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SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

tam-tam: the Emmaus news wall

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Editorial

Patrick Atohoun, Chair of Emmaus International

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights” but the Emmaus groups present across 4 continents nevertheless witness persistent injustices on a daily basis and the groups work hard to find solutions to these problems. Emmaus is not just a stakeholder in the ethical and solidarity economy and a model

for how to fight against poverty, Emmaus is also a collection of initiatives united under the goal of helping the most excluded to get their dignity back thanks to access to fundamental rights, the sharing of riches and the preservation of our environment. The struggle for social and environmental justice is the ultimate goal of our action and we wanted to reaffirm that at the world assembly in Jesolo.

Abbé Pierre always took action based on what he saw as being fair, taking into account economic, social, political and environmental factors. He defended equal justice for all men and women. Today we must follow in his footsteps by fighting for equal rights for all and so that all men and women can express themselves.



All aboard

→ Do you fight for greater social and environmental justice? Then share your initiative on the Act Emmaus platform!

→ Discover the initiatives led by the Emmaus groups from across the globe by visiting the Act Emmaus platform: www.actemmaus.org/fr

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Emmaus International

Emmaus on the move



AFRICA | Pag-la-Yiri (Burkina Faso)

INVOLVING WOMEN IN POLITICS

“In rural areas women are little involved in local decision-making, which is a social injustice. The association’s literacy and micro-credit activities have helped these women to see that they did have skills to offer. We have been supporting them since 2014, encouraging them to get involved in politics, with training about how institutions and political parties work and by organising meetings with female elected officials. In a period of just three years the number of female candidates in the local elections has increased by 25%. These efforts also enable these women to become financially independent: they take decisions that match their needs and work even harder to become self-sufficient once they are elected in order to find some time to work on their role as local officials. We continue to be involved in local and national networks and we work with the local authorities in order to change mindsets.”
Franceline Sawadogo



THE AMERICAS | Emmaus Amor et Justicia (Brazil)

AWARENESS RAISING ABOUT CITIZENSHIP MATTERS WITH CHILDREN

“The House of Know-How’ welcomes children and young people from the slum in Pirambu, in the suburb of Fortaleza, offering educational support as well as a wide range of other activities (dance, music, theatre, capoeira and IT). For many families the House of Know-How is an opportunity to protect their children from the devastating effects of drugs, violence and unemployment. As well as providing know-how we also want to help these children become stakeholders for social transformation and make them aware of environmental issues. We have noted that the young people who come to the House of Know-How take more of an interest in school and reading as well as developing a political awareness of a sort. The House of Know-How helps reduce violence and creates an atmosphere that encourages rights to be respected.”
Erievania Queiroz Santiago



ASIA | Emmaus VCDS (India)

RESTORING COMMUNITY WATER BODIES

“Community water bodies are the main water resource for the Dalit populations but this infrastructure has not been well maintained, the water has been polluted and is now unusable, having an impact on crops, animal farming and the consumption of the local people. We have been working with the inhabitants since 2001 to restore these water bodies so that everybody has equal access to this resource. We have led awareness raising activities with the local people about the need to maintain these water bodies and we also run an initiative with farmers where we train them on agricultural methods that use less water and on effective irrigation techniques. We work in networks to raise awareness amongst children about these matters because preserving this natural resource will allow the marginalised populations to increase their income and regain their dignity.”
Josephine Martine



EUROPE | Emmaus Aland (Finland)

A SOLIDARITY CAFÉ FIGHTING AGAINST FOOD WASTAGE

“This café was born of a desire to fight against food wastage and to find new means to offer long-term work to the unemployed, thus fighting for greater social and environmental justice. The Emmaus recycling café employs 20 staff members per year on a work integration scheme and they get personalised support to progress and find work or training. They prepare and serve 30 meals per day for Emmaus’ staff members and volunteers and these meals are made using local, often organic, produce. 80% of the ingredients is unsold food which is donated by shopkeepers. This project gives marginalised people a chance to re-integrate in society and to have a decent life whilst also having a positive impact on the environment. In 2016 we recycled 3,354kg of food and we are planning to open the café to the general public in 2018 in order to have an even greater impact!”
Robert Jansson

Next port of call... Emmaus Toulouse

For its 40-year anniversary Emmaus Toulouse organised a day dedicated to the environmental and social transition. Benoit, the group leader at the Labarthe site, spoke to us about the community’s commitment to this topic.

What initiatives do you run that help protect the environment? We lead the traditional activities of an Emmaus community: sorting, repairing, re-using and selling on objects but we are also committed to protecting the environment on a more wide scale and we have even included this goal in our statutes. We monitor our electricity consumption, for example, and try to eat untreated, locally-produced fruit and vegetables. We have also been thinking about how to design housing with a low environmental footprint for our companions. Before launching an initiative we always ask ourselves whether it respects people and the environment.

Is Emmaus a stakeholder for the environmental and social transition? Since its early days Emmaus has fought to protect the environment with its waste collection activities. Every day we are confronted with the environmental and social consequences of programmed obsolescence and excessive consumption, these realities provide us with the materials we need to survive but we also fight against this situation. Emmaus’ financial independence is clearly based on recycling and re-use but what is unique about Emmaus is how it gives people their dignity back whilst respecting the environment



at the same time, within Emmaus these two elements are closely interlinked.

What should be Emmaus’ stance? I think we should take up our role as a stakeholder in the social and environmental transition and strengthen our political voice as we definitely have things to say. Emmaus proves that it is possible to develop models which respect both people and the environment. The communities should continue to be living spaces as well as hotbeds for projects and innovation. Our communities should be open to people from outside the Movement and they should be involved in local networks of associations.