

Sharing in Success

Emmaus Communities for homeless people generate savings in public spending in excess of £800,000 each year, according to research carried out at Emmaus Village Carlton in Bedfordshire by a team from Cambridge University led by Christine Whitehead, Professor of Housing Economics at LSE and Director of the Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research.

This research follows a previous economic evaluation of Emmaus Cambridge in 2004. An assessment of the benefits of Emmaus to the wider community suggests that Emmaus Village Carlton is responsible for savings in public spending of at least **£660,777** per year – an output of around £24,473 per Companion.

Many of the people who live at Emmaus as Companions regain control of their lives and move on to paid employment. When these further benefits are considered then the total savings generated by the Community total **£843,815** per year, or £31,252 per Companion.

Emmaus Village Carlton is a Community for up to 29 previously homeless residents (known as Companions) and 11 members of staff, some of whom live on site. The primary aim of the Community is to provide home and work for previously homeless people.

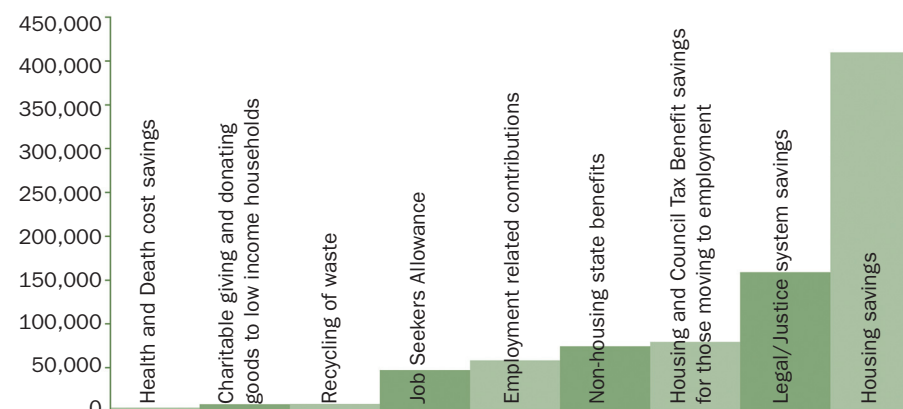
The sale of recycled household goods, books and clothes, and the sale of drinks and food from a Bistro provide most of the Community's income. Companions run these trading activities together with the staff members and some 60-70 volunteers.

The first level of economic evaluation, based on figures for 2006-2007, shows that Emmaus Village Carlton generated a surplus of £67,586 from its trading activities. Additional income from Housing Benefit and Supporting People funding enabled the Community to produce a surplus of **£19,089** after all Companion costs had been met.

The work undertaken by Companions in the recycling and retail business is central to the Community's ethos. Not only does most of their income come from trading activities, but trading is also the key to the whole Emmaus concept of Community financial independence. Work has a therapeutic effect in enabling the restoration of the Companions' dignity and self-respect.

Emmaus Village Carlton enables Companions to regain control of their lives. There is much emphasis on personal growth and on addressing each individual's training and support needs. Every Emmaus Community works to generate sufficient income from its business to cover all of its outgoings, to enable both grants and surpluses to be used to benefit others.

Potential benefits to the public purse



As shown by the chart, there are a range of potential benefits to the taxpayer as a result of the activities of Emmaus Village Carlton. Notably, the annual savings from housing 27 Companions in Emmaus rather than in alternative accommodation are approximately £408,937 and the savings to the justice system by reducing ex-offenders' likelihood of re-offending are calculated to be £158,140 per annum.

Other key findings of the research

- ✿ Emmaus Communities offer an alternative approach to homelessness by using a social enterprise model. Emmaus is a distinctive homelessness organisation for a number of reasons, but three stand out particularly:
 - Work is essential to Emmaus Communities. Companions give up income related benefits and work in the Community.
 - The concept of Solidarity lies at the heart of the Emmaus Movement. Ways in which Communities show Solidarity include sharing their surplus with others that have less, offering household goods at a discount or free to low income households and supporting other local community projects.
 - Communities provide a supportive environment, enabling Companions to develop confidence, recover their self-respect and their independence. There is no finite limit on length of stay: Companions remain in a Community for as long as they need. Personal development objectives are regularly reviewed by the Companions themselves, in association with the Community Leader.
- ✿ Emmaus Communities provide medium to long-term practical support for those who, for whatever reason, become detached from mainstream society.
- ✿ Emmaus Communities form an important part of the matrix of provision for homeless and socially-excluded individuals. They effectively operate as therapeutic communities: peer support and meaningful activities are important integral characteristics.
- ✿ While any economic evaluation cannot account for intangible benefits, it is clear that there are real advantages resulting from Emmaus Communities for the Government (national and local), the wider community, the homeless population and the environment.

The research findings illustrate the fact that Emmaus Communities

- **provide a unique and successful approach to homelessness;**
- **offer huge benefits to those living in Communities;**
- **run successful social enterprises with the potential to produce a healthy surplus from their trading activities, and significant benefits to the wider communities in which they are located.**

Copies of the full research and a longer summary can be downloaded from www.emmaus.org.uk or obtained from the address below.

Emmaus, 48 Kingston Street, Cambridge CB1 2NU · **T** 01223 576106

E contact@emmaus.org.uk · **W** www.emmaus.org.uk

Emmaus is a registered charity no. 1064470, limited company no. 3422341 registered in England & Wales



Sharing in Success

An economic evaluation of the Emmaus Community model

Summary of a Report by Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research, University of Cambridge 2008

Emmaus, the homeless charity that works