



Our outrage alone could

# SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

tam-tam: the Emmaus news wall

“Our outrage alone could give us a clear conscience. But it doesn’t exempt us from taking action”.

Testament, 1994 - Abbé Pierre



## Emmaus on the move



ATIOGBE YAOVI | MARS TOGO (Togo)

**Respecting the environment for the improved wellbeing of people and society**

“At MARS Togo, we focus mostly on protecting women’s and children’s rights. What will stay with me most was when the team at Kudumbam showed us how to use farming techniques to preserve crops and grow plants even when no water is available. This was a valuable lesson, because in Africa we’re increasingly confronted with scarce rainfall. Back in Togo, I’m going to pass on what I’ve learned by running training sessions for a group of forty women who work on a semi-organic farm. I think these techniques will impact their living standards and will lastingly improve their daily lives. **It all goes hand in hand – our struggle for the environment goes in tandem with our struggle for social rights.**”



EMILIO PAINEMAL | URRACAS COMMUNITY (Chile)

**“Seeds need to be politicised” for a fairer model of society**

“At Kudumbam, we helped plant trees and dig ponds. But that’s not all! Participating in these activities has raised our awareness about climate change and environmental damage. Kudumbam has been pioneering in this area for 35 years. **It is possible to create a society which takes a better approach towards farming.** Mother Earth needs and has the right to live without pesticides! We have a duty to defend the rights of the planet’s inhabitants, promote healthy seeds and water, and natural medicines. **This is a realisation that’s shared throughout the Emmaus movement, worldwide.** We have to act together to make this change in society possible.”



MUTHAMIL MURUGESAN | EMMAUS KUDUMBAM (India)

**A global struggle**

“**At Kudumbam, we emphasise the link between social and environmental justice.** We support organic farming, training for farmers and partnerships with students to highlight the importance of food sovereignty. During the work camp, we took part in a demonstration to defend the rights of workers exploited by multinationals and raise awareness about the health issues resulting from this form of oppression. We also support the cause of the Dalits, people who are discriminated against as they are considered ‘impure’. Their fundamental rights are flouted, and they’re often reduced to carrying out the most degrading jobs. We are fighting alongside them for their rights to be respected, particularly their access to education, which will enable them to improve their position in society.”



MURIELLE DOARÉ | VANNES COMMUNITY (France)

**Kindling the activist flame**

“For me, Kudumbam reminds me of the tale of The Two Pots, one of brass the other of clay. I was struck by the fact that a small group of Indians could rise up against the biggest multinationals. It takes a lot of courage to stand up to those wielding the most power – it’s truly inspiring. **The Asia work camp confirmed our aim of taking action.** If enough of us join forces, we can achieve something! Back in France, we shared our inspiration with our community, and decided to increase our activist support of Article 13, which enshrines migrants’ freedom of movement, following along the lines as Emmaus International’s struggle for fundamental rights. **The experience of this work camp reminded me that at Emmaus we all have shared struggles.** It rekindled the activist flame we all have inside – whether it’s a flicker or a blaze!”

## Next port of call... Asia work camp

Emmaus International organised a work camp in India from 17 – 27 January, providing an opportunity to get involved in solidarity by doing practical work in the field, and taking part in discussion sessions. Around forty companions from 25 different groups came, from countries including Bangladesh, Colombia, the United States, France, Lebanon, the Netherlands and Romania.



**T**hey met at the Emmaus Kudumbam community, in the south of the country, where they dug ponds and planted more than 700 trees and organic vegetables. These hands-on activities really brought the group together, whilst time was also set aside for discussions. By sharing their lives together for ten full days, and sharing their previous experiences, many said they felt freshly inspired and motivated to continue their struggle against the causes of poverty. During the work camp, the participants’ eyes were opened to the fact that Emmaus’s struggles are all inter-related. At Kudumbam, championing environmentally-friendly farming and food sovereignty also involves fighting for children’s right to education and decent living standards for those on the very margins of society, particularly the Dalits, a category



of the Indian population that faces wide discrimination. In addition to the organic farming techniques, the participants also worked with orphan children housed at the Kudumbam farm, and marched alongside members of VCDs and local villagers during a rally to defend the Dalits. Oswald Quintal, leader of Emmaus Kudumbam, which hosted the work camp, explained this transition from action in the field to a further-reaching form of commitment: “Opting to use organic seeds and products, instead of chemical seeds imposed on us by multinationals, involves supporting an alternative model that doesn’t alienate producers. This way we’re promoting food sovereignty, and a fairer, more equitable model of society.” These work camps give a wonderful opportunity for the practical demonstration of solidarity within the Emmaus movement. Centring on the themes of our three struggles for a fairer world, the camps will be hosted by a different group on a different continent each year.

## Editorial

Patrick Atohoun, Chair of Emmaus International

**F**or Emmaus International, 2018 got off to a good start with the successful work camp, organised in South India in January. Hosted by the Emmaus Kudumbam group, around forty companions, volunteers and community leaders from across the globe came to work together and take part in discussions on our struggle for social and environmental justice.

These work camps form part of the backbone of Emmaus, giving participants a chance to share with others and get involved in solidarity in a fun and friendly environment. They have been going strong now for almost thirty years. At our 2016 world assembly in Jesolo, we chose to give fresh impetus to this valuable event that fosters cooperation and combines practical initiatives in the field with consideration of their wider political significance.

With this edition of the Tam-Tam you’ll share in the participants’ enthusiasm, with their diary entries they kept whilst at Kudumbam. They also detail what they’ll take away from this fantastic experience, now they’re back in their own groups. The next work camps will similarly relate to our three struggles. There will be one in Africa at the end of the year and another in the Americas sometime next year. Everyone’s welcome!



## All aboard

→ Are you working to promote social and environmental justice? Then share your initiative on the Act Emmaus platform!

→ And discover the initiatives led by other Emmaus groups around the world log in to the Act Emmaus platform: [www.actemmaus.org/fr](http://www.actemmaus.org/fr)

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