

WORLD SOCIAL FORUM

tam-tam: the Emmaus news wall

“We’ve got to challenge our political representatives relentlessly about what they do, and hold them to account for their actions.”

Abbé Pierre



We've got to challenge

Emmaus on the move

Representatives of Emmaus International went to the Tunis World Social Forum from 24 – 28 March. There, they were able to talk with other organisations about a range of subjects – Emmaus International’s alternative initiatives in community-management of the right to water, alternative approaches to migration policy, democratic transition in Africa, and the challenges climate change will present the poorest people around the world.



RIGHT TO WATER

“Since 2006, the water access and sanitation programme around Lake Nokoué in Benin has given 90,000 people access to this fundamental right. Through access to water, what makes Emmaus International unique is that it’s enabled the poorest people there to organise themselves in order to manage this resource. This can be said of the whole project – from the initial work done to identify what people needed to actually building the infrastructure and fundraising. Today, the people of Lake Nokoué have become aware of the rights and put pressure on the authorities to have them respected. This programme needs to enable us to demonstrate that the poorest in society must be the driving force when taking ownership of their rights.”

Patrick Atohoun, leader of Emmaus Pahou (Benin), which leads the Nokoué programme



INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

“At Emmaus our doors are open, no matter what migration policy says and whilst governments are determined to close the borders. Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights asserts the right to freedom of movement and residence and this needs to be applied. A great many entities are concerned with migration – governments, grassroots organisations, financial bodies... and that’s why cooperation is essential, in order to change the current security-focused policies that kill thousands of migrants. Today, we support the idea of a new international treaty on migration. We’d like to set up a network of places that consider migrants as citizens and propose alternative policies.”

Renzo Fior, leader of Emmaus Villafranca, Italy



DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES

“In Burkina Faso, civil society, unions and political parties are all mobilised to achieve democracy and freedom. I’m a member of a special delegation that’s monitoring the democratic transition process and speaking up for the grassroots. Democracy is only possible if everyone has a voice. Emmaus contributes to furthering democracy further and educating and raising awareness about the importance of democracy. Emmaus is also there to encourage the poorest in society to reclaim their rights. At international level, Emmaus Africa and Emmaus International back African grassroots movements, at their request, to call for a handover of power in their countries.”

Mahamady Sawadogo, member of the executive committee and leader of SEMUS, Burkina Faso



POVERTY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

“For several years, climate change has been impacting small farmers, whose produce does in fact provide food for thousands of people in the world. Privatisation and the irresponsible use of water are making this disaster worse. The poorest in society are most affected - yet they’re least to blame. But by using green farming methods, these small farmers have the power to increase food production twofold in a decade. For 33 years, we’ve been working with farmers to find solutions - like rain-water conservation. But we need to go further, and we need to continue pressing the public authorities to respect our rights and speak up for the poorest of the poor in discussion forums.”

Oswald Quintal, leader of Kudumbam, India

Editorial

By Jean Rousseau, Chair of Emmaus International

Recently struck by violence, Tunisia has just hosted the World Social Forum for the second time. Civil society activists from around the globe wanted to show that, in these unprecedented times of terror and extremism, the only solution is to meet with others and exchange ideas. That’s what the representatives of Emmaus Interna-

tional had in mind when they went to the event – they were determined to share their experiences and hopes for the future. On a few chosen issues – the right to water, freedom of movement and democracy in Africa – our movement wanted to show that the poorest people in our societies can get together and come up with good and lasting solutions to their problems.

They aren’t just going to put up with the meagre crumbs we give them to survive. We must never forget that, while taking back ownership of our social and political rights takes us a step nearer a fairer world, it also tackles the breeding ground where frustration, violence and despair thrive.



All aboard

→ Be an activist for change! Find out more, follow us and support Emmaus International’s campaigns by going to our website, www.emmaus-international.org then ‘Get involved/donate’/ ‘Be an activist for change’.

our political representatives relentlessly about what they do...

Next port of call... Tunisia (Tunisia)

Tânia Schubert Barbosa is a member of the executive committee of Emmaus International and leader of group, Igualdade no Brasil, in Brazil. She took part in the World Social Forum in Tunis to represent the Americas.

Why is it important Emmaus International goes to the World Social Forum? Social Forums provide the opportunity to meet and discuss with representatives of other organisations and civil society organisations from around the world that support alternatives for a fairer world. Around the globe, Emmaus implements alternatives based on solidarity and sharing, so we need to take an active role in these forums which discuss issues like human dignity, justice, human rights and protecting the environment.

How do civil society organisations contribute towards democracy? Civil society organisations and movements contribute towards raising people’s awareness about political issues by telling them about their rights, how political institutions work, and how decisions are, or are not, made. Day by day, they’re fighting against a model of globalisation that’s lost its way and only serves the interests of the powerful. They’re promoting an alternative kind of globalisation that’s based on solidarity, equality, respect for universal human rights, social justice and sovereignty.



How did it go for you at the World Social Forum? It was the first time I’d been to a Social Forum and I wasn’t expecting it to be such a huge event! We were able to discuss our ideas and tell representatives from around the world about our activities. It was great to see such freedom of expression, respect and optimism. I also had the chance to find out about the work of Brazilian organisations, which we plan to keep in contact with to continue discussing our work in Brazil.

An Emmaus International publication - 2015
communication@emmaus-international.org
47 Avenue de la Résistance - 93104 Montreuil Cedex - France
Publication director: Jean Rousseau and the Communications steering committee
Edited by: Marie Flourens, Marie-Anne Dubosc, Lucie Bardisa
Graphic Design: Nicolas Pruvost (www.nicolaspruvost.fr)
Design: Claire Robert (www.claire.robert.org)
Photo credits: Emmaus International, Didier Gentilhomme
Printed on FSC-Certified paper by Loire Offset Titoulet
Translated by: Laura Sharpe

www.emmaus-international.org

Emmaus international