

The Containers – the Perspectives?

- Reflections for the annual meeting on containers held in Paris on 17 December 2013*
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 - *The reflections are advisory and personal and are of no commitment to neither the association to which I am affiliated (GtU Denmark), nor to the other members of the council.*

Studying the site http://emmaus-international.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=58&Itemid=81 you will, among other things, read the following:

“The goods received are usually sold in the groups' second-hand shops, or distributed to families experiencing major difficulties or to other organisations. They can also be used to set up or run social projects or training programmes (school equipment, technological and medical etc.). This resource sometimes allows countless people to survive.”

I would like to see this information becoming much more concrete:

- At least one example of a social project.
- At least one example of a training programme.
- At least one example of collaboration with other associations.

However, the most important questions are:

Do any of these actions provide a long-term perspective of change in the societies in which we act? Most likely, no one doubts that Emmaus is engaged in the fight against the elements causing distress.

Is it possible to make any change, to initiate development when work is based on results deriving from other continents instead of on the concerned countries own resources? Countries like Benin and Burkina Faso are among the most important manufacturers of cotton, and Emmaus provides them with second-hand clothes to be sold or donated.

It is correct that 98 percent of the cotton are dried and exported, untreated, and only 2 percent are manufactured in the countries of origin, but what is to be done in order to increase this percentage from 2 to 3?

For example, at the address Marché du Bounam, Quartier 17, Pissy, Ouagadougou, approximately 2 kilometres from Emmaus' African secretariat, you find an association called Fil Bleu which produces organic clothes from Burkinabe cotton – please consult <http://filbleu-butik.dk/francais>.

In Burkina Faso, you also find the National Council for Organic Agriculture. According to <http://www.autreterre.org/fr/documents/cat1-journal-terre.aspx>, number 135, page 33, this council has established an organic certification. In Benin, there is a Participatory Guarantee System which is a mechanism that allows for manufacturers to assess themselves and for mutual supervision to ensure the Organic production, the latter according to Gautier Amoussou from www.ecobenin.org.

My proposal is that Emmaus aims to establish collaborations with the associations mentioned above – and you could easily picture similar collaborations in other countries.

I have no doubts that we are doing well with the ongoing work based on the containers.

translated into English from French by Gitte Vejlgard.