



13th World Assembly 2016

18–23 April 2016, Italy

Jesolo, ITALY: The XIII World Assembly of Emmaus International was held from **18 to 23 April** at *Jesolo in Italy*. Around 450 participants from Asia, Africa, America & Europe attended the World Assembly (WA) and approved the resolutions that will guide the movement over the next four years.

The Assembly began with a **march** along the sea-shore on *18th April* which allowed participants to meet, introduce themselves & get to know each other with whom they will be working during the week. After the gathering, the classic opening session of the WA took place, following which the key points from the **Policy report & Activity report** had been presented. In the noon session, discussion was



held on the fight against poverty & inequality, and the role of the most marginalized in these struggles. The session was moderated by *Gustave Massiah from France*, in which **external speakers** from *Burkina Faso, Senegal & Italy* participated, and shared their views on the role of a movement like Emmaus International in terms of action and forming alliances to fight against poverty and transform society. Following the speech by external speakers, the plenary session was held on the results of the work carried out in the last 2 years on **'Emmaus Values & Guiding principles'**, and the WA adopted it as the fifth founding text of the movement.



From 19th to 21st April, a series of **debates / discussions** took place on the following topics, in addition to a couple of visits to Emmaus groups in Italy. World Assembly reaffirmed that we must see solidarity as a political commitment in combating poverty and its causes.

- How to combat the causes of Poverty?
- How to promote our heritage?
- How to build / train new leaders within the movement?
- Workshop on 'Revitalising our Solidarity action'.
- Workshop on 'Formulating & Strengthening our political stance'.



During the course of the week, time has been set aside for informal discussions both at midday and in the evening, giving the groups/countries/regions the chance to present their innovative activities, original projects and

experience of pursuing alternatives to participants from all around the world. From Asia, presentation has been made on the following two topics:

- Presentation on Mutual Health programme.
- How climate change is affecting the rural poor with whom Asian groups are involved?

The Jesolo World Assembly reaffirmed that today, we need to involve all the

movement's groups in this task, strengthening our shared ownership of the history and struggles of the movement and its founder, and using our initiatives to show how we have modernized to face the challenges of the 21st century all around the world.

On 22nd April, *Patrick Atohou*, leader of the *Emmaus Pahou* group in *Benin* and active in the movement since 1992, has been elected by the WA as the new Chair of *Emmaus International*. Members for the



Wise persons' committee (one from each region) had been elected, and from Asia, *Oswald Quintal* had been elected as a member in the committee. Thereafter the new Executive committee had been elected by the Board. From Asia region, *Moon Sharma* had been elected as second vice-char, and *Helene Sayad* as Treasurer of Emmaus International.

The closing session of the Assembly began with the handover of power to new Chair, and then the new EC members had been introduced to participants, following which the motions of the Assembly had been voted.



The new Executive Committee members of Emmaus International



Cuddalore, S.INDIA: Celebrating Yoga day all over the world as 'International Day of Yoga' on **21st of June** every year was declared by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2014. Following the adoption of the UN resolution, several leaders of spiritual movement in India voiced their support for the initiative. Today it is practiced in various forms around the world, and continues to grow in popularity.

The celebration of the event – 'International day of yoga' is supported by various global leaders. It is celebrated by the people of more than 170 countries by organizing the activities like yoga training campus, yoga competitions and so many activities to enhance the awareness about yoga benefits among common public. It is celebrated to let people know that regular yoga practice lead to the better mental, physical and intellectual health. It positively changes the lifestyle of the people and increase the level of well-being.



Florance Home Foundation in *Cuddalore* organized a training program for the residential students staying in FHF home at *Killai centre*. A resource person was invited to teach them, and all the students interestingly participated and practiced the Yoga on that day, and expressed their interest to continue this yoga every day before going to the school. They also thanked *Florance Home Foundation* for organizing such a meaningful training program, and requested to organize it frequently in future.

Delhi, N.INDIA: World Fair Trade Day was celebrated by '*Tara Projects Association*' on **14th May 2016**. The theme of this year was "Human chain for Fair Trade and Planet". More than 350 organizations in 70 countries celebrated the day. Fair Trade Movement has been working to create an enabling environment for the marginalized people by empowering them and creating a positive difference in their lives and communities. To recognize and acknowledge the work of agents for change, World Fair Trade Day was celebrated together with artisans and the staff.

Symbolizing their support, celebrations of the Fair Trade Day at Tara was attended by staff members, producers, government officials, volunteers and social workers. The main event was followed by celebrations in the producer groups at various centres of TARA PROJECTS ASSOCIATION in Delhi, Haryana & Agra. More than 550 persons associated with Tara took part in the celebrations.





At Tara, *Ms.Moon Sharma* welcomed the participants and briefed them about the theme of World Fair Trade Day 2016 – ‘Human Chain for Fair Trade and Planet’. She stressed upon the history of Fair Trade and its relevance in today’s world. She urged the participants to be the Agents of Change and work together in their areas of influence, supporting Fair Trade and protecting the mother earth. At this occasion, *Ms.Moon Sharma* who is also the councilor and an EC member shared information with all the members about Emmaus Movement and how it is helping the excluded all over the world. Thereafter *Mr.Vikas Kumar* working at TARA also informed the participants about his experiences during his participation in the General Assembly of Emmaus International held at Italy in April 2016.

This was followed by a discussion on Fair Trade Principles where *Ms.Alka - Director, Dept of Social Welfare, Government of Delhi*, informed the participants about the importance of Fair Trade. Later participants were divided into groups, which helped them to refresh and improve their understanding about the principles and need to implement those on regular basis. All the participants enthusiastically took part in the activity and re-acquainted themselves about Fair Trade Principles. Finally the participants joined hands to form a Human Chain and pledged to be The Agents of Change supporting Fair Trade and Planet Earth. The program concluded with a Snacks party for all.

LEBANON NEWS

Beirut, LEBANON: Activities in AEP (*Association d’entraide Professionnelle*) during the second term had been quite productive. AEP organized a training program for its members on the theme of ‘Communication & Marketing’ to build new capacities for their beneficiaries, especially in managing their small projects. The program concluded with a presentation session on the values of AEP & Emmaus International. Participants felt the training program very useful & interesting, and requested AEP to organize more such programs in future.



The Administrative committee meeting took place during the second phase of 2016, during which the Organogram chart had been reorganized after a long study, to perform the program more effectively. Also new form of feasibility studies are in process to perform the microfinance program and to serve as model for the political axes in EI. *Mr.Chady Rached*, President of AEP gave the opportunity to the executive team to express themselves by a one to one meeting, which worked very successful.

Emmaus groups in Asia celebrated World Environment day on 5th June to inspire people around their communities to become conscious about the environment and learn more about ways they can help to ensure the future of our planet is safe.

Galaha, SRILANKA: Gami Seva Sevana (GSS) in Galaha celebrated the day at Giddawa Primary school Teldeniya in the presence of Zonal Directors of Education, Development and Administration Department of Education, the school teachers, students, parents, volunteers from Macau and France, Dunhinna group members, GSS staff members and the coordinator of the Green Volunteers. The Principal of the school *Mr.Upul Pathmasiri* warmly welcomed the visitors who were present on this occasion.

The guest speaker *Mr.Senaka Weerasinghe* thanked GSS for supporting in organizing this program, and he spoke on the topic "The destruction of the Environment and its impact in society".

The key points of his talk were the loss of forest cover in Sri Lanka and the role of the present generation as custodian of our natural habitat. The aftermath of the destruction of the Environment leads to recurring floods, landslides, climate change with extreme weather conditions, rise of sea level due to melting of snow in mountains and many more.

He underlined that the impact of environmental disasters can be devastating on the social, economic and environmental systems of a country or region. Environmental disasters do not recognize man-made borders, and threaten the legacy left to future generations of a clean and supportive environment. Mitigation and adaptation strategies need to be practiced to control destruction to the environment. Urgently we



need to find an alternative to use of polythene & plastic bags, & start using environmental - friendly natural resources that could be recycled and reused. Planting of perennial trees & crops

which are climate resilient will help to withstand climate extremes.



Later the staff members of GSS, Green volunteers and group members made a simple e a s y - t o - m a i n t a i n demonstration

basket compost bin in the school garden using Bamboo, and explained to the students, school staffs and parents about preserving the environment by keeping it clean. They also explained the important role that composting plays in waste management of all degradable materials like leaves, kitchen waste etc., which is converted into nutritious organic material that could be used for the garden.



Delhi, N.INDIA: TARA PROJECTS in Delhi celebrated the day with children at its Learning centers and at *Bas Padamka village* with artisans and the local farmers. More than 200 beneficiaries including children, youth club members and farmers enthusiastically participated in the awareness programmes.

At *Tara learning centers*, theme based poster making and slogan writing competition was organized where children enthusiastically participated. Awareness was raised amongst the children to clean their surrounding and say no to the use of plastic bags. In the poster making and slogan writing competition, children drew attractive theme based posters and wrote meaningful slogans. The event concluded with a small party enjoyed by all.

In *Bas Padamka village at Pataudi, Haryana*, the Panchayat members, Tara social workers and the villagers discussed and exchanged ideas about the importance of protecting the environment, recharging the traditional water bodies and



reducing the usage of plastic bags. Tara social workers updated the participants about the ongoing activities of Emmaus International in the region and worldwide. The social workers also informed them about the work in Lake Nokoue

water cleaning project in Benin – Africa. They urged the farmers to prepare an action plan to explore the possibilities of repairing other ponds in the village and also identify the areas to build the rain water harvesting structures. They urged the farmers to work collectively if they want positive results.

In today's situation when the country is suffering severe drought conditions, it is important for all of us to save the water, plant more trees and work for managing the waste. The farmers agreed and assured to work collectively to save the environment. Tara has been working in this village on water issues since last few years. But there is still long way to go to reach the desired situation. So far a rain water harvesting structure has been constructed and two ponds have been repaired with the lot of plantation in the village.

Cuddalore, S.INDIA: Florance Home Foundation (FHF) in Cuddalore celebrated the day at its 'Child Development Centre' in Killai where more than 30 *Irular (indigenous)* children took part. They marched around the colony as a procession, after which they planted tree saplings around the Centre. Thereafter, *Mr.Selva*, Secretary of FHF explained to the children about the importance of environmental awareness. Selecting even a few actions from the vast array of options for greening the environment to incorporate into daily activities can protect water resources, improve air quality, reduce waste and raise awareness of environmental issues. All the children took a oath that they will take all measures in reducing waste and participate in tree planting programmes.



TRAINING PROGRAMS

Training on Environmental awareness

Pudukottai, S.INDIA: KUDUMBAM based in *Trichy* organized one day environmental awareness training at '*Kolunji Ecological farm*' situated in *Odugampatty village, Pudukottai district*. Since 1990, Kudumbam runs this farm in an area which is dry and solely depended on monsoon rains cultivation.

Kolunji was started to work as a model farm showing that farming with organic methods is not only possible but a better alternative than conventional farming. The aim was that, seeing the work at Kolunji, farmers in the nearby villages would be motivated to start organic farming in their lands as well. In doing so, Kolunji would be a source of knowledge and inspiration. Today Kolunji is not only a farm but also a training centre and home to the children at Vidivelli Children's home.



For cultivation a number of organic inputs are prepared and used at Kolunji. The nutrients from the cattles are recycled through vermin-compost. Since the farm is situated in the dry area of Pudukottai district the rain water is conserved and managed by a number of methods such as farm ponds and mounding. Another crucial part of the sustainable farming at Kolunji is production of tree seedlings and tree plantation.

At Kolunji the staffs of Kudumbam show models and give trainings in organic farming and its advantages. On **19th May 2016**, more than 45 under-graduate nursing students participated the training session in this farm, the prime focus of which had been to educate the youth on environmental preservation and management. The students learnt about food chain, ecological balance in the environment, organic farming, how to convert the bio-degradable waste into compost and vermin-compost and conservation of biodiversity. The team also visited the farm and learned about the different tree species, herbs and its medicinal values.

Training on Disaster Management

Killai, S.INDIA: A disaster is an event of sudden calamity causing disruption in normal routing and causing a lot of destruction, depending upon the intensity of the disaster. At times, there can be disasters where there is no loss of human life, and at times these can also cause a huge loss of life and property. This influences the mental, socio-economic, political and cultural state of the affected area. Disasters are inevitable although no one knows when and where it will happen. But their worst effects can be partially or completely prevented by preparation or early warning.

In South India and in Bangladesh where Emmaus groups are present near the coastal areas, cyclones and floods have become routine in recent years. Every year, natural disasters cause heavy damages not only to the infrastructure of the organization, but also to the people with whom they are working for the last 20 years. Thanks to Emmaus International which had been providing timely support to these groups to support the people in bringing them back to normal life, and also to the organization to repair and renovate the infrastructures damaged by this disasters.



Florance Home Foundation (FHF) in *Cuddalore* organized 'Disaster management training program' on **28th May 2016** at its 'Child Development Centre' in *Killai*. More than 52 members who belong to the *Irular* community from the nearby coastal areas affected by tsunami in 2004 and the recent floods last year in December took part in the training program. *Mr. Maria Stephen* from 'Rural Upliftment Centre' – an organization specialized in conducting trainings on Disaster management was invited as a resource person from *Nagerkoil*.

He explained to the participants how to prepare and safeguard themselves from natural disasters by listening to radio or TV and from Government announcements, and how to protect their belongings. Also after natural disasters, how to protect themselves from diseases, how to get access to support and various other schemes provided by Government & NGO's under relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes. He highlighted that the following effects will be there in the area affected by disaster - *Causes lot of loss in the terms of life and property; Leads to loss of agriculture and animal*

life; Hampers developmental projects in an adverse manner; Completely disrupts normal day-to-day life; Negatively influences the emergency systems; Normal needs like food, shelter and health are affected.

After his presentation, a booklet on 'Guide to disaster management' was distributed to all the members. Members felt the training program very useful, and FHF has planned to organize this type of training programs in the schools located at the coastal belts.

Training on Capacity Building

Tindivanam, S.INDIA: Village Community Development Society (VCDS) organized different training programs during the period *April to June 2016*. Training on capacity building were provided to evening school teachers under '**Non-Formal Education for Democracy**' program. Twelve teachers attended this training, which helped them to improve their teaching skills and to handle special children. The experienced teachers were invited as resource persons to provide this training. VCDS also organized another training program with **ADECOM network**, wherein 22 staffs from this organization camped at VCDS training centre for 3 days. They learnt about village issues and interacted with community members. An awareness program was also organized for **farmers** to explain them different Government welfare schemes available, and how they can have access to these schemes.



Training on Roof top gardening

Trichy, S.INDIA: Available gardening areas in cities are often seriously lacking, which is likely the key impetus for increasing interest in roof gardens. For those who live in small apartments with little space in urban cities, roof gardening can be a good solution. These use much less space than traditional gardening. These also encourage environmentally responsible practices, eliminating tilling, reducing or eliminating pesticides, and weeding, and encouraging the recycling of wastes through composting.



Further there has been an increased awareness among urban consumers on safe food and healthy life. Women are more conscious to cook poison free food for their families. Though they would like to cultivate organic vegetables and fruits, space is a major problem in urban cities. In such cases, roof gardening provides a better solution by fulfilling their home needs, and also reduces their financial burden to some extent.

Besides the environmental and financial benefits of roof gardens, there's another benefit that's more difficult to quantify: the age-old

pleasure of gardening itself. Especially in urban areas - where farmland is rare if not nonexistent - rooftop gardens hold the irresistible promise of fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as quiet, green spaces for relaxation and recreation.

Explaining these concepts, Kudumbam conducted one day training on 'Roof top garden' at Trichy on **25th June 2016**, in which ten women participated. During the training, organic farming practices as well as demonstrations like preparation of green bags and bio manure preparation were imparted.

SOLIDARITY sale



Cuddalore, S.INDIA: Florance Home Foundation in Cuddalore organized the Solidarity sale in the month of **June** for a week. Once a year, member organizations of Emmaus International, each run a solidarity sale to raise resources for the Emmaus movement's international solidarity initiatives: *projects, shipping containers and emergency relief*. Member organizations of Emmaus International do as much as they can for international

solidarity. The resources are then pooled and redistributed within the movement using a collaborative and transparent system, the aim being to encourage collective action.

This year, FHF organized their annual Solidarity sale at their centre in *Pudupalayam*. The agriculture produces from Emmaus multi farm at *Veerappar* like mango, chikku and guava fruits were sold in the local area to raise Solidarity contribution. Emmaus International posters and communication tools were also displayed during the sale to explain to the general public about the impact of solidarity support. FHF also prepared their own value added product of mango pickles, and altogether along with farm produces managed to raise around 320 euros for solidarity contribution to Emmaus International.



In 2015, with grant received from Emmaus Montbeliard community to a tune of 15000 euros, income generation activities of member organizations in Emmaus Asia were strengthened by implementing various programs like expanding dairy farm, by installing honey bee hives, sprinkler systems & green shade house in the farms, and by improving the infrastructure facilities to attract more tourists & visitors. Also micro credit support has been provided to deserving individuals which made possible for them to initiate new or expand their existing livelihood generation activities.

Florance Home Foundation (FHF) in *Cuddalore, Tamilnadu* installed 3 honey bee hives which will help the organization to generate additional income through selling the honey. And it also may increase the yield through pollination for next season. FHF also constructed a Green shade house at the size of 25 x 20 sq.ft to produce more nursery saplings in the farm, which will be sold to the local farmers and schools. Also they established sprinkler system in their farm to reduce wastage of water.



Village Community Development Society (VCDS) in *Tindivanam, Tamilnadu* has established fodder plots by which the cows in their dairy farm will get fodder regularly. Each year VCDS spends lot of money to buy fodder to the cattle's, but this year the fodder purchase expenses had been cut down by 10%. Pipelines were repaired in order to bring water to feed and clean the cows. Also a part of the fund has been used to inseminate the cows. If the insemination will be successful, the cows with calves will bring income to VCDS. 4 cows have so far inseminated. VCDS is now standing as an example for the people to run a dairy farm with the native breeds which was thought impossible and non-income generative.





Kudumbam in Trichy, Tamilnadu utilized the funds to improve the administrative & training centre facilities so as to have effective administration and improved staying facilities of trainees. Also to improve infrastructure facilities in order to attract more visitors/ tourists. Strengthening of fence and plantation has also been carried out within the campus, which now provides a more secure & greener environment

Association d'entraide Professionnelle (AEP) in Lebanon used their funds for Promotion of agri-business borrowers to sell their food products. Agri-food and special products made in Lebanon has been developed. The revenue of those borrowers has improved.



Tara Projects Association (TARA) in Delhi has identified and disbursed the credit support to ten deserving and needy persons in the slums. The supported beneficiaries initiated and expanded several livelihood generation activities. TARA has also conducted regular follow up meetings with the beneficiaries.

The project helped the beneficiaries to gain self confidence and earn required recognition in their community. The project also helped the beneficiaries to get organized and to be the part of their groups and become more aware socially and politically.

“Facts about Environmental Global issues”

- Forests make up only 30.9% of the world.
- About 17% of the Amazon’s rain forest has been destroyed over past 50 years.
- Coal is the number one fossil fuel used globally.
- Although the world is made up of 70% of water, there is only about 2.5% of fresh water on earth.
- 90% of the world’s water shortage is due to first world countries.
- It is estimated that by 2025, 1.8 billion people will have little access to water, and 2/3rd of world’s population will live in water-stressed areas.

Awareness through Cultural Events

Rural areas, by and large, lack educational facilities, especially those of higher education and rural people have to migrate to the urban centres for this purpose. Many of them settle down in the cities for earning a livelihood after completing their education. Urban cities provide vast scope for employment in industries, transport, trade and other services. They also offer modern facilities of life. Thus, they act as 'magnets' for the migrant population and attract people from outside.

Pudukottai, S.INDIA: Migrations are caused by a variety of factors including economic, social and political factors. People migrate in large number from rural to urban areas in search of employment. The agricultural base of rural areas does not provide employment to all the people living there. Contrary to this, urban areas provide vast scope for employment in industries, trade, transport and services.



People who migrate from rural area to towns and cities, most of them work in textile mills, and are between the age group of 12 to 20. They are employed as contract laborers or daily laborers. Hence they stop their school education and unable to continue their studies. These girls face work exploitation, health hazards and sexual abuses.

Kudumbam conducted the cultural yatra in *Pallathupatti, Ponnankudipatti, Puliur, T.Keelaiyur and Vilavayal villages in Pudukottai district* from **22nd to 28th May**. Folk dances, songs and dramas were conducted during the yatra with special speakers. They emphasized the magnitude of education, and the problems faced by people who migrate to other places leaving their hometown. This programme reached around 1500 people in five villages.

Editorial Committee:

Ms.Moon Sharma, India
Ms.Lena Sayad, 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



EMMAUS
INTERNATIONAL
asia

ACTIVISTS FOR CHANGE

Compiled by :

Mr.M.Kamalakaran
Regional Secretariat