



CLARET VIDA AWARDS

**GENERATING INTERCULTURAL AND
INTERGENERATIONAL SPACES**





The Claretian Association for Human Development "Sortarazi" emerged from the Claretian Laity communities and was created to promote and contribute to the integral development of men and women at risk or in situations of social exclusion. Our field of action is in Bizkaia, and we started in 1991 by being present in the neighborhood of San Francisco, one of the places with the highest inequality and social vulnerability in Greater Bilbao.

In recent years, the association has grown, and we have expanded our services to other municipalities in the area such as Getxo, Leioa, Erandio, and Uribe Kosta, but our spirit and action continue to be linked to this neighborhood where we grew and which is still on the path of recovery.

In the heart of its streets, we maintain with great enthusiasm the "Itzalaberri" program, which provides social care with a community focus to people in situations of social exclusion (especially young homeless immigrants living on the streets). In recent years, we have adapted the program to the reality of the neighborhood, aiming to provide the most timely and effective support.

Currently, the individuals we support are mostly young people of Maghrebi origin who have migrated from their countries of origin in search of new opportunities. They generally possess potential personal skills and abilities, but their well-being has been affected by the migration process, lack of resources, or other stressful life events.

The "Itzalaberri" service offers a space of care that ensures access to showers and laundry facilities, as well as professional support for social accompaniment and educational and community activities.

While we accompany each individual, considering their uniqueness and providing a safe space for personal progress, we also focus on the community aspect, which is crucial in promoting the social transformation we strongly believe in. We desire that all individuals can be part of and participate in our neighborhood, creating bonds of community and fraternity.

With this in mind, we realized that there were more people and groups in the neighborhood who might also want to know, share, and participate. Unwanted loneliness and lack of support are significant challenges faced daily by many young people leaving their countries of origin for a better future. A different reality, but facing the same challenge, is experienced by many elderly residents, whose life stage is sometimes socially disconnected from community involvement.

From there arose the enthusiasm to generate *intercultural and intergenerational spaces* among the activities we promote in the service. How could we bring together both groups, neighbors of the same neighborhood, but living in such different realities, to build lasting bonds of mutual support?

With great enthusiasm, we approached the nearest senior residence with a firm proposal aimed at creating a meeting place that would promote intergenerational and



intercultural interactions among people in the San Francisco neighborhood. We have much to learn from each other, and above all, much to contribute.

We began by arranging weekly visits to their center, creating moments of joint participation. To this day, we maintain a connection that has allowed a large number of young migrants and many individuals aged between 85 and 98 to share their realities from a community perspective, engaging in simple day-to-day activities together.

The visits to the residence are warmly welcomed every Monday. Some young people prepare tea and pastries, while others engage our seniors in board games and moments of fun. The residents, in turn, teach songs and dances, and on special occasions, joint celebrations take place.

María Dolores says, "If it weren't for Mohamed, I would have never tried a 'chebakia' nor imagined that this word, so similar to sugar, meant thank you."

Yassine confesses that from the elderly, one learns to face whatever comes with serenity because, as Jesus often tells him, "with time, everything passes, and from everything, you learn when you see life projected over the years."

Sometimes, small actions towards others can have incalculable value in changing perceptions of relationships, purpose, and life for both others and oneself.

Through this activity, everyone gives and everyone receives. We all benefit. The residents contribute their affection, warmth, and experience, while the young people bring their enthusiasm, joy, and service. We don't know who does more good to whom, but what is clear is that every Monday, San Francisco becomes a slightly more united and humane neighborhood.

Remaining true to our Claretian identity, we will continue this work wherever we are needed, with coherence and awareness, responding realistically and balanced. We will never forget our commitment to people and their diversity, regardless of their origin, gender, religion, or age, as well as our commitment to the neighborhood where we are located, aiming to make it a more cohesive place to live.