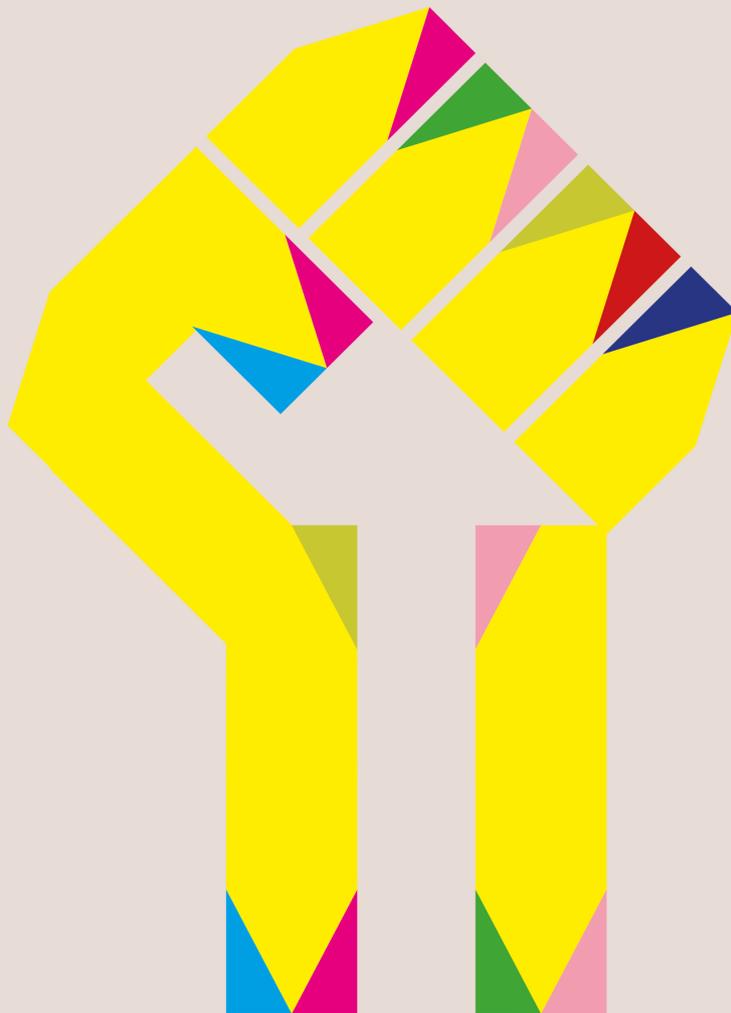


2021-2025

# GUIDANCE REPORT



emmaus

INTERNATIONAL

ACTIVISTS FOR CHANGE

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# INTRODUCTION

This guidance report is the result of a long process of reflection and discussion by the Board, and of dialogues that have taken place with all groups in the movement since 2019.

This preparatory work was severely affected by the global crisis provoked by the COVID-19 pandemic. It therefore seemed essential to the Board to analyse what the crisis revealed about the state of the world and our movement, and learn from it.

The different stages of the preparatory work can be summed up as follows:

## **1<sup>st</sup> stage: Board discussion in Cernay – May 2019**

After reflections led by a working group from the Executive Committee, the theme of our 2020 World Assembly emerged, based on three words of inspiration:

Exist – Communicate – Commit. Then a fourth one was added: Resist.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> stage: Evaluation of the implementation of the Jesolo resolutions – Board meeting in New Delhi, November 2019**

A summary of the evaluation was integrated into the activity report for the 2016-2021 term.

## **3<sup>rd</sup> stage: dialogue with groups, November 2019 through February 2020**

All of the groups within the movement were consulted during this period and asked to share their thoughts on local initiatives led in relation to each of the four words of inspiration, as well as the appropriate international initiatives to run in relation to these words.

We received and read the results of eighty-one questionnaires. Many more (192 after a reminder by phone in mid-March 2020) should have been sent back to us, but the pandemic put a halt to everything.

These questionnaires were studiously analysed and the main points were extracted. The summary of the results was useful for the Board's discussions.

## **4<sup>th</sup> stage: the COVID-19 crisis and the Board's discussions**

In March 2020, our work was abruptly halted. Our activities around the world were suspended and we refocused all of our energy on maintaining connections and setting up solidarity aid for those who most needed it.

It wasn't until December 2020 that the Board was able to hold its first meeting, via videoconference. The time was ripe to discuss the analysis of the pandemic's consequences—what they revealed about the movement's strengths and weaknesses and about the world at large (social and economic fallout, worsening poverty, troubling degradation of our ecosystems and climate).

The Board continued to discuss these topics throughout its meetings from January 2021 through October 2021:

### **Challenges within the movement:**

- our fundamental principles regarding solidarity and self-sufficiency had been sorely tested by the crisis. The Board decided to reach out to the groups once again, this time on two subjects that are important to our movement:

*Self-sufficiency and its meaning for our movement in the past and future*

*Sharing in a way that goes beyond solidarity*

- there was a widespread need to better understand our history, our values, our fundamental principles, and to draw new lifeblood into our movement:  
*The challenges of training and leadership for the future of Emmaus.*

**Challenges external to the movement:**

- In our fight against poverty, how does the movement address the necessary struggle for *environmental and climate justice*?
- How do we make our voices heard when we express our *understanding of migration issues* and our insistence on *a dignified welcoming of migrants*?
- Following our studies and consolidation work on our collective actions:
  - What has been our *experience of mutual health organisations*, especially given what the pandemic has revealed about *unequal access to health care and immunisation* throughout the world?
  - How can we strengthen *awareness/education* if we want to build a movement and world based on peace and solidarity?

**5<sup>th</sup> stage: preparatory debates, 2<sup>nd</sup> consultation of the groups (June-July 2021)**

Seventeen preparatory debates were held on the dual subjects of self-sufficiency and solidarity.

They brought together 184 people from 132 of our groups around the world.

The summaries of these debates will provide food for thought during the discussions in the second part of the World Assembly.

**6<sup>th</sup> stage: presentation of the first 2021-2025 guidelines, 1<sup>st</sup> part of the World Assembly**

Presenting the guidelines and polling the participants made it possible to draw out points of agreement and identify proposals that didn't seem to be top priority.

As you will note, the members of the Emmaus International Board have created this draft of the 2021-2025 Guidance Report with the utmost sincerity and commitment. The draft report will be submitted for debate during the second part of our World Assembly, which will take place from 9-13 May 2022 in Uruguay.

It consists of 3 chapters that echo the words of inspiration proposed for this assembly: "Exist" by strengthening our movement and its members; "Resist" through solidarity, to create a desirable future for the generations to come; "Commit" and "Communicate" so we can continue striving to understand the purpose and significance of our ever-relevant heritage and share it to inspire and mobilise others.

We thank you for the time that you will take with your groups to study the report's content and prepare for the discussions that will follow.

Important decisions for the future of our movement must be taken, and this World Assembly must embody a renewed energy—a collective and visionary energy—ready to meet the unprecedented challenges ahead of us.

**On behalf of the Board  
Patrick Atohoun, Chair**

## I. STRENGTHENING OUR MOVEMENT – EXIST, COMMIT.

“Often, as you know, I’ve repeated: “Emmaus, a tiny, huge thing”.

Tiny, because although there are hundreds of groups across the continents, its miniscule given the needs of humanity.

And yet, it’s a huge thing, because it’s like a ferment, a leaven in the steps of humanity. And it is a provocation, for one fundamental reason: at Emmaus, we trust the poor, the smallest.”

**Abbé Pierre, “Our responsibility”, Emmaus International Newsletter, June-September 1983**

### 1. Observations

In the 2016-2021 activity report, the Board notes that strengthening our movement is a continuous effort requiring reflection and work.

This term’s Board members made efforts to solve inherited problems, and this Board was very pleased to see historic groups such as those in Chile and Spain rejoin the movement. It has sometimes been necessary to exclude a group. However, when wrongdoing has been brought to light, the Board members have preferred to listen, provide support and find ways to hold together to defend our values, our struggles and our history.

Throughout the development of our movement, recurring issues have come up. They are not addressed collectively at Emmaus International but rather left up to the initiative of groups and national or regional organisations. This is the case for the diversity that we seek to draw strength from, but which raises questions about the way in which we welcome new groups, about the time and resources we dedicate to supporting them, and how we communicate our values. The policy guidelines adopted locally on this topic can lead to disparity and imbalances at the worldwide scale of the movement, and become a source of division instead of nurturing cohesiveness.

The crisis provoked by the COVID-19 pandemic revealed a number of significant gaps in understanding within our movement about what our fundamental principles should be, though they were reaffirmed at the 2016 World Assembly in Jesolo through the adoption of a fifth founding text. A lack of international solidarity, inward-looking attitudes, increasing searches for external funding, and a lack of recognition of the flagrant inequalities within our very movement, with groups receiving no support from public authorities in many countries around the world. All of these factors undermined the values that should be our great strength in times of crisis.

It’s clear that one of the first effects of the pandemic, through widespread lockdown measures around the world, was a wave of legitimate fear and confusion. Our models for self-sufficiency and the fight against the causes of poverty were profoundly disrupted for a length of time. In some countries, especially European ones, the end of lockdowns signalled a strong return to activity, although the shock has not faded away. And many groups are finding their way through a situation that has only gotten worse. We must take time to determine together what lessons we can learn from this disruption, which also represented an occasion for many world leaders to encroach upon our fundamental rights. Alas, we have observed the ravages of rising nationalism and imperialism that tip countries into war or military coups and deprive populations of the hope of a peaceful life.

These factors threaten to shatter the very existence of many groups.

The discussions that we propose for this World Assembly must help us create our path to a shared future in service of those most in need, while accounting not just for our diversity but also for the values that each and every one must make an effort to know and embody.

## 2. 2021-2025 outlook

Aside from the above observations, it appears that strengthening our movement is a high-priority issue for the new term that is beginning.

We must not only think about the resources we will need to pursue our work and our struggles, or specify how we will obtain them, but rather, we need to set out our collective prospects and reaffirm what unites us.

Therefore, we propose the following objectives for the 2021-2025 term:

Reaffirm what it means to be an Emmaus group today

Launch training that makes it possible to learn about, understand and reclaim the significance of self-sufficiency, international solidarity, and the strength we have as an international movement

Enable every actor in the movement—groups, group members, elected members of national and regional organisations, Emmaus International elected members—to feel that they are stakeholders in an international movement

Propose actions that make it possible to integrate new stakeholders into the movement and identify and support future leaders

Following the preparatory work summarised in the introduction, it seems necessary to bring the following subjects to the World Assembly for discussion and to decide on common resolutions:

### Subject no. 1: The future of our economic models for continuing our struggle against poverty

What threatens our existence today?

How do our groups present alternatives to poverty, injustice and the environmental crisis, or do economic concerns take precedence over our desire to be actors of social transformation and activists for change? What initiatives have already been conceived and developed to adjust our economic models?

How do we imagine the movement's development in the future? Based on what vision and what shared goals?

### Subject no. 2: Self-sufficiency, its meaning for our movement, from its origins and for the future

How does self-sufficiency inspire us today? How is it communicated to new members of the movement?

What are the obstacles hindering self-sufficiency for individual groups and the movement at large?

What could we leverage to move towards self-sufficiency?

What collective actions might help shore up our self-sufficiency?

## Subject no. 3: Bringing our movement to life; the challenge of learning and leadership within an international movement

What might be preventing individuals from getting involved in the choices made at the World Assembly?

What responsibility does each level and actor within our movement have to promote our common policy guidelines?

How can we coordinate an international movement while respecting our guiding principles? (Democracy, gender equality, room for the most excluded, equal-footing relationships between groups and regions, etc.)

## II. TAKING ACTION AGAINST THE CAUSES OF POVERTY – RESIST.

“It is important to constantly make suffering visible, to make it known. This is the first condition for the emergence of true action, that is to say, not only actions that provide immediate relief, but those that wipe out the causes. Then the voice of the voiceless will cease to be muffled. And the hunger of those who suffer will give way to the hunger for justice that is in the hearts of many...”

**Editorial Faim & Soif, August 1954**

### 1. Observations

The work undertaken throughout the 2016-2021 term breathed new life into our movement’s principles and international solidarity actions, and in doing so, strengthened our movement’s legitimacy in speaking out, denouncing the unacceptable, and demonstrating the value of our alternatives.

The elected members of this term, with support from the Emmaus International secretariat, did everything in their power to keep the movement on track toward its ambition and make it concrete, as reflected by the final statement adopted, with the following inspirational Abbé Pierre quote:

“It is not enough to take action, we must overcome, that is to say, take more action than the forces moving in the other direction”

**Abbé Pierre, Beirut, 1959**

To respond to groups’ requests and implement resolutions from the 2016 World Assembly in Jesolo, new spaces were made available throughout the 2016-2021 term. These were 3 international work camps in the Americas, Africa and Asia that made it possible for over 160 people to meet up and learn about different regions’ daily life, everyday difficulties, alternatives and overarching priorities. Reflecting and working together in the spirit of international solidarity for our movement were the great successes of these work camps.

Furthermore, work was done with the elected members of the four regions to:

- Better explain what international solidarity means to Emmaus
- Ensure consistency between the values our movement defends and the solidarity actions we perform
- Better analyse the impacts of our solidarity actions
- Place value in these actions which strengthen our advocacy work

The initiative of the first World Forum of Alternatives in 2018 was particularly invigorating and inspiring, with its 350 participants and 50 allies from around the world.

However, the collective momentum that groups created in Jesolo does not seem to have produced the anticipated results.

The board of Emmaus International has noted the following:

- On average, only one out of two groups participates in the annual solidarity sale.
- Solidarity funds have been established at every level of the movement (national, regional, international) and the lack of coordination can lead to confusion within the groups, or competition between different funds.
- Our means of support for groups based on their location are asymmetrical.  
Not everyone has the same understanding of what solidarity means for Emmaus. For some, it is limited to a project-based approach, whereas others see it as a tool for socially transformative actions that seek to eradicate the causes of inequalities.

The worldwide public health crisis that all of the groups within our movement have been contending with has deepened the divides between our values and our practices. The provision of support for our groups and for the most excluded populations has not been approached in a collective manner. Some instinctively withdrew inward and hoarded what they had.

However, this crisis is global, and our responses should reflect the appropriate scale of the global issues we face: increasing asymmetries in living conditions in rich countries compared to others. The only response that a movement like ours can provide is international solidarity, the affirmation of our fundamental values starting with “come help us to help others”, and the denouncement of everything that deprives a human being of the right to a decent life, including the degradation of our environment.

We draw strength from our local activities, from collective experiences advocating for the right to health, from our commitment to raise awareness through our many educational actions, and most recently, through the publication of our first Global Report on our struggles against poverty.

Making our voice heard will be a considerable challenge over the next few years. We must take up this challenge together in harmony. All of the actions that we continue to perform, in our groups and together, must play a role in this awareness-raising as it has become urgent. We must join forces and bring about the social, economic, democratic and ecological changes that are now critical for all people on Earth.

## 2. 2021-2025 outlook

We will need to find together the means to resist in the face of deepening inequality, irreparable damage to our planet, violations of our fundamental rights, the failure of our democratic models, and the bottomless appetites of despots threatening the future of humanity. Therefore, the following appears to be necessary for the next term:

- Strengthening spaces that allow groups to share, work together and bolster their efforts internally (international work camps, themed groups, etc.) and externally (participation in coalitions, campaigns, social forum meetings, etc.)
- Bolstering our collective actions to address identified international solidarity challenges, either through existing actions or through involvement in new actions
- Making our voice heard and communicating about our Global Report on our struggles against poverty
- Launching a training programme to analyse and understand the challenges in Emmaus' fight against poverty and the purpose of our collective actions so that each and every person understands why we do what we do

Following the preparatory work summarised in the introduction, it seems necessary to bring the following subjects to the World Assembly for discussion and to decide on common resolutions:

### **Subject no. 4: Why and how can we collectively take action and perform advocacy work?**

How have our collective actions enabled us to attack the causes of poverty?

How can we go further and use our demands to hold authorities to account?

What struggles should the movement get involved in in the future, given the democratic and ecological challenges, the exacerbation of inequalities and forms of racism that are particularly directed at migrants?

### **Subject no. 5: Being an actor of international solidarity with Emmaus**

What does resource-sharing mean within our movement?

How can we organise solidarity to lead our collective struggles, both local and global, during times of crisis?

What shared spaces can we create that would allow each and every person to be an actor within this international solidarity?

## **III. KEEPING OUR HERITAGE ALIVE – COMMUNICATE.**

“Young people everywhere want to live. They know instinctively that living means to fight and to create. And that living peace means being able to do this, being called upon for it and taking action”

**The world's youth and the violence of peace, editorial, Faim et Soif 79, May 1968**

### **1. Observations**

Several important actions were undertaken during the last term with the aim of sharing more of the incredible heritage of Abbé Pierre, from whom we must continue to draw inspiration.

The platform ActEmmaus, which was initially seen as the most emblematic action following the Jesolo World Assembly, was difficult to set up and did not meet expectations for sharing the history of Abbé Pierre's combats throughout his life to the general public, particularly young people. It remains merely an internal awareness-raising tool.

Fortunately, other significant actions did meet the expectations of the Jesolo World Assembly, especially the one commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Manifesto. This was a unique occasion for the whole movement to update its knowledge of this founding text, re-situate it in its historical context and examine how it can continue to inspire us today. The involvement of the Swiss groups and of the Emmaus Federation of Switzerland made this event possible, and we would like to thank them warmly.

We have observed, however, that the expansion of our movement has no particular guidance at the national, regional or international levels, which makes it all the more necessary to know how to communicate to new arrivals about our heritage using a clear and shared base of knowledge. Becoming part of Emmaus must be synonymous with sharing our values, our founding texts, our history and the struggles it features, which have enabled the movement to live on for over 50 years and weather external, as well as internal, crises.

Besides, the choice to make Emmaus International the sole legatee of Abbé Pierre, approved unanimously at the 2007 World Assembly in Sarajevo, places great responsibility on its shoulders to help each new member respect and embody this heritage. Our means are as yet insufficient, and the strategy for how and why we should embody this heritage is yet to be established.

## 2. 2021-2025 outlook

This heritage, bequeathed to us by Abbé Pierre, must be seen as a powerful way to revitalise the movement, instil pride in those who are part of it and communicate outside the movement about the wisdom and pertinence of Abbé Pierre's reflections and struggles.

It seems important to us, therefore, to concentrate during this term on the following objectives:

- Consolidating and sharing sources of our history
- Launching training and communication actions that facilitate taking ownership of our history, the fundamental choice to be an international movement, and Abbé Pierre's vision
- Communicating about our history and the "Emmaus method", especially among younger generations so that they can be inspired and become forces for change
- Strengthening our means of communicating these ideas, especially through digital channels

Following the preparatory work summarised in the introduction, it appears necessary to have further discussions on the following issues to determine our objectives and joint actions:

### Communicating to inspire new generations and new groups to get involved in our combats

How can we get younger generations involved?

What kind of support do new groups need so that they take ownership of our fundamental values?

How can we inspire new actors and especially new leaders for the future?

How should we communicate with the goal of sharing our heritage and inspiring others?

TOGETHER LET'S FIGHT  
T O C H A N G E  
**THE WORLD!**



**EMMAUS WORLD ASSEMBLY**

**9-13 MAY 2022**

**ASSEMBLEE-MONDIALE-EMMAUS.ORG**



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