

[View this email in your browser](#)

November 2022

Emmaus in Europe



emmaus

EUROPE

ACTIVISTS FOR CHANGE

Dear members of Emmaus Europe,

In this month's issue, we take a detailed look at the work of our very active groups in Ukraine, against a backdrop of the arrival of winter and increasingly frequent gas and electricity outages.

The other countries in Europe are feeling the inflationary impact of the war, particularly in the Eastern European countries without state regulation. The new Emmaus Europe Green Transition Fund has come just at the right time for the groups in these countries: learn more about the fund below.

At a time when democracy is under threat in many countries, we go to meet Emmaus 82 in the South of France to learn more about a way of developing democracy within Emmaus groups.

Finally, please do not forget that the European conference on migration is taking place on 7-8 December: it's the last call for those wishing to register!

Enjoy the newsletter,

The Emmaus Europe team

EMMAUS STORIES

TAO: enabling everyone to be involved in decision-making

This month, we are giving the floor to Romuald, the shop manager at Emmaus Montauban. He tells us about

TAO, a decision-making system involving all the members of the community. The system was implemented in 2019 and enables this French group to get everyone to buy into the projects and major policy directions decided by and for the community.

How would you describe TAO, and how did you have the idea to apply it to the group?

First and foremost, TAO is a collaborative card game. The aim is to work together to achieve the wishes expressed by the other players, and together bring to light projects that foster the common good and general interest.

Our leader, Christian, no longer wanted to spearhead the community's projects alone or practically alone. The situation was giving rise to frustration and misunderstandings, both among the paid employees and the companions. We therefore took it into our heads to find a more democratic mode of governance, that would truly take into consideration everyone's opinions.

Having done some research, we contacted the founder of this management technique, and he supported us over a year so that the technique was implemented in the community. Once we had taken on board how TAO worked, we developed it so that it was a perfect fit for our community.

How does it work in practice?

Several TAO groups get together every fortnight for two hours. There is a TAO group for each shop, and themed groups (transport, social work, kitchen etc). There is also the "steering group", which rubberstamps the projects put forward by each TAO group.

A facilitator, secretary and "go-between" are appointed in each group via a candidate-free election system: everyone says who they are voting for, and explains why that person is best placed to fulfil the role. The "go-between" is tasked with presenting a project put forward by their group to the steering group, which itself brings together representatives of each group.

This person is a "go-between" because their role is to pass on information about projects, but also feed back information to their TAO group to facilitate understanding of the decisions taken by the steering group. Said like that, it seems complicated, but once people take onboard the method, it is very simple!

Can you describe how a project is developed before being presented to the steering group?

Each member of the group may present a project. The project goes through three rounds in order to be put forward and presented by the "go-between" to the steering group, in which the three rounds are repeated.

In practical terms, Round 1 is the presentation of the project and questions about it: each participant must in turn ask a question. Their questions help to redefine the project, and may highlight shortcomings that the project leader can then address. If the project "gets through" this round, each member has to say whether or not they agree with the project, and why. The project leader can then further adjust their concept based on these opinions.

Finally, Round 3 is the "Objections Round": each of the members must say if they have any objections or see any shortcomings in the project, and why. As long as someone is expressing an objection, the project cannot progress further. Objections must be an infringement of "Emmaus' raison d'être."

Do you have any practical examples of new operating methods set up thanks to TAO?

Of course! All the decisions are taken using this system, whether they are important and affect the very workings of the group, or whether they only make a minimal change in the charity shop! For instance, a discussion about how best to manage the dumping of items at our community led to us increasing our hours on site.

Besides, TAO also highlighted the need to recruit a communications officer, as our communication method was potentially causing misunderstandings in the community. TAO proved really positive in this regard.

There are also lots of interesting small details, which can really improve the running of meetings. For example, we do a "weather check" before the start of each meeting. People use weather language to describe their state of mind:

bright sunshine means “I’m fine”, while “cloudy” means “I’m worried about something...” This helps gain a better understanding of everyone’s attitude at the meeting, and enables us all to be more understanding about how they react. The weather check is repeated at the end of the meeting, and we often find that the sky has brightened up!

If this decision-making system interests you, please contact Emmaus Montauban for more in-depth feedback. Who knows? Maybe you will start using this system in your group!

FOCUS ON...

A new fund to drive the green transition

This month, we are focusing on a new solidarity fund, rather than a specific Emmaus group. The “Green Transition Fund” is enabling Emmaus groups in Eastern Europe to reduce their carbon footprints. Five projects were approved in October 2022 by the Regional Council of Emmaus Europe (RCEE), making for a total funding amount of €100,000, and are already underway.



In 2016, Emmaus Rzeszow in Poland opted to build an almost fully energy self-sufficient house. This was a major decision at the time, but it is paying off now! The group fitted 70 photovoltaic panels, solar panels, mini wind turbines, a thermal heating system, and fully insulated the shop and community house.

Rubberstamped in a vote by Emmaus Europe in April, this new fund has a budget of €200,000, made up by donations made by the groups to Emmaus Europe. The Green Transition Fund aims to encourage and support the Emmaus groups in Eastern Europe in their green transition process, by prioritizing the funding of energy-saving work, and the installation of renewable sources of energy: insulation, solar or photovoltaic panels, thermal heating systems, and so on. The fund provides a “helping hand” of €20,000 per group.

Emmaus Europe has decided to prioritize the groups in Eastern Europe because these groups are facing a disproportionate rise in their energy bills in relation to their income. *“In Romania, electricity and gas bills have risen by almost 400% since August 2021 for legal entities,”* said Jean-Philippe Légaut, the president of Emmaus Satu Mare, a fund beneficiary. The situation is similar in Poland, which is why two Polish Emmaus groups will also be benefiting from this funding.

These groups are only entitled to small amounts, or do not qualify at all for public or EU funding to start their green transition. Moreover, the “energy price cap” equivalent implemented in Poland and Romania does not apply to third-sector organisations, who are subject to the same rules as the private sector.

A major impact

In relation to the cost of living in these countries, funding of €20,000 is enough to make major energy and financial savings every year: *“€10,000 will enable us to fully insulate our shop, by replacing the aging windows, and insulating the loft. We are also going to fit photovoltaic panels on one of our buildings at a cost of €11,000, and in this way further cut our electricity bill”*, said Jean-Philippe. The work will be completed before the winter, and will enable the group to *“save up to €3,000 a year, solely for electricity.”* The fund will have the same impact in Poland, where Emmaus Lublin, a beneficiary group, is expecting to cut its electricity use by roughly 40% by simply insulating its buildings.

They will see a return on the investment in under a decade, given the pace at which the cost of energy is increasing. However, some are going further: Emmaus-ISF (Bosnia-Herzegovina), another fund beneficiary, has decided to allocate the money saved to installing new photovoltaic panels. This is the beginning of a virtuous circle!

Each renovation project goes together with workshops to raise awareness about climate issues. The delivery of workshops is a mandatory requirement for obtaining funding: workshops with the teams, volunteers and companions, and poster campaigns in the shops. The green transition is an opportunity to change our habits in collective projects and keep hold of money that would otherwise go up in smoke, and use it for solidarity projects!



EUROPEAN ACTION

December 7 and 8

Migrant reception and migration policy in Europe: an opportunity to develop our knowledge and join forces in support of proper provision for migrants in Europe!

Emmaus Europe is arranging a conference and meeting with MEPs in Brussels on 7-8 December.

On 7 December, representatives committed to ensuring proper provision for migrants in all EE's member countries will present the issues in their country, their initiatives, and partnerships.

Sara Prestianni, a researcher from EuroMed Rights, and Brigitte Espuche from Migreurop, will explain the EU closed borders policy mechanisms so that we are better able to oppose them.

The afternoon session on 8 December will be held at the European Parliament in order to meet with MEPs working on

the new migration and asylum pact, and we will explain in detail the issues surrounding this future EU legislation.

A detailed preliminary programme was sent to you on 19 October, if you have not received it, or have any other questions, please contact: eve.poulteau@emmaus-europe.org

Please register by 28 November: <https://framaforms.org/rencontres-emmaus-sur-laccueil-des-exilees-en-europe-7-et-8-decembre-2022-bruxelles-1665997294>

Practical information We are asking participants to arrive at the meeting venue in Brussels by 19:00 on 6 December. The conference will end at 16:30 on 8 December.

Meals and accommodation will be covered by Emmaus Europe, up to a limit of two participants per Emmaus group. Groups must cover travel costs.

A look back at 17 October

International Day for the Eradication of Poverty



On 13 October EAPN presented the conclusions and proposals of its annual report on poverty in Europe.

The different crises that have occurred one after the other over the past two years have worsened pre-existing social injustice. The war in Ukraine, the increase in the cost of living and energy, and the long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic are far from being solved, and **have the greatest impact on the most vulnerable groups.**

EAPN (European Anti-Poverty Network), of which EE is a member, has just published its Poverty Watch country reports. The reports can be found on their website, and can be used to bolster your action in your country. www.eapn.eu

On 13 October in Brussels, EE was represented in discussions with MEPs about the key findings in this review.

Please use the following link to download a summary of the reports and recommendations: <https://www.eapn.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/eapn-1710-PW-Key-Findings-and-Recommendations-5-5559.pdf>

SOLIDARITY

Ukraine – The first bricks are laid at Oselya’s new social assistance centre



Building work began on Emmaus Oselya’s new social centre in August 2022. It is scheduled to open in early 2023. Credit:

Emmaus Oselya

Building work got started in August 2022, using funds from Emmaus Europe’s Ukraine Fund. It will be completed before the winter. Emmaus Europe is funding this project to the tune of €240,000, thanks to the generous donations made by the Emmaus groups to support Ukraine. Emmaus France topped up the budget with a donation of €45,000 made by the Maisons du Monde Foundation.

From January 2023, the centre will be able to support over 50 displaced people a day, and provide accommodation for a dozen people. More spacious than the current homeless shelter managed by Oselya, the new centre will enable the group to offer improved support for Ukrainians fleeing the war and going into exile. The centre will still be of use once the war ends, as it will enable the group to offer better support to more homeless people from the Lviv region.

A first transfer of €90,000 enabled work to get underway, followed by a second payment of €110,000 in early October, and a final tranche of €40,000 on 10 November.

Please contact [Emmanuel](#) if you have any questions about the centre.

Ukraine: Refugee support work is carrying on, and the Emmaus Movement's support is continuing



3 November 2022, a fifth humanitarian truck being loaded at Emmaus Rzeszow in Poland for Nasha Khata in Ukraine. Photo

credit: Emmaus Rzeszow

Emmaus Oselya – a daily presence in the heart of Lviv

Emmaus Oselya is working daily with displaced people. Over 7,500 meals and 960 hygiene kits have been distributed in temporary shelters and on the streets. The current social centre/day shelter has welcomed over 1,100 displaced people, enabling them to meet their needs (take a shower, medical care, have a haircut), and wash their clothes. The centre also enables beneficiaries to have a rest, enjoy a coffee, and pick up some new clothes. Oselya is receiving monthly support from the Ukraine Fund to finance this work.

The community has received five humanitarian container loads from the Emmaus groups, enabling it to carry out its work, while also helping other organisations: over 64 humanitarian loads (vans) have been sent across Ukraine.

Since March, the association has received over €100,000 of funding from the Ukraine Fund to cover its running costs when it had to close its shops and workshops, and for its work with displaced people.

The war has also hit the very heart of the community: seven companions are homeless people originally from the conflict zones, and eight Oselya companions have joined the Ukrainian army as volunteers.

A trial member group working in a rural area of Ukraine

Nasha Khata, a trial member located in Drohobych, is also working with the victims of the conflict: the group offers help with administrative formalities, and hands out food, warm clothing, and medicines. The community also wants to take over the running of a former hospital to house displaced people.

In total, the group has received €30,000 from the Ukraine Fund to carry out its work during the war and cover its operating costs. The group has also received four humanitarian convoys from Emmaus Rzeszow in Poland. The latest arrived on 3 November.

Moreover, funding of €15,000 is going to be allocated to help the group to purchase a minibus in a better state of repair to enable it to undertake its everyday work.

The community leader, Vasyl, is still volunteering on the frontline.

In addition to supporting the groups in Ukraine, our Polish groups are continuing to support and house refugees, while acting as hubs for the humanitarian convoys sent by Emmaus to Ukraine. The three communities are also being given monthly funding by the Emmaus Europe Ukraine Fund for all their Ukraine-related work.

Current needs

With the advent of winter, and Russian attacks leading to rolling blackouts and no heating, our groups have alerted us to a new need for warm clothing, blankets and duvets, and furniture for newly displaced people.

The groups that attended the Poland-Ukraine Collective meeting are in the process of organising lorry loads to meet these needs, containing clothing and furniture donated to the Emmaus groups.

Furthermore, Emmaus Europe is going to get in touch with NGOs specialising in humanitarian aid to meet the needs identified by our groups in terms of medical equipment and food for the people being housed in Lviv or other parts of the country.

There is still enough of the funds raised by the Emmaus groups for Ukraine to meet all the needs flagged up by our groups in the region.



Copyright © 2022 Emmaüs Europe, Tous droits réservés.

Emmaüs Europe

47 avenue de la Résistance

93100 Montreuil

contact@emmaus-europe.org

[Site internet](#)

[Se désinscrire de cette liste.](#)