



When it comes to bread – the fruit of everyone's labour, that we know anew that we are brothers.

TAKING ACTION
ALL TOGETHER
FOR BASIC RIGHTS

tam-tam: the Emmaus news wall

“When it comes to bread – the fruit of everyone's labour, that we know anew that we are brothers. And nothing more is asked of us than to be so in earnest.”

Abbé Pierre, *Faim et soif* magazine, June 1956



EMMAUS
INTERNATIONAL
ACTIVISTS FOR CHANGE

Emmaus on the move

Let's hand over to some participants in the Africa work camp. They will share their hands-on experience with us, illustrating the 3 combats supported by the movement: ethical and fair trade economy, social and environmental justice and universal peace and citizenship.



SHARING RESOURCES EMMAUS STYLE

Over 3 days, participants prepared a large charity sale at Emmaus Pahou. Serge, a companion from the community of Rédéné (France), took part in every stage: from the loading of the container in Brittany, to the sale in Benin, which raised €4,000. Thrown into a new reality of the surroundings, he found this time a real learning process. He makes the analysis: “I realise that I made certain mistakes [...] some things should not have been put in the container.” But he is leaving with a different vision and a better understanding of the issue of containers. From now on, he knows that “electrical appliances are highly sought after [...]. That mattresses go straight away as well as furniture which also sells well.” For the groups who receive them, these containers contribute to the strengthening of economic and social activities put to the service of the poorest. In Jean-Pierre's group, in Pag-la-Yiri (Burkina Faso), the goods are either given out to those in difficulty, “and here [they] prioritise the women in the organisation”, or sold in a bric-a-brac “where they have already received twenty odd [French] containers Annemasse, Toulouse, Plessis-Tréville and Bayonne.” With the revenues generated by these sales, they can put in action “charity works – notably for people living with the AIDS virus and orphaned children.” Solidarity through the sharing of resources manifests all of its sense here.



THE RIGHT TO A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

Clémence Sessou, a sociologist in charge of the promotion of hygiene at Nokoué Lake, put together the Emmaus International project in 2013. With longstanding commitment to community development, she shares the model of collective, citizen management of drinking water and sanitation brought by the movement. In particular, she engages with women through participative activities around the themes of hygiene and sanitation: a way of encouraging them to change their habits and to share them with their neighbours. A group of the camp's participants were able to go with her to Dékamney, as part of a program lead with the villagers. In the company of twenty women from surrounding villages, they helped to sweep-up, collect and burn the refuse. At the start of the project, “we had stated that beyond a lack of access to drinkable water around the lake, the populations had certain habits which made them very vulnerable to diseases” Clémence explains. She and her team decided to raise the inhabitants' awareness of different themes including the unhealthy nature of their environment. “Around the lake it is insalubrious [...] because there's no system to collect refuse [...], or any place to discharge waste”. With the wind, the refuse flies away and pollutes the lake. It's a sizeable challenge for Clémence – bringing together citizen mobilisation and the involvement of public powers. Aware that this process will take time, she says, “there are many socio-cultural factors [...] which we need to act upon, so it will take as long as it takes”.



PEACE AND FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT CITIZENSHIP WITHOUT BORDERS

Nowadays, it is tempting for many countries, political leaders and citizens to withdraw into themselves. Through its community work groups, Emmaus International allows the movement's participants to go and meet each other and, in turn, share the reality of their environment. The Africa community work group, like its forerunners, has been a celebration of diversity and the sense of belonging to a global citizenship; an illustration of our values of sharing and respect... These work groups also act as a strong symbol of everyone's right to mobility, even as an expression of freedom of movement. David, a young Afro-Colombian, was one of the group's attendees. This trip to Benin allowed him to reconnect with his family origins which were uprooted centuries ago during the era of slavery. Suffering long discrimination, the Afro-Colombian community has only been recognised by the State in Colombia since 1933. Today the younger generations have their heart set on claiming their heritage. “Because of this historical struggle, marked by racism, my generation appreciates all the information that the African continent can give to us, because we want to reaffirm [...] the culture that has been deprived of us for so many years,” David explains. He also goes back to the duty of solidarity that was fulfilled in the work group. “Thanks to Emmaus I was able to do it [travel to Africa], not only for the sake of being there but to give some aid.”

A closer look... 1st Forum of the Organisations of Lake Nokoué

From 29th January to 7th February 2019, Emmaus International organised a work camp at Cotonou, Benin. Before parting ways, the fifty participants from 4 regions attended the 1st Forum of Organisations at work on the banks of Lake Nokoué.

Initiated by Emmaus Africa and Emmaus International, who have been present at Lake Nokoué for over a decade, working on a project for the sustainable access and community management regarding drinking water and sanitation, this 1st Forum aimed to facilitate the meeting of local organisations taking action on common issues, looking to create local coalitions so as to collectively support alternatives in way that is complimentary and efficient. Seven organisations came forward at the appeal, including the Association for Users and Stakeholders in of Nokoué Water (AUAEN) with whom Emmaus has been working for many years; The Sonagnon Association, which works to strengthen activities that generate revenue, water access and revenue; the Circle of Women and Youth for Development Promoting Women's Rights; the 'Terre d'Espoir' Association, which raises awareness around sustainable development and eco-citizen conduct for better management of natural resources; the Beninese Red Cross, which works in the field of hygiene and sanitation; the Association for Children and Young Workers, which fights for literacy and the creation of



health centres and finally, the Collective for Organisations of the Civil Society of Sô-Ava which takes action to promote local democracy. After a day of exchange and debate, all of these stakeholders came to agreement on the urgency of joint reflection on the establishment of communal actions and of forming a network. Effectively, making resources mutual will allow the seven organisations not only to strengthen their respective work with the population of Lake Nokoué but also increase the impact of discussion initiatives with public authorities to reach a profound transformation of the social, economic, environmental and democratic situation... of the citizens of this region. With union comes strength!

Patrick Atohoun, Chair of Emmaus International

Editorial

At our last world assembly in 2016, we all agreed on the importance of reviving the organisation of our international work camps: the spaces for exchange and sharing practises which have constituted our prosperity for more than thirty years. With their diverse contexts and range of works suggested, they remind us that our collective commitment to our three areas of combat alongside those who are most marginalised is fundamental, and is so all over the world. They also

recall the reasons why we take part in this movement, and the necessity of remaining in union and solidarity, faced with the world's challenges.

Following a work camp organised in Asia in 2018, the African region has now swung into action to show how the most marginalised can come together to re-appropriate their basic rights. This also provided an opportunity to present the combats carried out by groups and the communal works being lead in the region. At

the end of January, fifty companions, volunteers and supervisors, from groups from 15 countries were hosted by the Emmaus Pahou group, and all of the groups from the African Region, in Cotonou, Benin. Find out about their experience in this issue of Tam Tam. And as the story keeps on going, you'll see us again with the next camp in South America, in Colombia, in September 2019!



All aboard

- Find out about the beginnings of Emmaus in Africa as well as the action that is currently being lead by the groups in the region, working with the most marginalised: www.emmaus-international.org/en under “Who are we?”
- The Africa community work group through the eyes of its participants! Take a look at the shots taken by two of our footloose photographers: www.emmaus-international.org/en under “News”.
- The next community work group will be organised by the American region and will take place in Colombia in September 2019. The sign up information will be out soon!

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