



“ENVIRONMENT” ANALYSIS WITHIN THE MOVEMENT

MEMO FOR THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

In December 2020, the Board expressed an intention to draw up an analysis on two topics as part of the preparation for the World Assembly and for use in our future political campaigning work. The two topics are:

- **Environment**, or more specifically, all initiatives run by the groups linked to the environment, climate change, environmental justice, etc.
- **Migration**

This memo presents the **results of the analysis carried out on the topic of “environment”**, which is currently part of our struggle for “Social and Environmental Justice for a Sustainable World”, as well as some **proposals**.

Emmaus’ work has been part of the environmental movement from its infancy, via its recycling, collection and re-use activities which limit consumption of natural resources and prevent them from running out, reduce waste production, and provide an alternative to consumer societies and planned obsolescence.

The analysis highlighted many different actions run by the groups of the movement in this area. However, these actions are not always linked to a political message. There is currently no common basis shared between the groups – each region has its own specificities.

Africa Region	Americas Region
<p>Group activities in the Africa region are mainly based around agriculture and market gardening. Some groups combine these activities with information or training sessions (environmental protection, compost manufacture, agricultural techniques) but each group carries out quite different activities.</p> <p>⇒ Actions based on agriculture and market gardening, sometimes with an environmental protection approach (agroecology, water conservation). Not linked to any political campaigning.</p>	<p>Recycling activities are particularly well developed in the Americas region and often include an educational aspect aimed at young people. Recycling is perceived and presented as a way of protecting the environment. A number of groups have participated in the “RSU” [Urban Solid Waste] training programme and have therefore worked together on building a political message on this subject.</p> <p>Some groups take a strong stance on environmental protection and the destruction caused by humanity, in line with the concept of “buen vivir” [good living].</p> <p>⇒ Actions based on recycling of waste and environmental protection with an educational and campaigning aspect for some groups.</p>

Asia Region	Europe Region
<p>Most groups carry out awareness-raising and training work on agroecology (water conservation, ancient crops, plant cultivation, fertiliser manufacture, etc). Many groups tackle the problems caused by the</p>	<p>The range of activities is wider, given the number of groups present, but most work in the field of education on environmental issues and sustainable development, and implement agricultural projects with a recreational</p>

<p>activities of multinational businesses, speaking out against these while implementing alternatives which help the most excluded people to organise.</p> <p>⇒ Actions aimed at building the capacities of the poorest populations to address environmental problems and abuse committed by large companies, through training and raising awareness of agricultural techniques which respect the environment. Identification of external factors and whistle-blowing activities.</p>	<p>or rehabilitation-based approach. The region recommends pooling knowledge and exchanging practices to help Emmaus groups learn how to limit their greenhouse gas emissions, adopt practices in line with their ideals, and adapt to new challenges in terms of re-use and recycling, without being complicit in production which violates social and environmental principles.</p> <p>⇒ Actions based mainly on recycling, education on environmental issues and agricultural projects through sharing knowledge and practices. Identification of the problem of climate change which affects the poorest populations. Probable upcoming mobilisation on European directives on recycling and sorting.</p>
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An interesting point emerged from the consolidation work done on the RSU programme in the Americas region: groups have observed that with regard to the environment, **most group members know what environmentalism is but find it difficult to define how their daily activity contributes to the wider objective of environmental justice.** Is this the case for other regions? Does this observation apply across the board? If so, what solutions can be found for this?

Furthermore, many groups have been bearing the brunt of the effects of climate change for several years. Some of them have experienced disruption of their activities due to natural disasters caused by human activities. This confirms the reality of climate inequality: the poorest and most vulnerable populations are the worst affected by these events, whilst being the least responsible for them.

At the 2016 World Assembly, the movement adopted the struggle “Social and Environmental Justice for a Sustainable World” with the objective of helping **excluded populations to organise and resist policies which authorise plundering of natural resources, land grabbing, and privatisation of shared resources.** However, the reality is that not all group activities share this backdrop, and the movement has not built a true political stance on these issues. The positions we have taken have been on **specific issues** (EU-Mercosur agreement, support for the Landless Workers’ Movement, support for peasant struggles), and have **systematically combined environmental factors with social factors.**

In 2019, the Board approved our participation in the following campaigns:

- **Rights for people, rules for corporations** (speaking out against the social and environmental impacts of multinationals)
- **Jai Jagat World March** (promotion of climate justice for disadvantaged populations who are the first victims of climate change)
- **Brazil Resists! Fighting is not a crime** (situation of social and environmental justice in Brazil, support for environmental defenders and speaking out against the government’s devastating climate policies)

The Board also approved an outline for the Global Report which sets out two objectives closely linked to this subject:

- **Building an economy which truly serves humanity and the environment**
- **Developing economic activities which ensure that social and environmental rights are respected**

We believe it is **important to specify or confirm what exactly we wish to advocate for, so that we are better able to build our political voice**, bearing in mind that a growing number of organisations are becoming active in this area due to the urgency of the situation.

The terms we use correspond to very different realities:

- **“Climate”** refers to subjects linked to the climate, whilst **“environmental”** denotes everything connected with the environment and its protection. The second term is therefore broader.

Two concepts stem from these terms:

- **Climate justice:** The climate justice movement involves holding to account industries and corporations which are responsible for climate change due to the damage they cause, i.e., holding them legally accountable for the human and environmental harm which they incur. This arises from a call from civil society to address climate issues from a social, ethical, and economic angle, and especially in terms of the accountability of public policy.
 - ⇒ **In this case, the movement could join an international campaign/mobilisation to highlight the impact of the activities of multinationals on the environment and human rights (e.g., <https://www.stopcorporateimpunity.org/>) or to advocate for the polluter pays principle.**
- **Environmental justice:** The movement for environmental justice considers protection of the environment as a fundamental human right. It was created in reaction to environmental and social inequalities, threats to public health, unfavourable treatment of the poorest populations, etc. Our “mission statement” is the idea that environmental justice implies fair access to natural resources, sparing, sustainable and participative management of these, and the declaration and protection of shared resources.
 - ⇒ **In this case, the movement could join a campaign/mobilisation to tackle environmental inequalities at international level, to help the most excluded populations to organise and combat climate change, or to promote the need for an international convention on the protection of all living things, for example.**

The analysis also shows that the two subjects that groups work on most, and on which a political message has emerged, are **recycling and agroecology**¹.

Options for decision by the Executive Committee, to be presented to the Board:

As well as learning how to support groups currently facing climate disasters, we need to reflect collectively on the political struggle which the movement wants to implement in the current situation, taking into account the results of the analysis. There are two possible options:

- **Carry out political campaigning and run an international mobilisation campaign involving the groups on one of the concepts set out above: climate justice or environmental justice.**
 - ⇒ *Which concept should be prioritised?*

The issue of waste, and therefore recycling, is present throughout the movement. Waste has always been collected by the poorest people as a means of subsistence. As the environmental crisis becomes undeniable and natural resources dwindle, the authorities are starting to take an interest in waste. However, as is often the case, they are particularly interested in the value of a growing number of recyclable materials, and private corporations are also starting to take an interest. Opposing the appropriation of waste – whether public or private – is therefore a matter

¹ Agroecology as a movement is an explicitly political approach which involves challenging and transforming the power structures in our societies, and placing seeds, land and regions, water, knowledge, culture, shared resources, and community spaces in the hands of those who feed the world.

of socio-environmental justice. To oppose this plundering, the category “shared resources” could be useful, as this goes beyond the circular economy.

- **Implement themed collectives on recycling and agroecology, as interesting practices exist and could be a subject for exchange and debate** in order to build our political voice.

Whichever option is chosen, we will need to think about the link with the points raised in our Global Report.