



50 YEARS OF COMBATTING POVERTY

Berne, SWITZERLAND: This year 2019 marks 70 years since the creation of the first community in France, and also 50 years since the first meeting of Emmaus groups from around the world and the adoption of the Universal Manifesto. The celebrations of these two key moments in the history of Emmaus International will be an opportunity for the Movement to address problems linked to social exclusion on international scale, & to share our struggles with the most excluded with the citizens of the world.

On 24 May 1969, 70 Emmaus groups from over 20 countries across 4 continents responded to Abbé Pierre's appeal and they met for the first time, in *Berne, Switzerland*. Abbé Pierre launched the international movement from the platform in the Federal Parliament in *Berne*, in the presence of 150 delegates mainly from communities in Europe and Latin America, and also from India and

Lebanon. This meeting marked the adoption of the "Universal Manifesto", the founding text and common set of principles of Emmaus international movement.

On 24 May 2019, the international Emmaus movement celebrated the 50th anniversary of the "Universal Manifesto" in *Berne*, in the same city where it was signed exactly 50 years ago. To mark the event, upto 180 people from 350 member organisation of Emmaus International, spread across 37 countries from 4 continents, met in the emblematic chamber of the Swiss capital to commemorate this founding document and give fresh impetus to our struggles and commitments. This Manifesto, a powerful marker in Emmaus history, is a still very relevant as it echoes our struggles today, at a time when our findings are alarming and we face many challenges.



The morning session had been dedicated to the meaning of the “Universal Manifesto” yesterday, today and tomorrow. A speech by Abbé Pierre was played so his voice can be heard, 50 years later. Thereafter Introductory speeches were made by Presidents of Emmaus Switzerland, Emmaus International, and Representatives of the Swiss authorities. Discussions then took place on what position we take today, after 50 years of creation of Emmaus Manifesto, and how relevant it is in today’s context. President of the four regions also presented the structural causes of extreme poverty identified at ‘World Alternative Forum’ in *Geneva* last year. Having assimilated our struggles and played with words, Swiss slam poet, *Patrick Guillain*, gave a fantastic performance, so that the power of the Manifesto resonated throughout the Federal Parliament chamber in *Berne*.



In the afternoon session, the Swiss Emmaus federation, hosting this historic event, invited the population of *Berne* to come to the *Waisenhausplatz square*, next to the Federal Parliament, to meet their communities and groups present throughout the country. The local population were invited to share a free meal and to discuss the work of welcoming others and the value placed on waste material by the movement. The programme included interactive performances, a giant mural, a Universal Citizenship passport cover workshop as well as concerts, to make our struggles known - all to the sound of music!



In addition to the representatives from Swiss groups, each Region had been represented by 4 people in this event: 1 long-standing figure and three more recent companions. Apart from that, the Movement’s groups worldwide were able to watch the whole day event online on social media, which enabled them to join the celebration of this important event, no matter where they are based. Emmaus International and all its groups worldwide extend their heartfelt thanks to all the Emmaus Swiss groups for their initiative and their involvement in the organisation of this event, and in its great success.



WORLD HEALTH DAY



Bogra, BANGLADESH: *Pollee Unnnyon Prokolpo* (PUP) participated in the rally on the occasion of 'World Health Day' on 7th April jointly organised by District Administration and District Health Department of Bogra, Bangladesh, with the focus on providing 'Health for all – Everyone, Everywhere'. It was emphasized during the rally that all people should have the access to the quality health services whenever and wherever they need it.



PUP has been working with rural people to create awareness on different health issues, and motivate them in following good health practices. They work in collaboration with District and Sub-district level health departments to take the Government schemes to rural villages, specially to their handicrafts producer groups and to farmer groups. They also work with Agricultural departments at District & Sub-district level to learn the technical know-how of cultivating crops by using traditional composts, without using chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

By the increased use of traditional compost materials, the overall soil

health status gets improved, especially the organic matter content and presence of micro-nutrients will be increased. Through the reduction on use of pesticide and chemical fertilisers, overall cost of production for vegetable cultivation and related health hazards gets reduced in the community. People are suffering economic loss because of inefficient and indiscriminate use of pesticides, which at the same time has huge health hazards. Among the directly affected people, agricultural labourers/farmers are the most vulnerable as they get direct contamination from using pesticides, because they don't use proper & safe methods of handling them.

In the above context, PUP organise regular awareness sessions with their farmer groups about the health hazards of using chemical fertilizers and pesticides, and motivate them to use traditional composts materials.

training programs

Delhi, N.INDIA: TARA and Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) jointly organised an entrepreneurship awareness session on 10th April 2019 at Pataudi – Haryana. More than 50 participants took part in the program, which included local residents from Pataudi, Bas Padamka village and the women group members of the Pataudi Spices Grinding Group.

Mr.Gajendra from KVIC informed the participants about various schemes and training programs conducted by KVIC. He shared the testimonies of some successful enterprises, and urged the participants to come forward and start a small enterprise. The trainer made aware

the women group members of the *Pataudi Spices Grinding Group* about the huge scope of a spices grinding unit. He also informed them about the challenges they might face in the beginning of their journey.



Mr.Gajendra also gave knowledge on the various aspects relating to the quality, processing techniques, storage, packing and marketing of the spices. He emphasized that the most important aspect is 'Quality' and it must not be compromised at any cost. He added that special attention needs to be given to branding and packaging of the items and urged Tara team to support the

group in these aspects. TARA representatives informed the participants that simultaneous work has been going on to develop packaging and other branding activities. They also shared that efforts are going on to develop the backward and forward linkages for the Spices Grinding unit

During the question answers session, the participants asked various questions concerning their doubts. Most of their questions were about how KVIC can help market their products and what other benefit the group can get through KVIC. *Mr.Gajendra* informed them that the brand 'Khadi India' was a very powerful brand in itself and the group will definitely gain from KVIC brand in their marketing efforts. The program concluded with the trainees and other team members thanking the trainer from KVIC for taking time to organize the awareness session. All the participants found the program very informative and useful.



Tindivanam - Tamilnadu, S.INDIA: Indian Social Institute – *ISI, Bangalore* has been organizing 'Cadre building training courses' for capacity building of marginalized rural youths. The sixth phase of ISI cadre training was conducted at *Karasanur* centre of *Village Community Development Society (VCDS)* from *28th to 30th of June* on the topic of 'Peoples' entitlements'. More than 30 members from 3 organisations – VCDS, THISAIGAL and ADECOM network participated.

Ms.Kousalya from VCDS facilitated the training on Motivation, and shared the information on the different government schemes available for the Dalits, women, minority and children; *Mr.Johnson* – a development Consultant & Human rights' activist focused on strategies to access Entitlements and Monitoring mechanisms; *Mr.Karthikeyan* from 'Shristi Foundation' provided training on Rights of Differently Challenged people; *Mr. Ponmaari* from 'Tribal development society' gave training on Entitlement of Adivasi & Prisoners.

Another awareness program on 'Human rights & Rights of people with disabilities' was organized at *Tholamur village* in which 150 people took part. *Mr.Arul Prakasam* – State Program coordinator from *ISI Bangalore* facilitated the program.



ORGANIC Agriculture training

Trichy - Tamilnadu, S.INDIA: Decline in Bio-diversity, reduction in uncultivated, food results in increase in Malnutrition of children and women. Decline in wild fodder has resulted in decline in livestock, drastically affecting the livelihood of the poor. The Indian forest department is making continuous efforts in enhancing community participation in reforestation. During *May and June 2019*, with the facilitation of KUDUMBAM, women groups

and school children were involved in seed collection. After the trainings provided by Kudumbam, 25 women from 5 panchayats have been involved in raising tree nurseries in their backyard, 70 women established backyard garden, and 8 of them raised tree nurseries in their farm.



There is a growing interest in establishing Roof top gardening in Urban Areas. In 2017, Kudumbam initiated activities in establishing a Roof top gardening at Kudumbam Administrative office in *Trichy* and in Kudumbam training centre at *Mathur*. In an effort to strengthen Roof Top garden initiatives in the neighbouring District, 18 Students from *Sastra University* were involved in a ten day Trainers Training in Roof top gardening. They contributed in Strengthening the Roof

top garden and were involved in developing Training material in seed Selection, soil fertility management, water conservation, waste water recycling, vermi compost preparation, preparation of panchayats as growth promoters and preparation of herbal decoction as pest repellent. They integrated creepers, Vegetables, Green leaf and herbs. This training team would impart training once a month in the neighboring District. As an outcome of this training, Seven Students have established Roof Top Garden in their house.

Bogra, BANGLADESH: *Pollee Unnnyon Prokolpo* (PUP) has been working with the farmers' group since last 5 years on the importance of organic farming, and train them about the technical knowhow of how to cultivate crops and vegetable by using traditional composts. The main objectives of these programmes were to explain to the participants, about the ill effects of chemicals used on the crops in their fields.

Chemical fertilisers and pesticides are expensive to purchase, whereas Organic manure and pesticides can be prepared by the farmers on their own with ingredients from their farms. Adoption of Organic Farming techniques reduces the overall costs of farming and can result in more income and increased employment. Moreover, Crops produced by chemical farming methods are more dangerous to the health of the producer and consumer, whereas crops produced by organic farming methods are more nutritious and safer for the farm workers.

An International NGO called MCC (*Mennonite Central Committee*) work in Bangladesh on food security. Their main focus has been in reducing chemical fertilizers and pesticides used in crop and vegetable cultivation. PUP has been a partner of MCC since 2005 to 2008. Since then, PUP has a very good working relationship with MCC. With the previous working reference, they applied to MCC for providing technical and Training support



MCC agreed to their request, and have provided two short term training courses to PUP staffs in the month of *June 2019*, each training for a period of 5 days. The training sessions covered the following topics - Importance of safe food production & its health-environmental benefits, Training on compost preparation, Training on Integrated Pest Management, Training on Vegetable cultivation with advanced technologies, and Training on Seed harvesting, processing & preservation.



LEBANON NEWS



BEIRUT: AEP board of directors and executive team met over two days in the month of *May 2019* for an in-depth reflection around volunteering, the mission of the association, and have put together an action plan for the future. Also AEP's management team has been conducting intensive field visits to identify the needs of its borrowers, to followup closely on the project implementation, and make sure that the end beneficiaries' status meet the mission of the association.



Success story: *Nancy Fardisi*, a young Lebanese mother of three from the *Beqaa* region, dreamed of expanding her business from a home-based beautician to operate and manage a professional beauty salon business. In *May 2019*, Nancy took a loan from AEP, to upgrade and furnish her beauty salon, which allowed her to reach a wider clientele. This loan resulted in additional household income and ensured better life standards to her and her family.

AWARENESS CAMPAIGN



Cuddalore - Tamilnadu, S.INDIA: Campaign on Water conservation: India faces 'worst water crisis' in history. Dirty aquifers and water scarcity are destabilizing the world's second-largest country. Groundwater scarcity and Pollution threatens India's Health, Economy, Environment and Food supply. A harrowing report in June 2019 warned that Delhi, along with 20 other Indian cities could reach 'Zero ground water levels' by 2020.

60 percent of agricultural land in India is not irrigated, so the failed rains are particularly devastating for farmers. When irrigation wells go dry, farmers turn to untreated wastewater that is laced with industrial chemicals and human sewage. The drought has destroyed crops and dried up wells already stressed by overuse, forcing rural families to move to cities.

After two consecutive years of weak monsoons, 330 million people in India, a quarter of the country's population, are affected by a severe drought. More than



The 2019 Chennai water crisis is an ongoing water crisis occurring in India. On 19 June 2019, Chennai city officials declared that "Day Zero", or the day when almost no water is left, had been reached, as all the four main reservoirs supplying water to the city had run dry. Two years of deficient monsoon rainfall, particularly in late 2017 and throughout much of 2018 had led to this crisis.



The inability to meet demand for water has forced businesses like hotels and restaurants to close. Water tankers from areas of *Tamilnadu* unaffected by drought have been bringing water into some areas of the city. However, government tankers can take up to a month to appear after requested, so some families, wealthy residents, and business owners have opted to pay for costly private water tankers. The poor who live in slums do not have this option; a family in Chennai's slums may receive as little as 30 litres of water every day.

In the above context, 'Florence Home Foundation' (FHF) in *Cuddalore* organised an awareness campaign through 'Street Art' on importance of water conservation in the month of *June 2019*. Street art is an easy way to pass the message to the General public. Government officials, students from schools and colleges were invited to organise and give awareness through street art. More than 100 people participated in the campaign. Different methods of conserving water through rain water harvesting and ground water recharge had been explained to the participants. The event ended at late noon, and all the participants found the program very informative.

Trichy - Tamilnadu, S.INDIA: Campaign on Bio-diversity conservation: Twenty three children from 5 Panchayats were involved in a one day awareness programme at *KUDUMBAM Kolunji ecological farm in May 2019*. In groups of 5, they identified tree species, shrubs, crops, herbs at Kolunji farm for 2 hours. Then they classified their collections, with the assistance of Kudumbam Trainers - *Ms.Usha, Ms.Priya and Mr.Chelladurai*, and they explained the use of the trees, shrubs, crops and their conservation. As an outcome of this exercise, each child was given five tree saplings for planting in their house. Saplings distributed were Amla, Lime, curry leaf, Guava, Pomegranate. The children decided to establish a nutritious kitchen garden at their home in *July 2019*. This programme was jointly organized with Child Sponsorship from CFCA (Community Foundation for children and Ageing).



Emmaus Asia Regional Board

Date: 14 - 17 April 2019

Venue: Rajshahi - Bangladesh



Rajshahi, BANGLADESH: Emmaus Asia Regional Board met at *Thanapara Swallows in Rajshahi, Bangladesh from 14 to 17th April 2019*, in which delegates from *India, Bangladesh & France* participated. Several discussions were held during the meeting in preparation for the *Board meeting* of Emmaus International (EI) which took place in *Cernay, France in May 2019*.

After the welcome session by the chair, the agenda for the meeting was adopted. The main decisions of the Asia Regional Assembly held at *Srilanka in November 2018* and followup / actions taken have been reviewed by the members, after which the minutes has been approved. Thereafter payments made by Asian groups towards Emmaus International membership fee & Solidarity sale contributions for the year 2018 were presented.



Updates on Mutual Health programme (MHO) were shared with the members, after which discussions were held on the need for MHO programme to continue, in light of the situation where poorest have less or no access to quality healthcare services. Thereafter discussions were held on the activities implemented under 2018 Annual Solidarity programme. Member groups in India & Bangladesh has received 100% of

the grant, and the activities implemented by the groups have been shared during the meeting. Discussions also were held on projects financed by Emmaus Montbeliard and Foundation Abbé Pierre, and the progress on the activities implemented were shared. Thereafter two groups in India who received emergency support for the damages caused by Cyclone Gaja, shared the information on the efforts taken in reestablishing the farm, and in repairing the damages. Members were informed regarding the visits to groups in India and Bangladesh to evaluate the projects implemented in 2017 and 2018. Thereafter members were informed regarding the new orientation of Regional Solidarity emergency funds. Representatives from GK (Gonoshasthaya Kendra) were present during the meeting to share about the activities implemented with Emmaus support in distribution of vitamin-enriched food supplements to malnourished children, pregnant and lactating women, elderly people settled in Rohingya refugee camps.

For the 2019 projects, members were explained about the background of how the new criteria for International Solidarity evolved, the different stages from submission of online applications by the groups, and the assessment of applications by different committee members. Regional Board analysed EC recommendations & groups' responses, and approved the



projects of two groups from Asia region to be presented to EI Board meeting in May 2019. Thereafter members were explained in detail the background behind the idea of Emmaus Ethical fund (EEF) for groups to avail loans to develop / strengthen their economic activities, or to increase their working capital for Micro credit programs.

Regional Activity report and utilization of funds for the year 2018 were presented and approved. Thereafter members were informed about the highlights of Africa international work camp that took place in *Benin, West Africa* early this year. Thereafter members were informed about the next work camp to take place in September 2019 in *Colombia*. Regarding the event to take place in Berne after 50 years of creation of Universal Manifesto, members were informed regarding the preparations underway, and the whole day program schedule. This event will be an opportunity for the Movement to address problems linked to social exclusion on international scale, & to share our struggles with the most excluded.

Members were then explained about the process of prioritizing the proposals put forward by the 'World Alternative Forum' held in *Geneva* in *September 2018*, and about the voting methods. Accordingly members discussed, and prioritized 8 of the 27 proposed initiatives. Thereafter

members were informed regarding the 2020 World Assembly (WA) which is scheduled to take place in Uruguay at the end of September / beginning of October. Also the details about the working group for WA has been shared. There being no further business to come before the meeting, the meeting was adjourned at 7 pm on *16th April 2019*, and field visits were arranged the next day to two groups in Bangladesh to meet and interact with the beneficiaries.



VISITORS TO EMMAUS GROUPS



Tindivanam - Tamilnadu, S.INDIA: *Ulrika, Erica, Maria and Hillevi* from Friends of VCDS (FoVCDS), Sweden visited *Village Community Development Society (VCDS)* from *11th to 16th of April 2019*. They met VCDS students, teachers and parents and had a meeting with Parents Teachers Association (PTA). This visit was important for VCDS as the Swedish team have donated more than 350 books for the children's rotating library. These books include stories, general knowledge, mathematics and scientific inventions. They also ordered more than 200 books to be delivered by the end of June. VCDS had been conducting 18 Non-formal schools in 17 villages of *Villuppuram district*. Swedish team donated this library to the Non-Formal schools with the acknowledgment of the PTA-EC members. They also visited evening schools at *Vanniper* and *Thollamur* village.

Cuddalore - Tamilnadu, S.INDIA: *Adrian Ramsden* from *Macclesfield, UK* visited 'Florance Home Foundation' for a one month period. He is a retired teacher, a Rotarian, and a Youth officer in Rotary club of *Sanbuch, UK*. He had been instrumental in jointly organising 'Youth exchange programme' for young people between UK and India. During his visit, he has been involved in the daily activities of FHF, visiting & interacting with local schools and college students, and will also participate in the local Rotary clubs in *Tamilnadu* during coming weeks.



Trichy - Tamilnadu, S.INDIA: *Sabine Pompey* from France visited Kudumbam, and completed her internship from 5th June to 5th July 2019. During her intern with Kudumbam, she was involved in studying key agricultural issues and emerging alternatives in villages around *Kolunji Ecological farm* and in villages around *Tranqubor, Nagapatinam* districts. She was also involved in translating the website of Kudumbam in French language. She evolved a 3 years internship programme between Kudumbam and AIME, where they will send 1 to 3 interns for one month to strengthen information dissemination at the international level.



Bogra, BANGLADESH: On the occasion of “**World Environment Day**”, *Pollee Unnnyon Prokolpo* (PUP) organised a rally jointly with the Local Administration at Bogra on *5th of June*. PUP has been affiliated with different national and local networks - member of *Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon* (Bangladesh Environmental Movement), *Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD)* and *Water Rights Forum (WRF)*. The main objective of these network movements is to attract the attention of the Government to implement the laws on protecting rivers, and to conserve the environment.

Today, many of the rivers in Bangladesh are in critical condition. The exact data is not available,

but environmentalists and journalists working on the issue identify most of the around 450 rivers in the country face serious threats mainly due to rampant grabbing and indiscriminate polluting by the industries through toxic waste dumping.

PUP with other networks working on environmental issues organise regular events and campaigns to put pressure on the policy makers and the River Protection Commission to save rivers from pollution and from grabbing by greedy grabbers. Without a strong political will and enforcement of laws, it won't be possible to stop river grabbing and recover the occupied lands.

Tindivanam - Tamilnadu, S.INDIA: *Village Community Development Society (VCDS)* had been conducting 18 Non-formal schools in 17 villages of *Villuppuram district*. These schools aim at ensuring and protecting child rights on education, participation and experimenting their scientific knowledge.



As a preparation for the new academic year, the non- formal teachers had their yearly start training on *9th June 2019*. Focus of the training was on the new syllabus introduced by the government, and how to handle those subjects easy to the students. New set of books have been distributed to the teachers along with the documents for each school. The teachers suggested reworking the handbook for the non-formal schools, as they need to be updated with few of the teaching methods. 20 teachers took part in this training. Training was conducted by *Mr.Balaraman, Mr.Sivakumar, Mr.Maria Anthony Dass and Mr.Karthikeyan* on different subjects, and in handling the students with disabilities.

INTERNATIONAL EARTH DAY



Trichy - Tamilnadu, S.INDIA: On 22nd of April, Kudumbam organized a procession at Odugampatti village to observe the International day of Mother earth. 200 school students from 10 Schools in Pudukottai District participated in the event. During the procession, placards were displayed highlighting change in land use, shift from integrated farm to mono agriculture,

which has resulted in depletion of soil fertility, depletion in water tables and increase in pest and diseases.

A memorandum was submitted to the Thasildar (Government officer) of Kulathur Taluk in Pudukottai District. During the procession, children sung environmental songs and performed folk dance. They prepared seed ball and took them to their respective villages. They have prepared a one year plan which includes planting trees, maintaining home garden, water conservation, etc.

Editorial Committee:

Ms.Moon Sharma, India
Mr.Camille Chedid, Lebanon
Mr.Selva Arokiaraj, India
Ms.Josephine Pavithra Devi, India

For Communications:

EMMAUS ASIA SOCIETY
Door No: 43, Fifth cross street,
Health Employees colony,
Nainarmandapam
Pondicherry - 605 004, INDIA
Tel: +91 94426 17266
E-mail: emmausasia@gmail.com



Compiled by :

Mr.M.Kamalakaran
Regional Secretariat