



SOLIDARITY COMMITMENTS

Final version – july 1999

TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Emmaus worldwide

A statement of our values, our responses to the challenges of modern society and how we can work for change.

The world is divided by poverty and inequality. People suffer from exclusion, oppression and exploitation. In Emmaus we believe that the world must change. Ours is a worldwide movement committed to showing that it is possible to work together in harmony, sharing a life where every one is treated equally and can live in dignity.

Those who live and work in Emmaus are drawn from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds. It is this diversity that gives us our strength. We are able to share our skills and resources, to celebrate our differences and to be one Movement.

OUR CORE VALUES

These are the values by which we strive to live in Emmaus. They set the standard for our way of life together.

- Showing respect:
 - Being tolerant of other people's way of life and their beliefs recognising that other people may have a different point of view.
 - Being willing to listen to what others have to say.
 - Having compassion for others and respect for their circumstances especially towards those who have suffered or are in distress.
 - Respecting the skills of others and valuing their work.

- Being open and honest
 - In the way we live our life within the Movement.
 - About how we report our finances and our activities.
 - In the way we take decisions.
 - By communicating properly so everyone knows what is happening and understands the decisions that are made.

- Sharing.
 - Sharing and exchanging our resources and skills, being willing to receive as well as to give.
 - Learning from each other.
 - Fighting together against injustice, accepting the risks that may be involved.
- Taking and Sharing Responsibility.
 - Encouraging people to participate actively at all levels of the Movement.
 - Ensuring that everybody's voice is heard.
 - Ensuring that decisions are taken and implemented democratically.

TODAY'S CHALLENGE

In a world where poverty and inequality are to be found everywhere, our Communities and Groups should be living examples of our values. They should be like oases of freedom and justice where everyone's basic human rights are respected, where people are free and treated as equal.

Right across the world there are countries where the poor and the powerless are oppressed and exploited. There are also many more countries in which society is just indifferent to the plight of the poor. This indifference is its own form of oppression and is just as much a challenge.

As a Movement we are committed to fighting poverty and oppression and its causes wherever we are able to and our response to these challenges, both as individuals and as a Movement must reflect our core values in practical ways:

- At both a political and a local level there are various ways in which we can take up the challenge:
 - Empowering others through working with them at grass roots level.
 - Enabling people to find their own voice and become their own advocate to fight their cause.
 - Campaigning so as to expose injustice and oppression whenever we become aware of it.
 - Lobbying politicians and decision makers to influence decisions and policies, whether at local, national or international level.
 - Combining with other like minded organisations to take collective action.
- We can also play our part in challenging the world's economic systems, for example:
 - Running our projects and investing our resources according to Emmaus values.
 - Creating jobs rather than accumulating wealth
 - Actively supporting projects that help people to become self supporting.
 - Showing responsibility as consumers by buying goods that have been fair traded in preference to those that have not.
 - Actively campaigning, either alone or with other organisations, against multi-nationals and other companies who exploit local labour markets or the environment.
 - Supporting the development of local credit schemes.
 - Campaigning for the cancellation of third world debt.

A VOICE FOR CHANGE

By living by its beliefs, by challenging the accepted values of society, by showing that there are fairer ways of living, Emmaus is truly a voice for change.

Through the life we live, we are able to show that it is possible to break down the barriers that exist between people of different languages and cultural backgrounds, bringing them together as one Movement.

In place of mistrust and misunderstanding, we substitute acceptance and tolerance, a willingness to listen and learn. This is our voice for change.

There are practical ways that we can make our voice heard and play our part in making change happen.

- Improving communication:
 - Sharing knowledge and exchanging information at all levels of the Movement
 - Telling the world about Emmaus and the values we live for. How, on a daily basis, we are working and living together sharing with those who are worse off than ourselves.
 - Breaking down barriers that exist between people of different ages, languages and cultural backgrounds.

- Raising awareness:
 - Raising peoples' awareness of the plight of the poor and of the practical things they can do to support the work of those who are fighting to end oppression and exploitation.
 - Raising our own awareness by keeping up to date with current world development and being informed on issues relating to poverty, exploitation and the environment.
 - Using the knowledge and experience we gain to strengthen our own work so that we are better able to argue for the rights of those for whom we are campaigning.

- Education and training:
 - Listening to those who have suffered and learning from their experiences.
 - Setting up training and development programmes to encourage people to develop skills and enable them to find their voice and have confidence to speak out.
 - Providing opportunities for involving young people in our work and widening their knowledge of the issues affecting the poor and the exploited.

Emmaus International, July 1999