

FINAL STATEMENT

2ND Internship Programme on Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue Bilbao, Basque Country, 10-19 December 2006

We, young people from 5 continents¹, representing a diversity of cultural, religious and spiritual backgrounds - Art of Living Foundation, Bahá'í, Brahma Kumaris, Buddhism, Christians of Catholic, Orthodox and Lutheran confessions, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism - gathered in Bilbao, Basque Country, at the 2nd Internship Program on Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue.

Recognizing and respecting our different identities, we chose to share our lives for a short while, reflecting on the question "Can we live together?" and at the same time enjoying our cultural and religious diversity.

Nowadays intercultural and interreligious dialogue is a necessity motivated by the growing realisation that cultural or religious conflicts may continue to escalate.

We met with members of different religious communities, were moved by their openness and their honesty in sharing their personal experiences of religion and faith with us. We realized that dialogue is a process of understanding our own identity and the identities of others that begins with the willingness to listen to one another with mind and heart. We confirmed our conviction that our own is only one of many ways to live. We shared prayer, finding a common connection despite differences in language, religious tradition and culture.

We commit ourselves to be multipliers of the idea of intercultural dialogue in our own communities, countries and societies. The embodiment of this commitment will be the creation of a network of young people of all religions willing to share perspectives and engaging in common initiatives. In addition we will cooperate with other existing youth movements to spread intercultural and interreligious awareness, building bridges of respect and understanding.

We do hereby call for:

- Promotion of intercultural sharing in all forms of education, both formal and informal
- The creation of awareness of religions based on personal sharing.
- The incorporation of the intercultural dimension and interreligious issues at all levels.

Bilbao, Monday 18 December 2006

¹ The participants are from Basque Country, Belgium, Catalonia, Chile, France, Germany, Georgia, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Italy, Kenya, Norway, Spain, Palestine, Puerto Rico, Russia, Rwanda, Tibet, Turkey, United States of America and Venezuela.