



TOGETHER, MORE THAN EVER,
LET'S FIGHT TO CHANGE THE WORLD!

EDUCATION: WHAT ARE THE ACTIONS AND DEMANDS FOR THE FUTURE?



I. WHY AND HOW WAS THIS DOCUMENT DRAWN UP?

Education is at the heart of numerous activities carried out by the movement's groups for several years and is the topic of regular discussions. Following the 2016 World Assembly, new strategic guidelines were adopted and one of these comprised of "aligning our actions with our guiding principles". One of the courses of action for the International Solidarity and Campaigns team was to organise evaluation reports of the movement's joint programmes and projects. Taking into consideration the diversity of the education activities carried out and our difficulties developing a collective stance on education, the Board decided to launch an international study, in collaboration with the four regions, on education within the Emmaus movement.

This document, drawn up based on the education study carried out in 2021 and its adoption by the Emmaus International Board, aims to outline the main points and propose ways to give a new impetus to our common work, in order to collectively carry forward the movement's demands for access to education.

II. WHICH WORLD ASSEMBLY DEBATE DOES THIS REFER TO?

This document is intended to help you prepare for the following debate, as proposed in the 2021-2025 Guidance Report that you have received:

Subject 4:

Why and how can we take action and speak out together?

How have our joint initiatives helped us to tackle the causes of poverty?

How can we go further and make our demands known?

What struggles should the movement engage in for the future, given the democratic and ecological challenges, and in light of the exacerbation of the inequalities and forms of racism directed at migrants in particular?



III. PRESENTATION OF THE DOCUMENT

Analysis

The aim of this education study was to better understand the political meaning of the educational initiatives led by the groups and more specifically to:

- Create a mapping document of practices and identify their objectives in terms of defending the right to education;
- Identify the shared aspects that inspire our educational practices to be able to construct and promote the movement's common political voice on the right to education;
- Propose points that could feed into a strategy to bolster the groups' work and jointly raise their demands at the international level. At the 2016 World Assembly, the movement adopted the struggle for "Social and Environmental Justice for a Sustainable World", with the aim of getting excluded populations to organise and resist policies that lead to the plundering of natural resources, land grabbing, and other forms of violence.

Study method

In line with the values defended by the movement in terms of education, i.e., a participatory method, popular education which raises awareness, a choice was made to support the movement's members so that they themselves could carry out the assessment and take ownership of the results of the study.

This method consisted in:

- Involving the four regions thanks to the **creation of an 'Education Study' working group**, set up with representatives of the movement who supported the work to develop the study's method and content, coordinating with target groups and analysing the results and proposals.
- **"The education truck"**, an interactive study tool: **the groups concerned received a study kit**, comprising a written questionnaire, "pedagogical resources" (videos of groups' initiatives, pathway to education, Abbé Pierre quote), invitation to provide "creative feedback" to illustrate the initiatives (audio and video testimonies, photos, education mosaic). **The form of an "education truck"** was chosen to reflect the idea of collecting information and to make the link between the *traperia* (collection and recycling) work and social initiatives.
- **Video conferences** were organised to enable the groups to take ownership of the objectives and the study method: six meetings attended by around 50 participants
- It was therefore more realistic to launch this study **with groups that were identified in advance** by each region, such as groups carrying out educational activities or those with a particular interest in education.

A total of **54 groups** across the four regions participated in this study:

Africa region: 14 groups
Americas region: 15 groups





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Asia region: 5 groups
Europe region: 20 groups

48 groups responded of the 54 groups asked.

The study received a good response rate, including among groups identified for the Europe region, which reflects a keen interest by groups who run education initiatives to get involved in a collective discussions to bolster their initiatives and construct a common message.

General overview

The diversity of the initiatives run by the Emmaus groups on the ground reflects a **very broad concept of education**. There is no majority trend, but rather different types of initiatives: formal education, non-formal education, school support, professional or political training, citizenship education, awareness raising to gain accessing rights.

Groups appear to adopt an **approach that emphasises taking the person as a whole into consideration** (and therefore their specific needs). The people who benefit from the initiatives are in **marginalised situations**: people in situations of exclusion, people living in remote areas with no available infrastructure for education, people experiencing poverty.

The initiatives are mostly run for **children and adolescents**. In some context, the **vulnerability of the children** is a result of family violence, forced labour, armed conflicts or migration. A smaller number of groups focus on women and girls because of the **gender inequalities and discrimination** they face. There are also initiatives that target **adults**, with a focus on teaching skills and knowledge as part of a social and/or professional reintegration process. Finally, the implementation of initiatives generally involves **other parties from outside the groups** (parents, families, volunteers, other social organisations), with whom links have been created to ensure the continuity of the initiatives.

Identified issues and injustices

One of the causes leading the groups to put in place the education-based initiatives is **the absence or lack of public education policies adapted and accessible to vulnerable people**: in the countries where our groups work, the state does not always play its role. The groups' analysis focuses on the lack of educational or vocational training programmes for excluded people, as well as the lack of socio-cultural centres for developing active citizenship and community living.

Another aspect emphasised is **unequal access to education** depending on social background, but also often their area of residence (rural area/urban area). The Emmaus groups note the absence of infrastructure, primarily in rural areas, a lack of access to new technologies (especially the internet) - particularly striking during the health crisis – as a result of the increasing privatisation of education services.





The traditional education system is viewed by some groups as a space that reproduces social, economic and geographical inequalities, and does not combat them, thereby exacerbating the vulnerability of the most excluded.

In general, the groups receive requests from local people and decide to provide solutions to the lack of adapted facilities or programmes, in a context where their initiatives are often the **only educational and social alternative available**.

Purpose of the initiative

In areas with high levels of exclusion, where access to schooling is not guaranteed, the initiatives are run to **guarantee access to education for all**, because having access to education is one of the conditions for overcoming poverty. Faced by inequalities generated by public policies on education, the initiatives put in place serve to promote social inclusion and access to fundamental rights.

In this sense, the work done by the groups is described as **a means that has repercussions beyond the educational sector**: it serves to **train new generations** in the values of the movement, promotes **professional integration, empowerment and economic emancipation** of young people and adults, contributes to **reducing gender and social class inequalities**, and builds **spaces for civic engagement and participation in local development**.

Education-related demands

The demands expressed by the groups echo the analysis of the injustices identified and can be summarised under three headings:

- **The right to education for all**: enable equal access to every person, regardless of their social or economic background etc. → This means fighting for inclusive education policies adapted to the needs of vulnerable people.
- **Free access to quality education**. Some groups go as far as to identify the fight against the commodification of education as a struggle to be waged.
- Education as **an instrument for accessing fundamental rights, individual emancipation and building a fairer society**.

Another type of demand focusses on the **search for an education method consistent with the movement's values and accessible to the most excluded**:

- Building a political framework where the 'Emmaus method' can be promoted and defended
- Developing educational content that takes into account cultural, regional and local aspects.
- Responding to the challenge of technology and the digital gap faced by vulnerable people

The groups have also affirmed a request to **strengthen existing initiatives**, both in terms of resources and commitment from groups:

- Continuing to support the groups' initiatives in times of health and social crisis
- Working on the stakeholders' sense of belonging to the group and the movement





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- Improving the training of educators





Proposal

In order to be able to continue working collectively on education, the study highlights the need for the groups to set up a common working framework, both to consider how to strengthen their actions and develop their political voice. Some specific lines of action were identified by the groups that responded to the study:

- Organising workspaces and meetings between groups (exchanging practices, international meeting)
- Pooling resources to support initiatives
- Drawing up a common pedagogical framework
- Developing a common voice on education and reaching out to identified targets
- Promoting informal education as a means for social transformation
- Developing a pilot project on education in the four regions

Based on these ideas, the strategy to bolster our collective work could focus on three key areas:

Meeting and holding discussions together

Organising meetings and spaces at international level to enable:

- the exchange of education practices between the groups from different countries and regions;
- the drafting of a common pedagogical framework, which would aim to raise awareness and bring about social change.

Strengthening initiatives and collective engagement

Pooling resources to support and strengthen groups' initiatives and promote joint initiatives thanks to the solidarity within the movement.

Developing a common voice on education

Implementing a common work framework to construct our message could enable the demands promoted by groups to become practical ways to engage the whole movement.

Based on the analysis of the contributions to the study, the Emmaus International Board prioritised two approaches:

1. Education as a means for accessing fundamental rights and combatting inequalities
2. Citizenship training for awareness raising and social transformation