

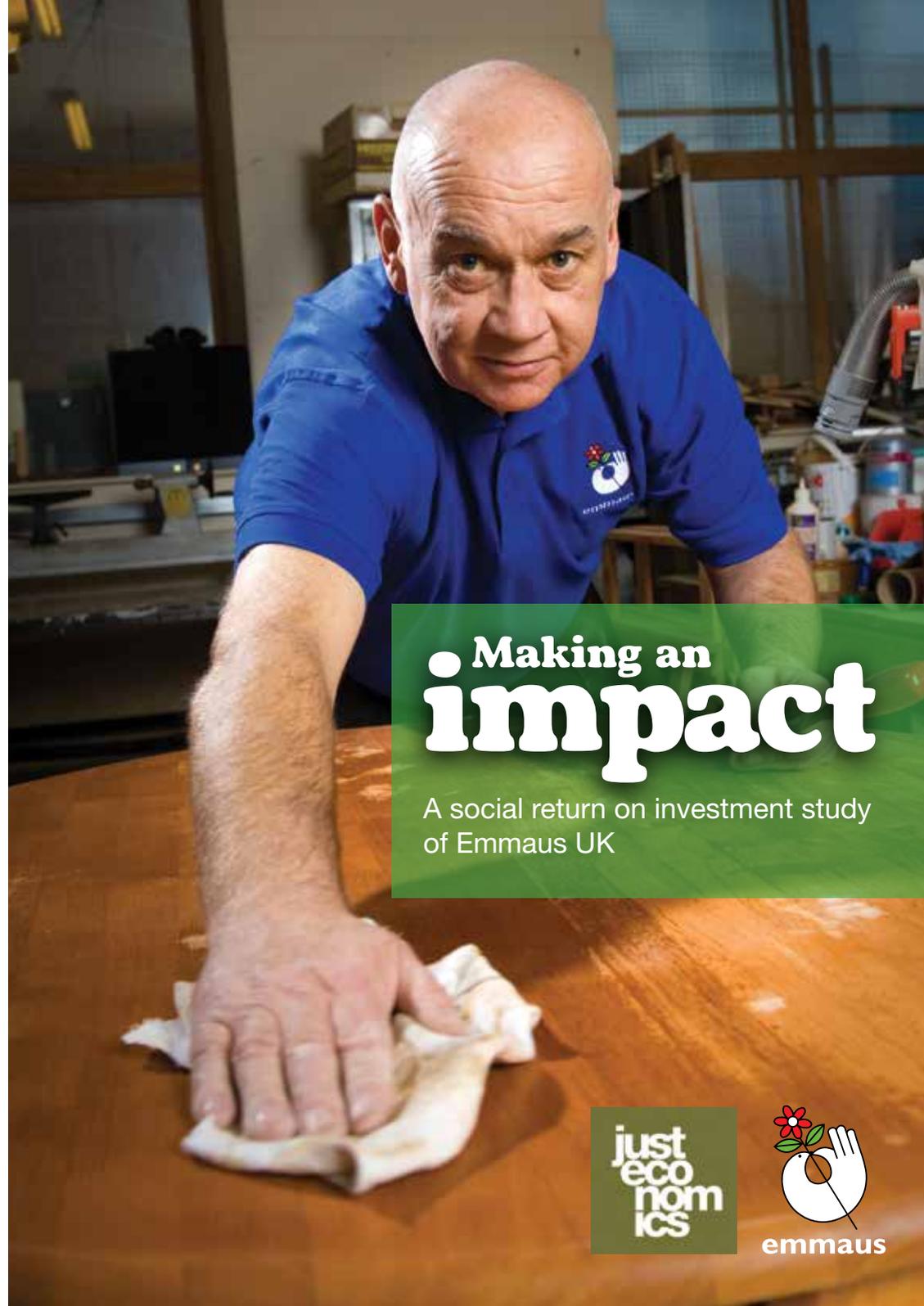
This research was supported by a grant from



Copies of the full research can be downloaded from [www.emmaus.org.uk](http://www.emmaus.org.uk)



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# • Making an impact

A social return on investment study of Emmaus UK



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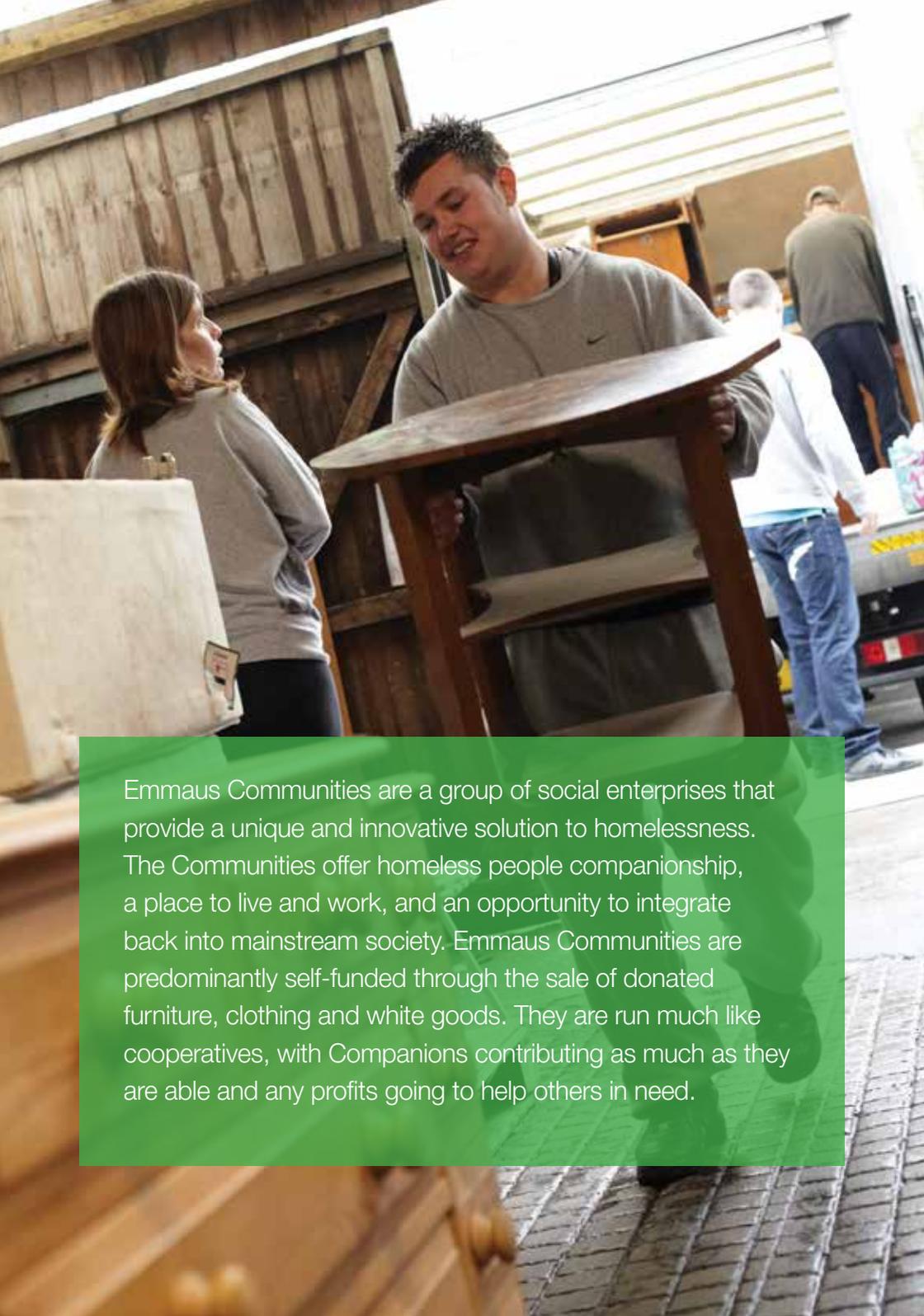
# A different approach to homelessness

In 2011, Just Economics carried out a forecasted Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis to quantify the social value created each year by an average Community. SROI is a form of cost-benefit analysis that measures the value of an organisation's social, environmental and economic outcomes. Rather than looking at 'returns' to the State or the economy, it measures all of the most significant sources of value to individuals and local communities. This makes it suitable for an organisation like Emmaus that creates value across an economic, social and environmental 'triple bottom line'.

The researchers talked to Companions and staff members in seven Communities across the UK to establish the main outcomes of Emmaus' work. They then calculated the value of each outcome to four main groups of beneficiaries: short-term Companions who stay at Emmaus for up to two years, long-term Companions, the Government and wider communities local to Emmaus.

The report finds that Emmaus Communities successfully provide a place for people in vulnerable housing situations to rebuild their lives by offering them meaningful work and support. Emmaus' work has a potentially high rate of social return: for every £1 invested in an established Emmaus Community, £11 is generated in social, environmental and economic returns. This equates to an average of £2.2 million per Community, for non-trading investment of £198,000.

***“The majority that we spoke to had spent time on the street, in prison, or both. Our conversations with Companions revealed very high levels of satisfaction with Emmaus. In addition, we heard some very significant accounts of change; more than one person told us they would probably be dead if they had not come to their Community.”***



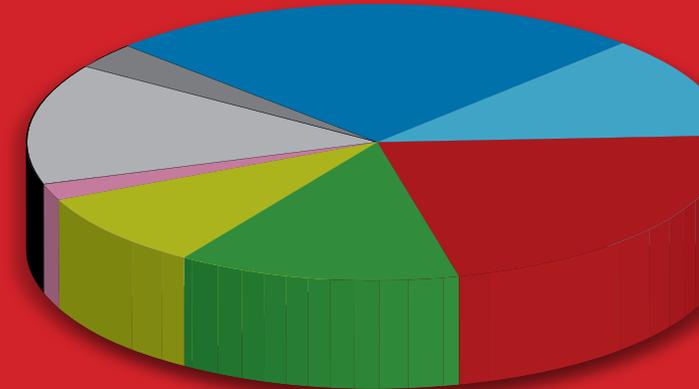
Emmaus Communities are a group of social enterprises that provide a unique and innovative solution to homelessness. The Communities offer homeless people companionship, a place to live and work, and an opportunity to integrate back into mainstream society. Emmaus Communities are predominantly self-funded through the sale of donated furniture, clothing and white goods. They are run much like cooperatives, with Companions contributing as much as they are able and any profits going to help others in need.

# Benefits to Companions



The vast majority of the benefit of Emmaus' work accrues to Companions, for whom Emmaus can be a life-changing experience. Key outcomes for Companions include:

- Food, shelter and security
- A long-term home for some
- Meaningful work
- Skills development, employability, acquisition of qualifications
- Improved access to dental and medical care
- Better long-term health
- Reduced drug and alcohol use
- Friendship and emotional support
- Reduced loneliness
- Improved well-being and self-confidence
- Improved finances and reduced debt
- Re-establishing relationships with children and family members
- Ability to make plans for the future



- Physical health - 25%
- Addictions - 22%
- Crime - 13%
- Employment and finance - 9%
- Mental health - 12%
- Accommodation - 14%
- Relationships - 3%
- Other - 2%

A man in a grey hoodie is seen from the side, carrying a large, heavy wooden cabinet. He is looking upwards and to the right. The cabinet has several drawers and doors. The background shows a building with a window.

**“Emmaus is one of those places where the more you put in the more you get out of it, simple as that.”**

# Peter's story

Peter grew up in the care system. He never knew his parents, and when he was 16 he became homeless. He spent 11 years living on the streets, sleeping rough or in night shelters. He describes himself as having been “constantly on the move”. He also spent time in prison, although he never got into drink or drugs.

According to Peter, the main difference between Emmaus and other agencies is that in other places you sit there and talk about your problems, and focus on your issues all the time. In Emmaus an important part of tackling your problems is that you build a routine around work – you need to get up and go to work and you have to get settled into a pattern to do this. The stability that the routine gives people with chaotic lifestyles helps them to overcome challenging issues. In addition, they are building strength, eating properly, working and exercising. He describes it as “bringing you back to life”.

He explains:

***“If you have some meaningful work to do, you don't focus on your problems so much and that's the most important thing that it gives you as far as changing your lifestyle from the street to living in a Community.”***

Peter is now a Community Assistant. He helps others with detox and to overcome their own issues. He thinks that they tend to listen to him a bit more because he has been through it.

He is now starting to apply for staff jobs and Deputy Community Leader jobs, and that is his hope for the future. He says, “Emmaus is one of those places where the more you put in the more you get out of it, simple as that.”

# A Companion's perspective

## on being involved in the research

“

I was asked to contribute to the SROI as a Companion at Emmaus Brighton and Hove, attending all the task-group meetings and interviewing five people at Emmaus Hastings and Rother, our sister Community nearby.

The Hastings Community had been started about a year previously, so was in its infancy. I had offered to talk with the Companions feeling that it might allow a novel perspective, if a fellow Companion undertook the process, and that it would be a useful and interesting experience for me.

Having had some experience of social science surveys, I was aware that the prime concern is often how to 'classify' different Companions. However, I found the narratives all highly individual and specific. I reflected that at Brighton the one common assertion we make as Companions is that everyone has their own story.

I am pleased that my experience of the SROI has been of an authentic effort to capture individuals' personal narratives, as well as to quantify the benefits (or otherwise) of Emmaus. As a Companion, it does seem that Emmaus is interested in people's own experience and what it means to them. Homelessness defined as a state of housing tenure is not always the same as 'feeling homeless'.

”

Tony, Emmaus Brighton & Hove

# Benefits

## to Government and local communities

For the 21 Communities included in the research, the report forecasts that the present value of savings to Government stands at almost £6 million per year. Key outcomes for Government from Emmaus' work include fewer rough sleepers, reduced pressure on statutory services from homelessness, fewer people on housing lists, fewer people claiming benefits, reduced substance misuse, reduced crime and fewer health problems.

Department	Outcome areas	Present value to State
Department of Health	NHS and emergency service costs	£1,478,506
Local Government	Hostel accommodation Reduced pressure on drug and alcohol services Landfill cost savings	£2,447,612
Ministry of Justice	Criminal justice savings	£778,435
Department for Work and Pensions	Savings in welfare benefits while Companions are at Emmaus Future benefit savings when people move into work.	£1,252,030
<b>Total</b>		<b>£5,956,584</b>

For local communities Emmaus generates £421,300 worth of social value. This figure includes the value of goods donated by Communities to people on a low income; time spent by Companions volunteering for other local charities and reduced carbon emissions from the reuse and recycling of furniture.

# Founding new Communities



The research concludes that Emmaus Communities create a sizeable amount of social value through providing a place to live and work for Companions.

Demand for places in Communities far exceeds the number of rooms that are available and Emmaus often has to turn many people away. The research shows that there is also a strong business case for investment in new Communities. The average cost of setting up a new Community and supporting it on its journey to self-sufficiency is £1.5 million. The research estimates that a new Community generates a net social value of £9.3 million over the lifetime of the building (estimated to be 20 years). This calculation includes capital and replacement costs.

The results demonstrate that a return can be realised in the short term. However, where Companions are able to rebuild their lives and are no longer at risk of being homeless, benefits are likely to last well into the future.