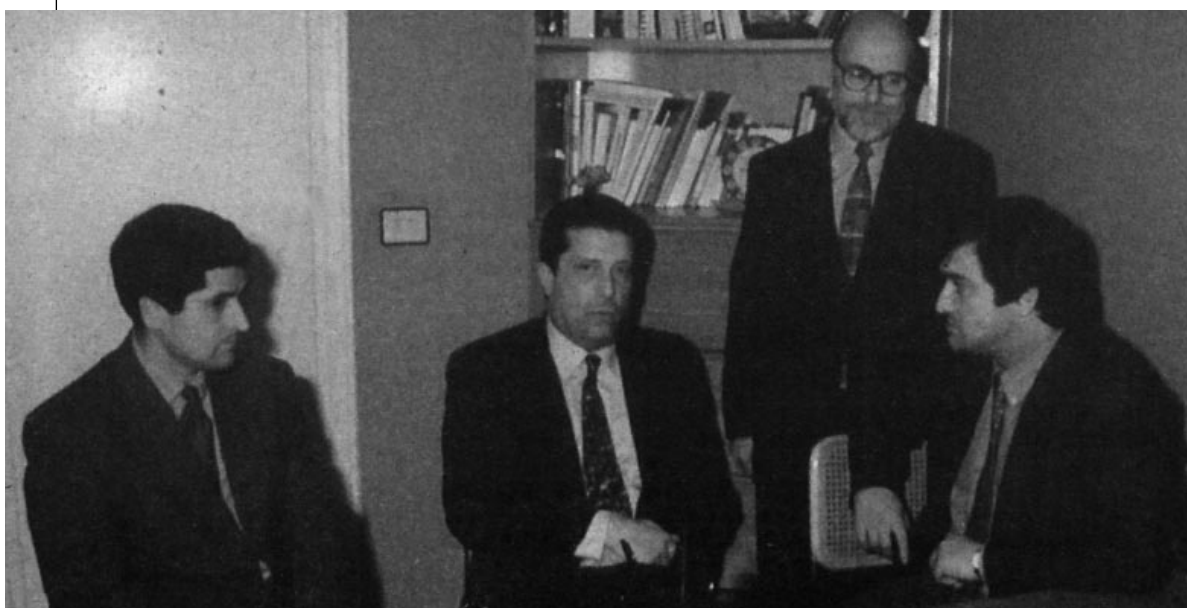
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Taking a quick general overview, we might say that in these years, elkarri has become an indispensable point of reference in the search for peace in the Basque Country. It has created a solid committed social basis (251,000 signatures, 3,500 members-contributors, 1,200 active members and collaborators and more than 100 local workshops), together with a wide range of theoretical documents on different topics of interest referring to the conflict, a substantial record of activity, many projects for the future and some debts.

Besides having created a considerable social space, elkarri has managed to shape itself as a social, plural and independent movement. This is maybe one of its most outstanding

achievements. In a scenario loaded with polarization and with no room for nuances, elkarri has made it impossible to put into doubt the independent character of this social group or the plural background of its social basis.

That is why elkarri's work is guided by a double criteria of singularity and non-compliance with the parties involved. It attempts to create its own language and action, differing from the concepts, words, and ways of acting used by the parties in the conflict. elkarri focuses its work on the presentation of proposals, suggestions, creation of spaces of collaboration, while at the same time taking criticism and contributing its opinion when elkarri thinks it fit.



# a new approach

The intervention of this social movement is based on a multidisciplinary analysis of the conflict situation besetting this country. elkarri knows its nature, its roots and manifestations, acknowledges its complexity and discards the simplifications that surround it.

elkarri does not take rigid criteria such as neutrality or equidistance and is led by an active commitment to the necessary conditions to develop a balanced and democratic process of dialogue, which leads elkarri to adopt the position it considers best in each particular circumstance.

In the last seven years elkarri has contributed to provide the struggle for peace with a greater content. The aim of this social movement's work has been to promote a culture of dialogue and peace, which would contribute to overcome the dynamic of confrontation, and to create an atmosphere of cooperation. In this sense, its work has been aimed at society as a whole, the social agents, mass media, political parties, institutions, and all the actors in the conflict.

elkarri has contributed to introduce a less polarizing language and attitudes in the conflict. These attitudes and language have tried to create spaces for meeting and persuasion

instead of the common practices of spite, defiance, forcefulness, irreversibility, or rigidity.



# elkarri and human rights

Starting from the assumption that the right to life is the supreme right, elkarri understands that all individual and collective human rights are indivisible and interdependent. In the opinion of this social movement, respect for all fundamental human rights of individuals and peoples is precisely the best guarantee of peace, normality and justice. This interpretation is stated in the last two articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights itself.

Consequently, with regards to the right to life, elkarri takes of board the contents of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and estimates that the right to life is a fundamental human right, as well as a priority

objective for a social movement working for peace.

In elkarri's view, and as an open and non-excluding proposal, this framework should be based around international law, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the International Human Rights Pacts.

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# manifestations of violence

elkarri takes as a basis a criteria of its own in order to situate itself within the framework of this situation. This social movement firmly rejects and dispraises the different manifestations of violence. elkarri tries to avoid the ritual of recriminatory reactions and recreation of pain and suffering, looking instead for a constructive way of disapproval.

From that point of view, all manifestations of violence meet our disapproval, because all of them are located in a deadlock process of confrontation, which is precisely what elkarri is working to surmount by dialogue and agreement.

Together with this global consideration, this movement states the special responsibility of states in terms of abuse of power, use of violence, and human rights violations, because of their superior resources, as well as the commitments undertaken before the population and with democratic principles. elkarri understands that States, as representatives of public power, have the duty to obey the Law, to be a model of respect of the law and to be guarantors of the exercise of democracy and respect for human rights.

# fields of work

Throughout its course of development, elkarri has focused its activities in different levels, being conscious that the attainment of peace requires work in the different areas of society.

1.- In the international sphere, the support a peace process will need are beginning to be prepared, looking for co-operation with collaborating institutions and with the European Union, working on terms of international public opinion and following the development of peace processes in other countries.

2.- On a political level, a work and research forum with all political parties has been developing since May 1996. Discreetly, with no publicity, and with an interactive methodology, there has been an attempt to identify spaces in which it would be possible to try out an agreement which would have the capability to unlock the current situation. This program is currently in a very advanced state.

3.- Besides this, we possess a wide social network, as we have more than 100 local workshops, which perform elkarri's work at the grass-roots level. This social movement thinks that the pacification process has to be developed at all levels, so great emphasis is placed on local work. From spring 1996 the main task of local workshops has been organizing forums for peace, with the aim of starting to create and expand a culture of dialogue and making citizens really feel that they are people in charge of finding a solution to the conflict that besets their community. Elkarri has also started a campaign called "Eraiikiasi", through which it aims to disseminate information about what a peace process involves and the need for there to be social involvement in any such a process.

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# organizing structures

elkarri's organizing and decision-taking structures are the following: Local Workshops, Permanent National Workshop, Provincial Workshops, Provincial Assemblies, General Assembly, and Extraordinary Assembly. elkarri's social reality is made up of the people who work in elkarri's 100 Workshops spread all over the Basque territory. Local Workshops usually meet weekly and are in charge of vitalising and transmitting to society this social movement's aims and tasks.

The Permanent National Workshop, made up of 16 people, is the body in charge of developing guidelines and action plans for the General Assembly. The Permanent National Workshop meets every Monday at elkarri's central office in order to deal both with proposals put forward by Local Workshops and issues related to the social movement and the conflict.

elkarri's decision-taking bodies are Provincial Workshops, Provincial Assemblies, and the General Assembly.

Provincial Workshops gather fortnightly, and apart from the province's own dynamics, they are in charge of developing national level tasks in the province. Generally the member in charge of each Local Workshop in the province attends these meetings.

Provincial Assemblies, which are attended by all members in the province, are generally held on each month's last Wednesday. Provincial Assemblies are the ordinary participation and decision-making bodies in this social movement.

The General Assembly is elkarri's supreme decision-making body. It approves annual reports and major guidelines. It is open to all members and collaborators. It is held once a year on an ordinary basis, and on an extraordinary basis whenever the Permanent National Workshop thinks it fit.

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# elkarri's local workshops

## Gipuzkoa

Andoain  
Donostia-Antiguo  
Hernani  
Soraluze  
Antzuola  
Donostia-Centro  
Hondarribia  
Tolosa  
Aretxabaleta  
Donostia-Alde Zahar  
Idiazabal  
Tolosa-Amaroz  
Arrasate  
University  
Irun  
Urretxu  
Ataun  
Donostia-Gros  
Lasarte  
Usurbil  
Azkoitia

Deba  
Lazkao  
Zaldibia  
Azpeitia  
Eibar  
Mutriku  
Zarautz  
Beasain  
Bergara  
Billabona  
Elgoibar  
Eskoriatza  
Elgoibar  
Oñati  
Orereta  
Pasaia  
Zestoa  
Zizurkil  
Zumaia

## Bizkaia

Algorta  
Barakaldo  
Igorre  
Leioa  
Bermeo  
Basauri  
Larrabetzu  
Ondarru  
Bilbo-Abando  
Deustu-University  
Lekeitio  
Santurtzi  
Bilbo-Deustua  
Durango  
Leioa-University  
Ugao  
Bilbo-Santutxu  
Galdakao  
Markina  
Usansolo  
Bilbo-Txurdinaga

Gernika  
Mungia  
Zornotza  
Ortuella  
Plentzia  
Elorrio  
Berriz  
Erandio  
Bilbo-Rekalde  
Sarriko-University  
Bilbo Alde Zaharra

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## Nafarroa

Arantza  
Altsasu  
Etxalar  
Lesaka  
Alde Zaharra  
Etxarri-Aranaz  
Lizarra-Estella  
Atarrabia  
Igantzi  
Rotxapea  
Bera

Iruñea-Pamplona  
Tafalla  
Burlata  
Irati  
Tudela  
Barañain  
Leitza  
University

## Araba

Amurrio  
Gasteiz-Aranbizkarra  
University

Errioxa  
Gasteiz-Ariznabarra  
Laudio

## State

Madrid

Barcelona

# main initiatives by elkarri

## 1. Personal introductions



In early 1993, elkarri conducted interviews with practically all political parties, trade union leaders, intellectuals, Church members, etc.

elkarri has approached the different sides involved in the conflict and has made proposals to the Spanish government, political parties and ETA's official spokesmen in the Dominican Republic. Similarly, it has made public presentations to explain what elkarri is all about in (amongst other cities) Paris, Madrid, Barcelona, Santiago de Compostela, Valencia and Zaragoza.

## 2. 251,323 Signatures



Conscious of the importance of keeping an active and balanced presence in the street, a signature gathering campaign was launched in May 1993 in favour of dialogue and agreement. This campaign was in operation for a year, and 251,323 signatures were gathered and presented before a notary. This campaign became an important means of spreading elkarri's message as well as evidence for the social support to this kind of solution.

## 3. From Arantzazu to Maroño

Acting on elkarri's proposal, nine organisations working in the field of peace and human rights in the Basque Country met for the first time on 15 May 1993 in Arantzazu in order to reconsider their analysis of the conflict and explore possible ways of finding a solution. The process ended up as the important Maroño Agreement on 15 January 1994.

In a «second cycle» of conversations initiated after the Maroño Agreement, 7 organisations have consistently worked on topics such as bringing about dialogue, the situation of prisoners and the right to self-determination.

## 4. «Détente and dialogue, now is the moment»



On 12 March 1994 elkarri carried out in Bilbao its first large scale demonstration under the slogan «Détente and dialogue, now is the moment», which turned out to be a considerable success with a positive general appreciation. It was an unprecedented fact to be able to join in the same demonstration leaders of political parties such as EA, EUE, HB, IU, PNV, and PSOE, and from practically all trade unions, as well as sporting, social, and cultural personalities.

# main initiatives by elkarri

## 5. Northern Ireland



On September 1994 an elkarri delegation travelled to Northern Ireland in order to learn the details of the peace process in progress in that island. elkarri had the chance to meet leading members of Sinn Féin and SDLP, Irish social movements, trade unions, journalists,... As a result of this experience a monographic booklet was issued (elkarrikasi), which among other things sums up the details of the peace process and the conclusions drawn.

Subsequently, the former President of the Republic of Ireland visited the Basque Country on an elkarri initiative, meeting the Basque President and top authorities in the Autonomous Region of Navarra.

Since then, elkarri has kept in constant contact with the main players involved in the Irish peace process: political parties, governments and civic movements.

In reply to a request for solidarity from Northern Ireland, Elkarri invited the Basque political parties to participate in a round table on the Irish peace process and its repercussions in the Basque Country. This was held in Bilbao on the 1st of September 1995. The following parties took part: EA, HB, IU and PNV. UA and CDN expressed their support although they were unable to attend the meeting. On the following day, Elkarri called all those wishing to participate, to a silent demonstration under the slogan "In favour of the Irish peace process. All-party talks". The demonstration finished with a speech given by Denis Haughey, international secretary of the SDLP (Social Democrat and Labour Party).

Subsequently, Albert Reynolds, former President of the Republic of Ireland and one of the architects of the peace process, was invited by Elkarri to visit the Basque Country where he met with the main political and institutional leaders.

More recently, Elkarri has seen in situ the whole negotiation process, the agreement between the different parties and the subsequent referendum and ratification.

## 6. Herrigintzan-social debate



In June 1994, the Participative Meetings for Peace, which would later become Herrigintzan-social debate, were established. The topics were drawn from a survey conducted upon 1,111 people in Araba, Bizkaia, Gipuzkoa, and Navarra. The project had two main fields of work: social stimulation and sociological research.

After elaborating the reports, summaries, and statements on each field of work, a questionnaire was produced containing 39 questions in order to carry out a large scale survey in the four provinces of the Basque Country. This survey —3,055 home interviews—, published in a special edition of our monographic booklets (elkarrikasi), was presented on 14 March 1995 to the Mesa y Junta de Portavoces del Parlamento Navarro

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(group of representatives of all political parties in the Navarrese Parliament), and on 27 April to the Human Rights Commission of the Basque Parliament. The aforementioned work summarizes and quantifies the picture of society on the issue of violence and conflict on February 1995.



## 7. Meetings on the Future of Navarre

With the purpose of opening up a process of debate and reflection on the topic of Navarre in the year 2000, elkarri initiated a campaign in February 1995 about the future of Navarre. In this campaign, a dossier was mailed to all homes in the province, in which each citizen could choose from different options about the future government model for Navarre. This exercise was reinforced with the Meetings on the Future of Navarre which took place on 8 and 12 February at the Tres Reyes Hotel at Iruñea. Personalities from the world of culture and academia, leaders of all trade unions and political leaders from IU, EA, HB, and PSN/PSOE took part in these meetings on different days. They were closed by Juan Cruz Alli, President of the Government of Navarre.



## 8. Peace for the Basque Country Conference

On 8 and 12 March 1995 the First Meeting of the Peace for the Basque Country Conference was held at the Carlton Hotel in Bilbao under the heading "Autonomy, Sovereignty, and Self-determination". PNV, EA, HB, IU/EB, and UA took part in this initiative. This meeting was judged very positively by those who attended, as well as by the team of moderators constituted by Felix Martí (director of UNESCO-Catalonia), Mariano Ferrer, and Eugenio Ibarzabal. This first meeting, unprecedented to date, was used to enquire into the main issues to be dealt with in order to break the stalemate of the current situation of conflict and confrontation. In addition, it made it possible for the first time to see a situation of dialogue in a constructive and real way.

## 9. Gathering in Madrid

On 1 July 1995, elkarri organized a silent meeting at the Puerta del Sol in Madrid under the heading «Democratic Will and Dialogue for Peace in the Basque Country», on the occasion of the taking up of the Spanish presidency of the European Union. More than a thousand people of different political convictions demanded in a silent event the beginning of a dialogued and democratic solution for the Basque conflict, and the involvement of European institutions in a peace process for the Basque Country.



## 10.-Desire for Peace Contract

«Something has to be done». Probably this phrase sums up the feeling which has been running through our society lately. But the origin of the problem could perhaps be found in the real will of the agents in the conflict towards a dialogued solution. The Desire for Peace Contract campaign was meant to create a basis and a starting point for a peace process in the Basque Country by means of the subscription to an eight point document containing the basic will to solve the conflict. The constructively ambiguous wording allows different interpretations which help

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mark out a sphere of agreement upon which dialogue and the search for a consensus can be furthered.

This campaign achieved more than 2500 subscriptions from significant persons in Basque society, as well as from CDN, PNV, EA, and IU, besides leaders from other political parties on a personal basis.

## 11. The Local Forums

These form the central axis of our organisation and have been foremost in developing the output of the workshops in the past couple of years. The forums represent the practical grass-roots side of our dialogue and social mediation, working on both the contents and solutions to the conflict. The groups consist of a wide range of individuals who meet, discuss, debate, study and develop arguments, proposals and initiatives related to the conflict that affects the Basque Country.

To date there are almost 120 local forums throughout the towns, villages and cities of The Autonomous Basque Region and Navarra. The most common issues are "The cause of the conflict", "Concrete solutions to the conflict", "Living together in harmony", "Local contributions and initiatives to construct a peace process", "Individual and collective human rights" and "Tolerance in the Basque Country".



## 12. Something has to be done: more than just words

On 29 June 1996, coinciding with the week-long ETA truce, elkarri brought together 10,000 people in a plural mass demonstration in support of a fair peace process in the Basque Country. This demonstration, supported by a wide range of personalities from the world of culture, demanded the need for real and positive action in the endorsement of dialogue, and introduced two new terms in the conflict: process and fairness.



## 13. Navarra: for a future without walls

After the withdrawal of the Common Permanent Body between Navarra and the Basque Autonomous Community and the subsequent impairment of relationships between the Basque Autonomous Community and the Foral Community of Navarra, elkarri launched a campaign on the future of Navarra. Talks, personal interviews, a round-table conference of political parties... the different activities finished on 9 November with a demonstration in which around 2000 people from a wide social spectrum claimed Navarra's right to decide on its own future.



## 14. Forum For Research Into Areas Of Consensus

Since 1996 elkarri has sent all the political parties in the Basque Country five documents which contain concrete proposals contributing towards the advancement of a solution of the conflict. The subsequent work of following up the feedback,

# main initiatives by elkarri



using an interactive methodology has led to elkarri taking a deeper look at the points which offer the best opportunity to bring about a concrete proposal which would help break the gridlock and initiate a peace process.

Presently the results of the forum is the only initiative for breaking the gridlock that has not been rejected by any political party.

## 15. Popular Consultation About Relations Between The Autonomous Basque Region and Navarra

In March 1997 elkarri once again turned its attention to the key issue of The Autonomous Basque Region-Navarra relationship as an essential point in order to break the gridlock. To do this a campaign was initiated at both institutional and social levels to request the Parliament to carry out a popular consultation and redefine the debate as regards this particular controversy. Likewise a poll was carried out looking at the sociological relations between The Autonomous Basque Region and Navarra. The results showed that three-quarters of the population were in favour of establishing permanent relations with The Autonomous Basque Region, whilst respecting the autonomy of Navarra.

## 16. Educational Units For The Primary Education Sector

In September 1993 elkarri set in motion its Education Commission, composed of professionals and specialists in the field of education. At the end of 1996 the commission published, together with the Federation of Ikastolas (Basque speaking schools) four didactic units aimed at the Primary Education sector. The aim of these didactic units being to work towards and promote attitudes that would make it possible to transform the conflicts they experience in their immediate surroundings in a constructive way, using dialogue and agreement. These units are aimed at 3-12 year-olds. The material for each age group focuses on what is immediate and fundamental to the student. The material is aimed at both students and teachers, and are based around conflicts in the family, with friends, the school and the neighbourhood.

## 17.-Pedagogic Conference About Education For Peace

On the 14, 15 and 16 of May 1997 the "Pedagogic Conference About Education For Peace" were held in Bilbao, organised by elkarri and the Federation of Ikastolas. Following the co-operation in publishing the "Didactic units for peace" we saw the need to deepen the issue, collecting the visions and methodologies offered by the different components that compromise such a complex issue as this. There were two objectives; create a framework for the reflection and debate, and offer didactic proposals to apply in the education for peace in primary and secondary teaching.

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## 18. A Fair Peace For Our Senior Citizens

During June and July 1997 an intensive social campaign was promoted defending the idea that "Now is the moment" and to urge politicians to open a peace process, especially as we owe it to the generation that had suffered most; our Senior Citizens. There was a poster campaign and leaflets were distributed putting this message across. Letters were also collected and sent on to the political parties in order to transmit this message.

## 19. Searching For The Guilty –v– Searching For The Solution

In September 1997, coinciding with the re-start of the Peace Process in Ireland, elkarri carried out a social campaign bringing together two ideas; one, searching for the solution, the constructive, the integration, the truce, the dialogue... leading towards peace. One the other hand the search for the guilty, isolation, the destructive, the negative, rigidity, lack of communication, violence and antagonism... leading to gridlock and suffering without an end in sight. This demonstrated the sterility of the latter approach and showed the need to revise the strategies and opt for solutions.

## 20. Eraiki Project

On the 28th March 1998 elkarri concluded a process of internal debate about its future. The result of which was that this social movement confirmed their commitment for dialogue, waging to continue centralising in all those opportunities that the Basque Society offers and facing a new challenge: to activate the culture of cooperation.

With this aim the Eraiki Project is presented; a twice yearly plan of work consisting of 10 programmes of performance to constructively support the evolution, transition and approximation of the Basque conflict towards a peace process. The priorities of the intervention include: international activity, social mobilization, the introduction of the social pedagogy «eraikikasi», the cooperation with other agents, the possibility of convening a new peace conference, internal financing and the culmination of a «Research Forum of Consensus Scenarios».

## 21. Eraikikasi



As the main consequence of the Eraiki Project, elkarri put into practice the most ambitious campaign of social pedagogy in favour of the process in its history. The idea is to send 4 publications to more than 40,000 people and bodies all around the country that are revolved around the ideas of «Facilitate» «Cooperate» «No exclusion» and «Deepen democracy». The intention of these publications and the initiatives that accompany them is to offer ideas, contents, suggestions or reflections that contribute an answer to a two way question: what is the peace process and how can I/we help.

Each Eraikikasi develops 10 subjects about the peace process that have to be worked on. At the same time this material goes along with a page of contributions that allow a way of social participation in the peace process. With the first Eraikikasi titled «to facilitate» a questionnaire was also sent. As a result of the answers received elkarri has elaborated an exhaustive report that will be sent to those responsible in the institutions, political parties and the rest of the agents of the peace process.



# main initiatives by elkarri

## 22. The local and municipal contribution in the construction of peace



The importance of building peace from the base of the society, from the city, villages or districts, count on the association of the local and municipal sectors, with the participation of the people, is the best guarantee of stability for the process of the transformation of a conflict of identity. Because of this in May 1999 elkarri started a campaign that had as its objective to spread and extend a culture of dialogue, reconciliation and social integration as one of the fundamental bases in the construction of peace. At the same time this social movement promotes at local level, distention, humanisation and the solidarity with all those that have suffered, trying to improve the local social-political coexistence in the context of a peace process.

## 23. The victims in the process of peace

Aiming to recognize the suffering, to alleviate their consequences and to facilitate the positive incorporation of all those people who have suffered in the task of the construction of the future, in May 1999 elkarri intensified this area of work that is absolutely necessary in the way towards the transformation of the Basque Conflict. In this context, elkarri published and distributed specific material about this subject. At the same time, this social movement presented their proposals to the Commission of Human Rights of the Basque Parliament which emphasize the possibility of developing a «Memory of the testimonies of the victims in the peace process».

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## 24. The peace process in Navarra



Following ETA's declaration of ceasefire, all social and political agents began to study the way of building an authentic peace process. However, these efforts did not have the same intensity in the region of Navarra. The role of this territory, which has specially suffered the consequences of the conflict remained unrecognized in the peace process.

With the objective of contributing to the debate and the political advances in a crucial moment and that it would result in a better cohabitation in Navarra, and an improved relation with their neighbours, elkarri edited the report «The peace process in Navarra» accompanied by a campaign of intense social activity in a territory plagued by conferences and round table forums about the subject.

# main initiatives by elkarri

## 25. In support of a conciliatory culture

This is an initiative which fits in with the line of work that elkarri has been developing and which includes co-operation with other organisations and people. Hence, "Gesto Por la Paz" and "Elkarri" , two civic movements with different viewpoints and approaches, but both equally aware of the importance that the participation of society has in building a better future, jointly decided that it was of utmost importance to disseminate, promote and adopt a conciliatory culture in the clear conviction that this is the best contribution that can be made to the peace process. This gave rise to the campaign with a manifesto entitled "In support of a conciliatory culture", which aimed not only at getting this message across in towns, neighbourhoods and universities but also providing it with content.

## 26. Manifesto in support of the peace process in Navarre

elkarri was worried that Navarre might be excluded from the opportunity for improvement provided by the peace process and so in Autumn 1999 it promoted an initiative to support the peace process. This managed to bring together 174 social, political and cultural representatives from Navarre.

The manifesto broached the peace process from a "win-win" stance so that all social and political options can profit from it. Its success was thanks to the efforts made to find common ground in an area of different traditions and positions with a view to making joint progress within the peace process. Through this we have seen that it is possible to reach an agreement with Navarre.

## 27. The three steps



In December 1999 elkarri published a teachers' handbook called "Hiru Txandatan" (the three step method). This slotted neatly into elkarri's work in the field of education for peace. In this particular case, the project had the support of the Basque Government's Youth Office, and Education Ministry as well as the Basque Country's Youth Council, the Federation of Ikastolas (Basque medium schools and the Bilbao local council. The handbook covers a teaching module for 12-18 year olds aimed at promoting new dialogue habits and the teaching of how to listen.

As well as just publishing the handbook, the project included training all the trainers at Teachers Guidance Centres in the Basque Autonomous Region and the handing out of teaching materials to all secondary schools. The Basque Country's Youth Council took charge of putting this initiative into practice through its network of youth associations.

# main initiatives by elkarri

## 28. We need clear answers



When the peace process that had started eighteen months previously reached a crisis point in February 2000, elkarri started a campaign entitled "we need clear answers".

The campaign was in response to a very real worry and that is: after ETA's return to the armed struggle, certain political and media sectors refuse to accept dialogue as a means for resolving the Basque conflict. In this context and with the ultimate aim of actually supporting the idea of dialogue, the campaign posed three questions to political leaders: "Apart from condemning violence, asking society to hold out and calling demonstrations, what else are you doing to work towards peace and to find solutions to the unresolved problems of political coexistence in the Basque Country? Do you believe that a forum or dialogue committee/s in which all the political parties of the Basque Country and Navarre were present would be a valid method for finding solutions? If not, what other alternatives can you propose? Do you agree that Basque society, as well as being represented by the different political parties, could also be consulted upon what it really thinks about how to get out of the current situation? If not what other means do you envisage for guaranteeing the expression of society's democratic will?"

The "We need clear answers" campaign was promoted through the distribution of 100,000 informative leaflets, adverts in the press, street awareness-raising activities and round tables in which the candidates of the main parties present in the general elections held on the 12th March 2000 took part and replied to the questions they were asked

## 29. Campaign for a «Party Forum»

On the 28th March, 2000, elkarri started a campaign aimed at creating a "Party Forum" to provide a negotiated solution to the Basque conflict.

It was mainly an awareness-raising exercise in which over 40,000 copies of leaflets with explanations about the definition, aims, principles and reason for the opportune nature of the forum were sent out to Basque society. The leaflets also made a series of remarks on procedural issues, content and possible participants. A form was added to the leaflet in which people could express their support and make comments and suggestions to the country's main institutional figures.

In addition, 6,000 explanatory posters were put up, 55,000 handouts were given out in street campaigns throughout the Basque Autonomous Region and Navarre, 15 speeches were delivered and 2 debating sessions and 5 round tables were organised. In two of them (those held in Vitoria and San Sebastian) qualified representatives of virtually all the political parties expressed their opinions about the proposal.

elkarri drew three conclusions from this campaign: (1) a party forum provides us with a tool and an opportunity to re-start the peace process and overcome its crises; (2) society needs such a forum and (3) the setting up of a party forum should become the main aim of the coming period in politics.



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A report containing the campaign's conclusions was published in the media and also given to Miguel Sanz (The President of the Navarre Government), Juan José Ibarretxe (President of the Basque Autonomous Region) and José María Aznar (President of the Spanish Government). A copy of the 2,400 signatures of those who participated in the campaign's activities was included, together with 600 comments and suggestions made by members of the public to the three presidents, as an illustration of the social awareness for a kind of peace based upon non-violence and all-party dialogue.

## 30. «Zubigintzan» (Building bridges). To foster 2,000 hours of all-party talks



In January 2000 Elkarri started to develop its Zubigintzan project. It was approved in June during elkarri's 6th General Assembly. According to the project, elkarri's mission, based upon the experienced gained during eight years of work, as well as upon dialogue and non-violence, is to contribute towards the consolidation of a peace process in the Basque Country, and more specifically to foster and support all those kinds of dialogue that strive to obtain all-party agreements on the principles and procedures of the different processes that come together in the construction of peace and normal socio-political co-existence.

In practice, the aim is to foster a dialogue marathon, i.e. promote and support 2,000 hours of multiple, all-party talks. We are convinced that the peace process needs many hours of dialogue in all the different possible combinations imaginable and we aim to meet that need.

2,000 hours of dialogue are equivalent to between approximately 500 and 700 working sessions. When we say working sessions we mean both dialogue at the highest political level and also at grass roots level, in towns, neighbourhoods and local councils. In short, the idea is to promote interactive, critical and constructive social participation, in a negotiated peace-building process as well as democratic solutions to the problems of political co-existence that society has.

The work programmes that resulted from this sixth assembly and which supplement the dialogue marathon are:

- A. elkarri's quarterly programme (Eraikikasi)
- B. A local and municipal contribution project (called the UBE project)
- C. The fostering and support of grass-roots mobilisation
- D. The defence of non-violence and its alternatives.
- E. A consensus on victims
- F. The defence of prisoners' rights and the rights of their families.
- G. Education (teaching manuals, Hiru Txandatan and the Garatu Programme)
- H. Intervention at a state level
- I. International experience and support.

# publications

With the aim of opening up a new field for consideration and of covering an open space, far from party political positions, a solid publishing team was set up. A product of this work are the several periodical publications, such as the monthly magazine *elkarri* issued to more than 3000 people (55 issues to december 1999), videos, and different informative materials, as well as the «*elkarrikasi*» debate and education booklets.

Ten «*elkarrikasi*» booklets have been published to date N°1: «"Basque Country agreement 94" project», N°2: «Social mediation in the Basque Country», N°3: «Ireland: a door to hope», N°4: «Fifth *elkarri* General Assembly and Desire for Peace Contract campaign», N°5: «Debate on social movement funding», N°6: «Torture», N°7: «Mass media and the Basque conflict», N°8: «On confrontation and street violence», N° 9: «The prison». Analysis and suggestions for better treatment and a more human approach and N° 10: «Victims and the peace process», as well as the special issue with the sociological survey carried out in 1994 about conflict, violence, and peace in the Basque Country, and a special publication with the survey and proposal for a referendum on the relationships between Navarra and the Autonomous Basque Community.

Within the campaign of *Eraikikasi*, three fasciculus have been published. The first titled «Facilitate» in March 1999, the second «Cooperate» in June, and the third «No exclusion» in september of the same year.

With the objective of contributing to peace from the base of society, *elkarri* have published a monograph titled «Local and municipal

contributions in the building of peace. 1999-2000».

In June of 1999, with the aim of contributing to the debate and the peace process in Navarra another report titled «The peace process in Navarra» was published offering a simulation about the meaning and scope of the peace process in that region.

We have also published the books «*Bake Biderako Topaketak*» («Meetings for Peace») on the beginning of the Maroño group, and «*Violencia y Paz. El turismo*» («Violence and Peace. Tourism»), on the effects of a peace process on the economy. Finally, we should not forget the above mentioned «Didactic units» and the listening methodology «*Hiru txandatan*» issued to the basque schools and youth networks.

*elkarri*, has also opened a web page in the internet at the following address:

<http://www.elkarri.org>



# funding

As a independent social movement, elkarri has a self-funding basis, so a financial strategy had to be prepared which allowed becoming an offensive social movement, i.e., a social movement with a capacity to influence, determine, mobilize, and transform Basque reality. As a consequence, the criteria in terms of funding, and especially in spending can be summed up as daily expense control, austerity, and transparency. elkarri makes public, by means of an annual press conference, the yearly balance and the budget for the following year. From its birth in December 1992 to May 1999, elkarri has spent a total sum of 510 million pesetas. Funding for this expenditure is shared among the concepts and categories detailed as follows:

Contributors and occasional contributions	400 million pesetas
Publications and sale of materials	36 million pesetas
Occasional grants	12,5 million pesetas
Other sources of income	3 million pesetas
Bank loans and credits	58,5 million pesetas

From the figures above it should be emphasized that 79% of the income derives from regular and occasional contributions, and we should stress the importance for elkarri, since the time of its constitution and throughout its development, of this community

El movimiento social por el diálogo y el acuerdo, elkarri nació el 20 de diciembre de 1992 en el País Vasco. El objetivo de elkarri ha

made up by about 3,000 people who contribute economically month after month. Another important issue, even though in terms of quantity it is considerably smaller than contributors, is that referred to personal loans and bank credits. elkarri's debt as of June 1999 amounts to around 58,5 million pesetas, a relatively high sum of money, which shows the effort undertaken by this social movement in order to meet the social request it has found, resorting to loans backed in most of the cases by personal guarantees.