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Human Rights Education in the Basque Country (Spain)

A Model for Divided Societies?

Introduction: Politically Motivated Violence in Modern Basque Country

The Basque society is indeed a divided society. From medieval times Basque people enjoyed some degree of political autonomy with a set of own private law but also of public law. There was a kind of autonomous institutional framework respected by the Kingdom of Spain. However, due to different civil Wars during XIX century (1833-1840; 1846-1849; 1872-1876) Basque Regions were subject to an attempt of assimilation within Spain: i.e. the basis of Basque identity so far was at risk through the abolition of a great deal of its own juridical status. At the same time industrial revolution and its inherent socio-economic changes attracted increasing migration movements to the Basque Region from other parts of Spain. Here there is the birth of the so called Basque problem that paved the way to the creation and development of different political identities related either to (higher degree of) autonomy-independence for the Basque region or to a greater deal of identification-integration with/in Spain. As a reflection of this emerging trend new political parties were founded, mainly the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV/ EAJ) which is today the greatest and the ruling one in the Basque region.

During the XX century the situation did not improve. The civil war of Spain (1936-1939) ended up with the victory of Franco Regime that exercised a cruel repression against Basque culture, prohibiting its own language, sending thousands of Basques to exile, killing dissidents, using systematic torture against the civilian population and, in short, committing all kind of violations of human rights inherent to a totalitarian regime but, in the case of the Basque Region, with an added ethnic and political motivation. In this context of brutal repression born ETA (Basque Country and Freedom) as resistance movement in the last part of the Dictatorship with an overwhelming support of the Basque and even of the

Spanish people. At the very beginning of its armed activity ETA could be regarded as freedom fighters against a dictatorship. However, with the time, especially after the birth of the Democracy in Spain in 1978, the violence of ETA evolved progressively until a fair labelling of its activity had nothing to do with its origin: ETA became a terrorist group with a decreasing support of the population. In the 90's, for example, not more than 10-15 per cent of the political corpus was ready to support its activity.

Decreasing support of the people, increasing criticism of civil organised society against terrorism, review of the strategy by the political arm of ETA (the political party called BATASUNA), pressure of the police forces, exceptional laws and judicial enforcement with prohibition of political parties and draconian criminal intervention were some of the key factors for the end of ETA. The terrorist group declared a ceasefire in November 2011 that seems to be so far the definitive one.

After decades of politically motivated violence the results are dramatic: only for the period of time from 1960 to 2011 more than 800 hundred people have been killed by ETA and more than 2600 have been severe wounded. But the complete picture of the violence cannot leave aside violations of Human Rights committed by the State or State-like actor after the Democracy and before it: counterterrorism abuses were added to the not interrupted repression since the civil war of Spain onwards. According to some reliable figures based upon data provided by Human Rights Organisations only for the afore mentioned period of time there are more than 200 people killed and more than 1000 wounded waiting for investigation, reparation and justice by Spanish authorities who have been denying their existence throughout decades.¹

Under the light of this state of affairs, the Basque Government launched in 2006 the initiative for a Basque Plan for Peace and Human Rights. The goal was to make room for a common understanding within the society towards the culture of human rights. The aim was to prevent terrorism and all kind of direct or indirect support toward violations of Human Rights committed by the State. For that purpose there was available a solid reference point in the international trend that had begun after the United Nations Human Rights Conference in Vienna 1993. Precisely, one of the main strategies linked with the Action Plan approved in that

¹ For an overview of the whole picture related to politically motivated violence in the Basque region from 1968 onwards see the reliable report of the pro human rights Non Governmental Organization ARGITUZ, *Mapa (incompleto) de conculcaciones del derecho a la vida y a la integridad física y psíquica en relación a la violencia de motivación política*, at <<http://www.argituz.org/documentos/inf/mapacastfinal.pdf>>, 27 December 2012; see also: ARGITUZ, 'El largo camino hacia una Política Pública de Víctimas incluyente y respetuosa con todas las víctimas. Informe de Valoración de las Políticas Públicas de Víctimas de la Violencia de Motivación Política en el País Vasco-Euskal Herria, Octubre 2011', at <<http://www.argituz.org/documentos/inf/EVALUACIONPOLITVICTARGITUZfinal.pdf>>, 27 December 2012. See also mainly focused on violations of human rights committed by the State: J. Landa, *Victims of Human Rights Violations Derived from Politically Motivated Violence*, Vitoria-Gasteiz 2009, *passim*.

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Therefore, the Basque Government took firm steps to join this international trend by approving first of all a Basque Plan for Peace and Reconciliation³ that envisaged to engage the public fabric of the Basque Institutions in the promotion of the culture of international Human Rights (1), the support of victims of terrorism (2), the support of victims of Franco Dictatorship (3), the defence of civil and political rights with special view to fight against torture and ill-treatment in prisons (4) and, as last field of action, the plan contained a full range of initiatives for promoting Human Rights Education with the commitment of approving a Plan: a Basque Plan for Peace and Human Rights Education.⁴

1. Education for Peace and Human Rights: Reasons for Launching a First Basque Plan

On 26th December 2007 the Basque Government Council approved the Basque Plan for Peace Education and Human Rights (2008-2011).⁵ This plan definitively established a stable, coordinated, systematic and permanent framework to extend the culture of Human Rights and peace throughout Basque society at all levels. The period for designing and progressively writing the Plan lasted approximately fourteen months which is what the United Nations High Commissioner's Office for Human Rights estimates to be the right time frame for this type of process.⁶

However, looking further back, the Plan was the natural result of work that reflects increasing social efforts and initiatives on this subject. Basque society, particularly its framework of NGOs and its own institutions, has been exponentially multiplying initiatives in favour of a peace and human rights culture. Coinciding with international raising awareness in terms of promoting education on Human Rights (UN World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna 1993), the Basque Country (Euskadi) also woke up to this issue at the end of the 1980s. However social dynamics encounter a specific difficulty: the almost impossibility that the

² F. Weber, 'Ein Nationaler Aktionsplan für Menschenrechte in Deutschland' in S. Frech, M. Haspel (eds.), *Menschenrechte*, Woehschau 2005, p. 255.

³ Gobierno Vasco, *Paz y Convivencia (Aprobado en Consejo de Gobierno el 2 de mayo de 2006)*, Vitoria-Gasteiz 2007, *passim*.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 73-74.

⁵ Basque Government, *Basque Education Plan for Peace and Human Rights 2008-2011*, Vitoria-Gasteiz 2008.

⁶ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Professional Training Series No. 10 Handbook on National Human Rights Plans of Action*, New York-Geneva 2002, p. 49. See also: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Guidelines for national plans of action for human rights education A/52/469/Add.1*, 20 October 1997, pp. 8-11.

political parties in Euskadi could agree on a document centred on human rights. All of them invoked human rights, but from there partisan views imposed a fight which drains the area for initiatives such as the case of the specific educational strategy on values regarding peace and human rights. For this reason, the fact that we actually have a Plan today is really great news. However, what does Basque society actually gain from this Plan?

It gains organisation and consequently efficacy. To date, there had been sufficient awareness of the need to educate for peace and reinforce the human rights culture but this awareness, with the best will in the world, led to dispersion. There were too many initiatives lacking coordination, too much duplicity, without really setting our sights on results. This referred to social and institutional initiatives. Probably in the initial phases of any policy, the most important part is just starting but the second essential step involves planning where we are going, organising the whole country for effective coordination and equipping ourselves with stable diagnosis and evaluation tools to retain control of our steps and measure our progress. The Plan gives us this necessary infrastructure: specific bodies are created to promote and carry out the actions, evaluate them, discuss them, improve them... and also to be aware of the map of actions and have the right information so efforts can be maximised.

Gains are made in social participation and institutional coordination. For the first time, the three levels of the Basque Administration – Basque Government, the three local Governments and the Town Councils – got down to working together in unison. Each part has its own autonomy and its specificities but worked together. There was also the background approach of forging an alliance with civil society. In terms of public responsibility, Peace Education and Human Rights is an undeniable task for the institutions and, particularly, for the Basque Government. However specifying the policy both in terms of design and contents and carrying it out must receive sufficient participation along the way from educational agents and social organisations. A good sign of this alliance is the fact that a Forum of Human Rights and Peace Education Associations was set up in March 2007, on a Government initiative, bringing together around 30 NGOs from the Basque Country who work day in day out in our districts, villages and cities. This Forum, still open and autonomous to this day,⁷ has worked side by side with the Government to design the Plan and is doubtlessly playing an important role in carrying it out.

Gains are also made in the international presence of this policy for human rights and peace education. The Plan responds rigorously and scrupulously to the Plan model promoted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and UNESCO and the European Council.⁸ And this has led to it being included as a best practice in the consolidated Compendium that these institutions

⁷ Information about the Forum is available at <<http://www.ddhhypaz.org>>, 30 December 2012.

⁸ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Guidelines...*, pp. 1-20.

are promoting.⁹ This is good because, for the first time, this policy has included its definitions and principles; its organisation and management proposals; their criteria for evaluation and diagnosis. In this way, we are going to be able to make ourselves visible in international waters concerning Peace Education and Human Rights which will make it easier for us to incorporate best practices from other countries and also make our own small contribution. But above all – and this is our great hope – we wish to lay solid foundations so that this can move out of partisan territory in the mid and long term. There is little left to invent in the field of systematic work on human rights. To set the right course, we just have to set sail on major international routes where the concepts and principles are defined. This is precisely what we aim to do with the Plan: get to work as instructed by international organisations trusting that their authority and experience will help us to make progress so that this might be a land for everyone. We will do this by cultivating initiatives in our work traditions and according to our specificities.

For the first time, after almost 30 years of self-government, we have a Plan with these characteristics which brings together a set of more than 90 action programmes (70 from the Basque Government). Training and skills programmes; new intervention programmes via cinema or theatre; promoting agreements, subsidies and also specific programmes on the social-political reality of the Basque Country from the viewpoint of human rights. All this will be done with an overall budget of almost six and a half million Euros including the culture of the diagnosis and assessment to make this matter into a serious policy, where we know which way to go and how fast it is progressing.

But before analysing the most important contents of the Plan it will be worth presenting the preparatory stage that was brought about for paving the way for this course of action.

2. Background and Preparatory Actions for the Plan

Actions will be listed below which were used to launch and prepare the Basque Education Plan for Human Rights and Peace. These are actions which, in synthesis, already outline the official and social institutional framework which boosts and supports this issue today.

⁹ Council of Europe et al., *Human Rights Education in the School Systems of Europe, Central Asia and North America. A Compendium of Good Practice*, Warsaw 2009, pp. 17-18.

2.1. Interdepartmental Committee for Peace Education and Human Rights

The starting point and official kick-off for the Plan was the creation of the Interdepartmental Commission for Human Rights and Peace Education (Government Council Agreement dated 17th October 2006). This commission received the formal commitment to draw up the Plan and it has worked as the coordinator and enabling centre for the institutional and social network of agents. It has been given the task of informing and collecting contributions from agents (Town Councils, Local Governments, Basque Parliament Humans Rights Commission, Official Human Rights Organisations such as Ararteko or Emakunde, Basque Radio and Television Broadcaster (EITB), the associations forum, the economic agents, churches, the youth people's associative sector, universities¹⁰ and Human Rights institutes, international organisations such as the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNESCO, European Council, etc.).

2.2. Diagnosis

The period for designing and progressively writing up the Plan lasted around fourteen months. The plan started by drawing up a complete updated diagnosis of the situation of Human Rights and Peace education in the Basque Country. The diagnosis has made participation possible from key sectors in promoting human rights and peace education (institutions, school agents, associations and nongovernmental organisations) who were able to contribute what they had done and what was being done and also their strategic view and future priorities.

2.3. Associations Forum

In parallel to writing the Plan, the Office for Human Rights of the Basque Government promoted the creation of an Associations Forum for Human Rights and Peace Education. The Forum was set up in March 2007 so that it could participate straight away in the process of producing the Plan making contributions and it is currently made up of more than thirty associations.

¹⁰ The importance of the role of Universities, specially legal clinics, is highlighted by M. Mahdi-Meghdadi, A. Erfani-Nasab, 'The role of legal clinics of law schools in human rights education. Mofid University legal clinic experience', *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, No. 15 (2011), pp. 3014-3017.

2.4. Participation from Other Agents

During the months when the Plan was being produced, in addition to political negotiation with the different Basque Parliament groups, drafts were exchanged and contributions received from the Forum of Associations for Human Rights and Peace education (grouping together around 30 NGOs from Euskadi), Amnesty International, Escola per la Pau (UNESCO lectureship in Barcelona) or the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. It should be highlighted that the Plan has also been submitted to the (non prescriptive) ruling from the Euskadi Schools Council and which was debated in detail in an International Conference (Arantzazu, July 2006) on peace education organised by an Institute from the University of Columbia (New York) involving more than 60 specialists.

2.5. Public Media (EITB)

Prior to approving the Plan – although now included in it – a Collaboration agreement was signed with the Basque public media (EITB). This agreement (Permanent collaboration agreement between the public entity Euskal Irrati Telebista and the Department of Justice, Employment and Social Security dated 2nd May 2007) aims to create the structure and basis for operating principles making it possible, in the most effective and sustainable way over time, to meet the social responsibility quota that corresponds to the media regarding Human Rights and Peace Education. In matters relating to human rights, because they are the basis of any serious injustice so that education in this field is the basis for the specific development and taking root of any more specific education (citizenship education, democratic values, for development, anti-racist, peace). But also, specifically, in matters relating to peace education because the presence in Basque society, for too long, of violence as a supposed form of resolving conflicts requires a specific approach which takes note of reality to redouble its efforts where they are most required.

The Agreement creates a decision body – the Council for Education in Human Rights and Media – and a technical secretariat which are in charge of planning and deciding, annually, on the specific actions to be run and their assessment. The first Plan of Action was approved in December 2007 and assessed in December 2008.

2.6. Resources Centre – Human Rights Website

The centre emerged from the need to institutionalise a peace and human rights culture knowledge space around everything which is generated (ideas, analysis, developments, implementations) within the framework of associations and institutions in the Basque Country giving better and greater use of existing resources.

The aim, therefore, was to design a reference space where different sensitivities can meet, founded on human rights and peace culture. That makes it possible to circulate and raise awareness on the constitutional values of human rights, to implicate institutions, associations and citizens in general; provide resources to ascertain (observing, analysing and evaluating) the past, present and future of human rights and peace in the Basque Country; and which can be used for reflection.

The Basque Plan for Peace Education and Human Rights committed to creating a Centre for Resources, Assessment, Technical Assistance and Information which must become the central technical body of the whole institutional framework. This Centre began to shape itself to a progressive constitution strategy back in 2006. In the first phase, it was primordially commissioned to promote and support creating the associations' forum through the Technical Secretariat and to start preparing the resources map. It has also been running preparatory actions such as designing, implementing, feeding and maintaining a website (www.bakegune.net) as a human rights portal including complete information on both the institutional and social spectrum. It is a tool which aims to be used as a reference point offering our community information without closing doors to initiatives from beyond our borders.

This website also fulfils the function of a communication mechanism and link with the Forum of Associations for Peace Education and Human Rights and in the future with members of the Basque Plan Consulting Council.

Finally, the resources centre is working on a consolidated "information highway" system which permits the flow of online resources and building a documentation centre among all the agents which can be used as a technical basis for the functions of consultancy, assessment and future planning.

3. Basque Education Plan for Peace and Human Rights (2008-2011)

The Plan structure responds, on the one hand, to its configuration as a Plan of Action and on the other hand, to its necessary pedagogic nature making it accessible to a wide range of sectors which must become involved in its implementation.

3.1. First Part of the Plan: Descriptive Part

The first part (called the *Descriptive Part*)¹¹ presents the context which is used as an institutional, social and standard-related reference framework for this Plan. This first part gives the key aspects which help us to understand the justification of this type of Plan. This thereby locates this Plan within the context of the docu-

¹¹ Basque Government, *Basque Education Plan...*, p. 23 ff.

ments and obligations for promoting the culture of peace and human rights which emanates from the United Nations (High Commissioner for Human Rights), UNESCO or the European Council (**international context**). This explains its junction with context of state policies (**state context**). As a third line of contextual approach the background of the institutional work is developed, particularly from the Basque Government, in boosting the culture of peace whilst explaining the political commitments underlying the plan: that means, complying with the Plan for Peace and Cohabitation in its final strategy, the victims agreements from the Parliament and the demands from the UN High Commission on the matter.

However the first part also includes a summary of the results of a diagnosis¹² which was being carried out by the Human Rights Board throughout 2007 on the state of peace and human rights education (in formal, non formal and informal education) in the Basque Country. The updated diagnosis of our (institutional and social) capabilities and our evolution is essential to seriously, and with knowledge of our cause, determine our target for the next four years. The Plan therefore appear justified in its structure and targets from the preceding work and as a result of the demands from this work reflected in the diagnosis.

3.2. Second Part of the Plan: Substantive Part

A second part (*Substantive Part*)¹³ describes the basic political options shaping the document. The primordial objective is definitely specified, along with the governing principles and the strategic lines.

The objective of the plan is to promote Human Rights and Peace Education in Basque society, optimising existing resources and generating necessary synergies among the different strategic sectors. It also involves drawing up a programme for systematic, coordinated, permanent and sustainable action to inform, train, promote and diffuse the human rights and peace culture. In the midterm, information and training aim to change attitudes in many sectors of the population.

By means of this general objective, we hope to achieve:

1. A Basque society which is aware of Human Rights and the situation of others in their immediate environment, which promotes their knowledge, defence, exercising and promotion when faced with situations where these rights are infringed.
2. Public administrations which lead public policies on duly coordinated Human Rights and Peace education, and which guarantee the correct use of the existing resources, generating the necessary resources and programmes.

¹² Ibid., p. 40 ff.

¹³ Ibid., p. 63 ff.

3. A social-educational fabric which is active in dissemination and promotion of Human Rights and training society in the field of education for Peace and Human Rights.
4. Media, particularly publicly owned media, especially active in broadcasting and active pedagogy of human rights and peace.
5. The Governing Principles of the Basque Plan for Human Rights and Peace Education are divided into general, substantives and organisational principles. The general principles are suggested by international organisations for this type of plan. The substantive principles inform on the Plan's later strategic lines, whilst the organisational principles focus on their implementation.

So, to achieve the central objective, the following substantive governing principles are necessary and sufficient:

1. Dignity Principle.
2. Public Responsibility Principle.
3. Social Participation Principles.

Having presented the objective and governing principles, the Plan presents four basic strategic lines each one with their corresponding general and specific objectives. At the same time, these four strategic lines will be used later on to provide a backbone for the actions in the operative part of this Plan:

1. Social Awareness-Raising General objective: Disseminate the values of a Peace and Human Rights culture in Basque society.
2. Social Training General objective: Train Basque society in the field of Human Rights and Peace Education.
3. Institutional Training (Empowerment) General objective: Strengthen the work of the institutions and organisations in the field of Human Rights and Peace Education.
4. Coordination (Promotion) General objective: Leading policies on Human Rights and Peace Education in the Basque Country.

3.3. Third Part of the Plan: Operative Part

Finally, at a level of greater specification, a third operative part¹⁴ establishes the different sector-based intervention programmes from the institutional field (six sector-based programmes from the Basque Government, three programmes from each of the Local Governments and a sector-based programme from Town Councils -EUDEL-).

The programmes identify the protagonists in charge and provide details on a set of actions which will have to be developed to progressively put down roots for a more widespread and intense culture of peace and human rights. It identifies

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 77 ff.

a total of almost 90 actions or programmes of which almost 70 correspond to the Basque Government.

The following stand out among these initiatives:

1. Developing multiple training programmes for members of NGOs, political assignation positions, prison officers, police, young community mediator leaders, teaching staff, etc.
2. Subsidy programmes for associations, municipalities and schools and for projects specifically aimed at young people.
3. Grants programmes.
4. Programme of educational intervention in matters relating to human rights and for peace through the cinema.
5. Programme of educational intervention in matters relating to human rights and for peace through the theatre.
6. Programme of educational intervention in matters relating to human rights and for peace through EITB and particularly BETIZU.
7. Programme of educational intervention in matters relating to human rights and for peace which particularly affect the intercultural perspective.
8. Pilot projects in matters relating to human rights and victims of terrorism (didactic units).
9. Boosting informative publications lines comprising basic texts on human rights and peace.
10. Promoting university studies on human rights and victims.
11. Sessions on best practices for education for Peace and Human Rights among municipalities and associations.
12. International seminars.
13. Boosting Agreements with international organisations for human rights and peace.
14. Developing awareness raising campaigns.
15. However, maybe the star project is the development and consolidation of the **Centre for Resources, Assessment, Technical Assistance and Information** on peace education and human rights.

This third part also determines an **organic structure** which is specified, on the one hand, in the Interdepartmental Commission for Human Rights and Peace education (Basque Government) and, on the other hand, in the new **Consulting Council for Human Rights and Peace Education**. This will be the structure in charge of assuring that the Plan is carried out correctly for a critical period of four years (2008-2011).

The Plan, in final terms, also alludes to the criteria and people in charge of monitoring and evaluating the Plan and the budgetary base to make this feasible: a total of almost **6.5 million Euros** of which almost **5.6 million** correspond to the Basque Government and 850,000 Euros to Local Government.

4. The Basque Plan for Peace Education and Human Rights: First Evaluation

The Basque Plan for Peace Education and Human Rights 2008-2011 was approved by the Government Council on 26th December 2007. As the Plan itself determines, it will be obligatory one year from its definitive approval to produce a first impact assessment, looking above all to identify needs for adjustment, correction, complementing or broadening actions in all sector fields. This should give, after running the Plan for one year, an accurate completion timescale and a much more detailed budgetary adjustment.¹⁵

The Basque Government Interdepartmental Commission on Human Rights and Peace education was responsible for approving the assessments – both complete and partial – at the request of the Office for Human Rights and this Committee met on 20th November 2008 and approved the evaluation document ratified by the Government Council Agreement of 10th February.

The most significant conclusions of the assessment were as follows:

A) The Plan is in progress and its speed of completion is much faster than what would be essential to assure that it is duly finished completely within the four year period that it covers. The data speaks volumes: out of 92 actions planned, 63 have already been implemented (68.5%). In addition to being implemented many of them have been completed (34 out of 92; 37% of the Plan has been completed). So we can rest assured that the first promotion of the Plan has begun securely with guarantees of completing all the programmes by the time it finishes in 2011.

The data already given on the actions started appear graphically in:

- Line 1: social awareness raising
 - itinerant exhibitions;
 - translation and dissemination of basic texts on human rights and peace;
 - intervention programmes using cinema or theatre;
 - forums and international seminars on human rights;
 - support for publication and research on the topic;
 - topic-based websites;
 - special campaign for 60th anniversary of Human Rights...
- Lines 2 and 3: social and institutional training
 - development of educational leisure programmes on Human Rights;
 - drawing up didactic guides for teaching staff and students on training courses for free time instructors and management staff;
 - development of the Programme to participate in the Basque Parliament («Debate with us»);

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 21-22.

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- development of the La Peña pilot project An educating district (Zamákola project);¹⁶
- development of a specific programme on peace education particularly looking at the reality of the Basque Country on the basis of the pilot projects completed in the 2006-2007 academic year (A society which builds peace) and in the 2007-2008 academic year (Taking steps towards peace);¹⁷
- postgraduate programmes on victims and human rights;
- civil servant training programmes;
- Ertzantza (police) training programmes;
- subsidy lines for project for schools and teaching staff;
- subsidy lines for project for town councils;
- drawing up a permanent collaboration Agreement with the Forum of Associations for Human Rights and Peace education in the Basque Country;
- producing a Memorandum of Understanding with the United Nations High Commissioner's Office for Human Rights.
- Line 4: coordination and promotion
- creation of the Centre for Resources, Consultancy, Technical Assistance and Information;
- creation of a Centre for Resources, Consultancy, Technical Assistance and Information from the Plan which will fulfil the consultancy function in terms of municipal policies concerning Peace Education and Human Rights;
- creation of a topic-based website as a centralised informative instrument on the real situation of Peace Education and Human Rights in the Basque Country;
- promotion and planning for the media sector (EITB): evaluation 2008 and planning 2009.

B) All the strategic lines (awareness raising, social training, institutional training and promotion) and the programmes also present a coherent and uniform degree of implementation which is reflected by the fact that at least 50% of the actions in each line have been started and are in progress.

C) It is important to highlight the homogeneity and implication of the institutional agents in charge of the Plan. This first year of completion has demonstrated interest from all the administrations – and particularly the Local Governments – to work in the Basque Country for Peace Education and Human Rights. As highlighted in the conclusions from the assessment, 75% of the actions are run in jointly between different agents and administrations and, therefore, involve the whole institutional fabric and its coordination, lacking previous experience in this respect, is revealing itself to be one of the most relevant potentials for the immediate future.

¹⁶ CEP Zamakola-Juan Delmes LHI (Bilbao), *Bizi gaitetzen elkarrekin. Proyecto escolar de educación para la convivencia*, Vitoria-Gasteiz 2009.

¹⁷ M. Garaigordobil, *Evaluación del programa "Dando pasos hacia la paz – Bakerako urratsak"*, Vitoria-Gasteiz 2009.

D) Another positive point from the assessment is to have managed to make another firm step towards a better adjusted time scale and budgetary forecasts. After this assessment, practically all the actions in the plan have an accurate completion timescale and the budgetary forecasts have also been adjusted for each individual case according to the type of actions which permit this type of calculation.

As a summary: the assessment demonstrates that the Plan was in progress and running at a good pace, with homogeneity in all its lines and action programmes and with the whole institutional and social fabric involved responsibly working for Peace Education and Human Rights in the Basque Country. On a more technical level, after the assessment we had an accurate completion timescale, a much more individualised budgetary forecast and a more purified and operative model for planning and collecting information which will assure the final assessment of this Plan.

Last but not least it is important to underline again that the Basque Plan was included as a *Good Practice* at international level within a Compendium published by the Council of Europe, OSCE, ODIHR, UNESCO and OHCHR.¹⁸

5. Further Developments and Final Remark

By 2009 the first Basque Plan for Peace and Human Rights Education had been set completely in motion after having succeeded in pushing ahead more than 60 per cent of the total action programs during one year and a half. A global assessment of the Plan for that period of time had been completed with very good results. Moreover according to international and independent assessment from human rights official organizations the plan had been considered as a good practice in the field.

However, and that is key point of this final remark, when a new ruling Basque Government came to power in 2009, the Plan was radically transformed. Instead of paying attention to the whole culture of human rights, the focus was set in a very concrete initiative: to bring testimonies of victims of terrorism to the formal school system. The new representatives of the Government claimed that just to push ahead a general culture of human rights was not enough and could even amount to a kind of justification for terrorism and a way of getting rid of responsibility in telling new generations that history of terror.¹⁹

The new plan arose a counterproductive reaction against human rights education and throughout 2010 and 2011 it was almost impossible just to tackle this issues in public discussion without a great deal of bitterness and refusal by large sectors of the Basque Public.

¹⁸ Council of Europe et al., *Human Rights Education...*, pp. 17-18.

¹⁹ See the whole document related to the new version of the Plan and further information about its enforcement at <http://www.jusap.ejgv.euskadi.net/r47-dheduki3/es/contenidos/informacion/plan_convivencia_mayo10/es_plan/2010_2011.html>, 27 December 2012.

After two years of political battle this new direction of the plan was abandoned coming back the Government to an attempt of building up again broad consensus in the matter.²⁰

Therefore, the evolution of human rights education policy in the Basque Country comes to a standstill where the tension between two different approaches in the field had open new perspectives for a more inclusive future. The first plan was based in a model of indirect education for human rights and peace assuming that pedagogical (direct) intervention related to our own human rights violations in the Basque Country needs previous and wide support, absent at the moment, amongst both the general public and political arena. It is not possible to try to solve through the school issues highly controversial and subject to hot political discussion. Probably, where there is no consensus towards the existence and the extension of human rights violations, as it is the case nowadays in the Basque region, it is not possible to try to set a successful strategy at the formal educational system based upon tackling directly those infringements. Direct education for peace and human rights, that is education which faces our own ongoing violations of human rights demands special conditions such as consensus at political level.²¹

After the ceasefire of the terrorist organization ETA the aforementioned consensus is closer than ever for the Basque Country. From indirect education to a direct one a transition should and could be carried out. However a lesson should have been learnt: let us continue the long way to peace all together!

Abstract

For decades, Basque society has been suffering different types of violence: civil war of Spain (1936-1939); repression under the dictatorship of the Franco Regime (1939-1977); and, more recently, during the transition to democracy, both terrorism carried out by non-state actor actors (ETA) and torture, police abuse, as well as other kinds of politically-motivated violence committed by the State (and/or state-sponsored or state-like) apparatus (1977-2011). The result has been a deeply divided society where violence has been used systematically in an attempt to achieve political goals both related either to (a higher degree of) autonomy/independence for the Basque region or to a greater deal of identification-integration with(in) Spain.

In 2007, a Basque Education Plan for Peace and Human Rights (*Basque Plan*) was approved as a result of a long participation process that lasted almost two years, and succeeded in enabling a full range of stakeholders (NGOs, Basque Defender of the People' office, Youth representatives, Universities, Human Rights Institutes, formal and non-formal educational agents, Basque media, local, regional and central Basque Governments' authorities etc) to present proposals and to draft the final document. Following the model

²⁰ See information available at <<http://www.irekia.euskadi.net/es/news/8662>>, 27 December 2012.

²¹ D. Bar-Tal, Y. Rossen, 'Peace education in societies involved in intractable conflicts. Direct and indirect models', *Review of Educational Research*, Vol. 79, No. 2 (2009), pp. 557-575.

plan (*Guidelines for national Plan of Action for Human Rights Education A/52/469/Add.1, 20 October 1997*) issued within the framework of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education of United Nations (1995-2004; A/RES/49/184, 6 March 1995) and with the support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Basque Plan was included as a *Good Practice* at international level.²²

The Plan seeks to identify steps whereby the Basque Country can use education as a means to improve the promotion and protection of human rights and it has four main strategic goals: to raise social awareness about human rights; to educate society about human rights; to enforce institutional work in human rights and peace education; and to coordinate policies of peace education and human rights in the region. The Plan is based primarily on non-formal approaches but also incorporates actions specific to the school system.

The aim of this paper is, on the one hand, to present the process of drafting a Basque Plan, its structure, main contents and implementation. On the other hand, however, it will be worth illustrating positive achievements acquired by means of the Plan but also political and technical difficulties the plan has been coming through so far.

Finally, as a conclusion, in analysing the mentioned implementation process and the evaluation of the Basque Plan it will be subject to discussion whether a *direct peace education* (i.e. that which face its own ongoing violations of human rights), and not just an *indirect one*, is likely to be successfully carried out in divided societies and under which kind of conditions should it be possible.

Jon Mirena-Landa

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²² Council of Europe/OSCE/ODIHR/UNESCO/OHCHR, *Human Rights Education in the School Systems of Europe, Central Asia and North America. A Compendium of Good Practice*, Warsaw 2009, pp. 17-18.

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in Times of Transition and Crisis:
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Education

Eds. Krzysztof Mazur, Piotr Musiewicz and Bogdan Szlachta



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