

LA LETTRE

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INTERNATIONAL
SOLIDARITY SITES:
A TANGIBLE
EXAMPLE OF
ENGAGEMENT!

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SPECIAL

Prevention of school
drop-out and
underperformance

association **Asmae**
Soeur Emmanuelle
Agir pour l'enfance défavorisée

Let's mobilise all our forces for children's futures!

In the face of the tragedies experienced by an increasing number of refugees and a somewhat bleak political and social outlook, many of us may feel disheartened and feel that our work is in vain. But how can we fail to be moved by the look in a child's eyes?

That is what the fantastic «Réfugiés derrière les clichés» (the refugees behind the negatives) photography exhibition has been offering over the last few weeks, inviting us to be moved by the faces of Lebanese and Syrian children helped by our partner Alpha — the Association libanaise pour la promotion humaine et l'alphabétisation (Lebanese Association for Human Advancement and Literacy). During our missions on the ground with our partners, are we not struck by the number of smiles and the amount of joy we encounter in the midst of such poverty, neglect and even violence?

These children's faces, so full of life and so solemn, could also be those of the young Malagasy, most of whom live on the street, taken into classrooms each day by our partners to take part in literacy classes. The only thing their huge thirst for learning and incredible curiosity need is committed teachers to show kindness and skill. That's the challenge of such a project, as you can find out on the next few pages in «Promoting education among children outside the school system». In Madagascar, a country with a population of about 23 million, 1.5 million children are outside the school system. What an incredible springboard for development access to education would be!

While there are currently almost 48 million child refugees and forcibly displaced children in the world(*), we should remember that Sister Emmanuelle wanted to do everything possible to aid the development of countries in the South so that people didn't have to emigrate.

However, when these people have no alternative and have taken the risk to emigrate, the countries in which they arrive should welcome them, treat them with dignity and support them in their integration. That was Sister Emmanuelle's vision, and that is the work that her Association Asmae continues to advocate in France and abroad.

For the sake of children's futures, let's mobilise all our forces to keep innovating and move forward!

As the new year begins, on behalf of the Board of Directors and the entire Asmae team, I wish each one of you every happiness and the strength to overcome the difficulties and discouragement and work towards a fairer and more united world for its children!

Sabine Gindre

Chair

* Document published by UNICEF in September 2016.

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Sister Emmanuelle with two young rag-and-bone collectors in the Suez canal (Egypt)

For 36 years, Asmae has been continuing the work of its founder, following her principles.

OUR VISION

“A fair world where children are guaranteed the opportunity to live and grow up in dignity within their families and their environments to become free men and women who can contribute to society.”

OUR MISSIONS

- * To promote child development through a global approach. To do this, Asmae also works to support families, with their environments in mind.
- * To increase the capabilities of local stakeholders in the area of child development, to improve the synergy between them and to maximise their social impact.
- * To champion children's causes by raising awareness and speaking out.
- * To experiment, to expand and to disseminate.

OUR VALUES

- * Trust * Engagement * An Ideal of Justice * Freedom * Respect * Solidarity

ASMAE IN FIGURES

- * **47,707** beneficiaries (children and families) through **84** projects in **8** countries
- * **1817** children supported
- by **1210** sponsors
- * **53** local partners
- * **92** permanent employees
- * **149** 149 volunteers in France and on international solidarity sites

In each of our newsletters, we take the opportunity to tell you about one of our five areas of intervention. Today, we are looking at one of our historical projects: keeping children in school and preventing academic failure.

In 1989, the International Convention on the Rights of the Child asserted children's right to free compulsory primary education and teaching. In 2000, countries made a commitment to achieve universal primary education. To date, however, these goals have still not been achieved. In total, there are 121 million children and young people around the world without primary or lower-secondary schooling*. Yet, as Sister Emmanuelle said, "a successful education is the basis of a successful life".

Along with its partners, Asmae is fighting academic failure and helping to improve the quality of education by providing technical and financial support (including sponsorship** and project funding), as well as developing innovative teaching methods. Asmae is also involved in teacher training and in developing relationships of trust between families and those involved in education.

The challenge is to find appropriate solutions that will give these children access to school and allow them to stay there and flourish.

* Source: Global Partnership for Education, <http://www.globalpartnership.org/>

** Asmae is looking for new sponsors. If you would like to give children the gift of education, our sponsorship spokeswoman will be pleased to discuss it with you by telephone on +33 (0)1 70 32 02 50 or by email at parrainage@asmae.fr

Key figures

- 22,334 direct beneficiaries
- 34 partners
- 30 projects
- Operations in 7 countries: Burkina Faso, Egypt, India, Lebanon, Madagascar, Mali and the Philippines, and actions supported in France as part of the Divers-Cité

FRANCE - DIVERS-CITÉ: *Listening to local people and empowering them to act.*

The Divers-Cité programme launched by Asmae in 2001 supports community initiatives set up by residents of underprivileged areas to help children and young people through projects promoting better social integration. Among its many activities with children, the programme focuses in particular on specific actions relating to education, preventing academic failure, providing psychosocial support and supporting young people and families.

* ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND CARE

Extracurricular support is provided several nights a week throughout the year for many children, from primary to secondary age, in all areas. These academic support sessions are led by the young people themselves, which helps to create a strong link. The goal is to help the children to develop working methods, to give the young people the inclination, curiosity and independence to work, and to provide a time for discussion and debate.

2016 beneficiaries

- Extracurricular activities: 205 children
- Support: 100 young people
- Family-school mediation: 120 children and 55 secondary-school students

* BRINGING FAMILIES AND SCHOOLS TOGETHER

Local groups EACB (Espoir et Avenir à Claude Bernard — Claude Bernard association for hope and the future) and VEMT (Vivre ensemble à Maroc Tanger — living together in Maroc Tanger) have implemented actions to bring together schools and local families, who are not very well represented in parent authorities. As a result of these actions, parents in the Claude Bernard area (EACB) have joined the school board or become parent representatives. Parents in the Maroc Tanger area have organised quarterly meetings with school management to allow them to monitor their children's progress.

MADAGASCAR: *Promoting education for 440 vulnerable children outside the formal education system.*

Educational exclusion currently affects over 1.5 million children in Madagascar. These children from vulnerable families or rural areas are often forced to drop out of school. In the face of the educational challenges in Madagascar, Asmae and its partners Hardi and Manda are working on the quality and sustainability of education provision as part of the “Promotion of education for vulnerable children outside the formal education system in Antananarivo” project.

2016 beneficiaries: key figures

- 2 partners: Manda and Hardi
- 10 education professionals
- 440 children
- 340 families
- 21 Malagasy civil society organisations
- 25 schools and vocational institutions

★ PROJECT GOALS:

- To improve literacy and learning outcomes for children and young people aged between 7 and 18.
- To reinforce socio-educational integration mechanisms.
- To strengthen the two partners' technical and management capabilities in their mission to combat educational exclusion.

★ STRENGTHENING OUR PARTNERS' CAPABILITIES TO PROVIDE HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION

Putting vulnerable children straight back into the formal education system carries a serious risk of failure. To

mitigate this risk, the project helps to prepare the child, family and school for successful reintegration. Literacy activities are complemented by multiple actions involving the child's environment: work with families, monitoring of reintegration at school and health monitoring.

The project also involves the use of new tools intended to facilitate learning. A picture book comprised of 200 to 250 flash cards is currently being created for children aged between 7 and 12 to help them learn to read. Individual support based on the specific needs of the professionals teaching the children has been put in place. Training will be provided through group workshops and networking to allow local associations to share experiences and to provide them with tools.



* TWO PARTNER ASSOCIATIONS SPECIALISING IN EDUCATION

MANDA

Manda is a Malagasy civil society association that supports reintegration into school or work for children aged between 4 and 18. It provides social and medical support and provides parents with socio-economic assistance.

The NGO Manda provides literacy classes for 32 children every day. The group's goal is to prepare them psychologically, intellectually and socially to join state schools.

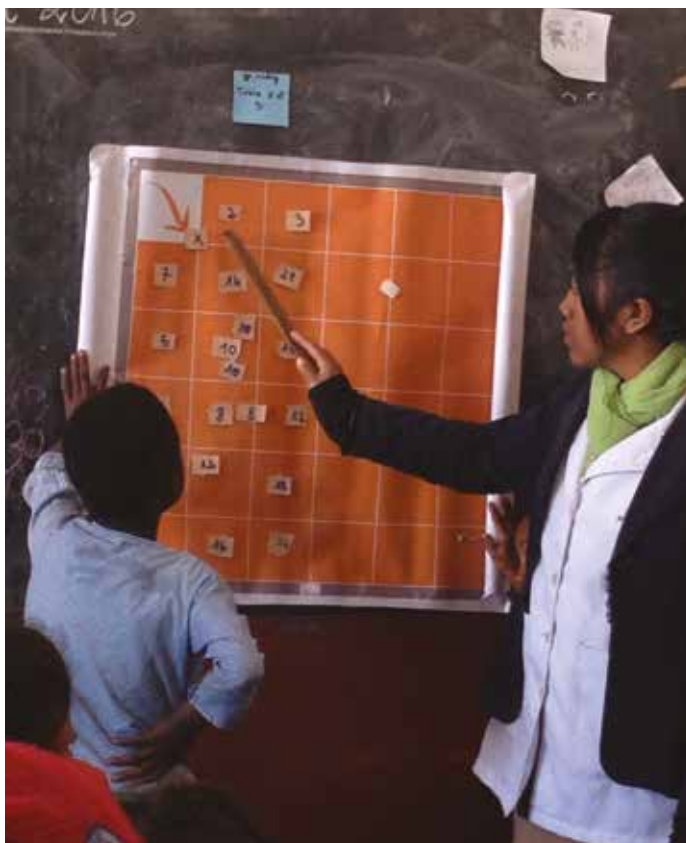


"Literacy is one of the things we teach 7 to 18-year-olds. [...] This job is a vocation! The thing I like most about what I do is working with street children, seeing what they and their lives are really like, and working out how to teach them so that they really take it in. These children have grown up too quickly; they haven't really experienced childhood, which makes them quite different to other children."

Tiana ANDRIAMAMONJY
Teacher

HARDI

Hardi is an association registered in Madagascar that supports communities to help them turn their initiatives into reality. In particular, it works in the areas of education and vocational training.



"For us, literacy is learning to read and write, but it also allows children who have never had any schooling or who have left school to be reintegrated into the system. To reduce the number of children living on the street, Hardi, an NGO, takes them in so that they can subsequently be put into schools. These children are from families in difficulty, and their quality of life is not the same as that of other children. The problems they face can have an impact on their lives and schooling.

The teachers make sure that the children receive individual support based on their particular issues and abilities. We are working in collaboration with Asmae's teams on the ground to look for suitable new methods and working tools. This support is really important to us."

Nicole et Hanta
Literacy class teachers



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INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY SITES

For more than 35 years, volunteers have been setting off for sites in Burkina Faso, the Philippines, India and Madagascar with Asmae every year.

Solidarity sites are short stays (2 to 3 weeks) in the countries where we operate organised in collaboration with Asmae's local partner associations. They provide an opportunity to experience local development while learning about another culture. Volunteers work with children, taking part in fun activities, educational games, arts and crafts, sport and sometimes renovation work. The site allows volunteers to develop skills and values like tolerance, participation and helping each other. An international solidarity mission is a powerful experience, from both a cultural and a personal point of view.

Although they are based on values of solidarity and intercultural encounters, Asmae sites are not solidarity tourism, but a partnership built on exchange. They are a response to specific needs identified by local associations working in partnership with Asmae. The sites help children to gain self-confidence and develop their involvement and creativity. They also provide improved visibility and new facilitation techniques for the partner teams.

Key figures:

- An average of around 30 volunteers each year
- 4 destinations: Madagascar, Burkina Faso, India and the Philippines
- About a dozen partner associations
- Times: spring (April) and summer (July and August)

★ REPORT FROM SUZANNE TAPSOBA IN BURKINA FASO

From 18 July to 6 August 2016, four volunteers were welcomed by the École des Jeunes Aveugles (EJA — school for blind children) run by the ABPAM, a local association in Burkina Faso that is the beneficiary of a project co-financed by Asmae and the American volunteer service (USAID). The EJA is the only educational institution for blind children in Burkina Faso. The head teacher sums up the site.

How did the solidarity site fit into your project?

“The association is committed to helping children with visual disabilities to fulfil their potential and become fully integrated. Through its educational activities, it therefore does everything in its power to bridge any gaps that might prevent the children in its care from making the most of their talents and knowledge. With Asmae's support, the École des Jeunes Aveugles offered a site based on early learning activities.”

What activities were planned and what were the main effects?

“The activities planned were: events, outings, odd jobs, drawing, storytelling, singing, sport and games. The site went well; all the planned activities were carried out with the support of the four volunteers. There was a positive impact on the children who took part. They were able to use what they had learned to give them more self-confidence when faced with certain school activities. In terms of the community, this activity aroused great curiosity among residents and made some families want their children to take part in future sites.”

How are you following up this site within your programmes?

“Everything that we learned through this site is being passed on to the other children at the school who did not take part. Some of the activities are being included in the school curricula so that all the classes can take advantage of them (games, decoration, making things, etc.)”



The four volunteers with the EJA team

★ A REWARDING EXPERIENCE FOR VOLUNTEERS

The experience of a site generally arouses strong emotions in volunteers. Aside from the surge of solidarity and sharing at the start, it is an extremely rewarding experience on a personal level. "Giving your time does not mean wasting it. Giving your time allows you to get a huge amount back in exchange," says David, a site volunteer. After taking part in a site, many volunteers express a desire to become more involved in international solidarity or community life.

Manon Lévêque on her trip to Madagascar

"I've realised something: when you give, you get a lot more back in return! Sister Emmanuelle wasn't wrong: "you set off hoping to give, but you come back feeling that you've actually received". In Madagascar, at the Orchidées Blanches medical and educational centre, I met exceptional people who give their all for these young people with intellectual disabilities. The thing that struck me most was their love, which can be seen in the way they live their lives, even in one of the poorest countries in the world. These young people with intellectual disabilities inspired me in my personal and professional mission to promote social inclusion and celebrate our differences! Meeting different people, being surprised by our cultural differences, learning... a solidarity site is about all those things too! Thank you, Asmae!"



Manon Lévêque with one of the young people from the Orchidées Blanches centre

WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR THIS SPRING AND SUMMER?

If you would like to take part in an international solidarity site too, find out what we have on offer on our website www.asmae.fr under the "Act" section and download your application form. You can also write to us at chantiers@asmae.fr. Sites are open to anyone over the age of 18 and in good health.

Project status update

Each issue gives us the opportunity to update you on the project under way in Burkina Faso in partnership with the Agence Française de Développement (French development agency).

Pilot project to combat educational wastage in Burkina Faso by moving teaching practices towards a more fun and participatory approach

The aim of this project, carried out in partnership with the ICCV association*, is to create a school and extracurricular environment that is conducive to high-quality learning through fun, participatory and inclusive teaching methods. The idea is to support early childhood educators and teachers as they develop their practices by trying out teaching tools that are appropriate to the situation in Burkina Faso. Launched in 2015, this three-year project will benefit more than 4000 children and 7000 people (members of the communities involved, staff at partner public institutions, etc.), through training for 78 education professionals, for example.

*Association Initiative Communautaire Changer la Vie/Nazemse (ICCV) (the change lives community initiative/Nazemse association). **Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale et de l'Alphabétisation (ministry of national education and literacy)



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I'm in, you're in, they're in...
We're all in to support
children's future!

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Isabelle D'Ornano

Three questions for Isabelle d'Ornano, Co-founder of Sisley and Chair of the Sisley D'Ornano Foundation.

The French company Sisley is a world leader in phyto-cosmetology. It is committed to reducing social inequality and, through the foundation of the same name, funds projects in France and abroad. In 2016, the Sisley-D'Ornano Foundation supported actions carried out by Asmae in France to support young children living in highly unstable situations and their families.

Why did you decide to support Asmae?

Why support Asmae? First of all, because of Sister Emmanuelle: her extraordinary personality, her tremendous work, the energy she had to move mountains and awaken people's consciences. Almost 10 years ago, I attended the mass in her honour at the Chapel of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal. The entire road was dark with people. What she undertook and achieved in Cairo for the kids working on rubbish dumps and their families demonstrates an unshakeable faith. Both alongside her and following in her footsteps, Asmae has continued her work elsewhere in the world, based on the conviction that education and care for others can overcome poverty.

This year, you have chosen to support the pilot project involving children and their families taken in by 115 (French emergency number for homeless people). Why? How is this important to you?

The situation of street children is a concern in France, too. In Paris in particular, I am amazed to encounter more and more children, either alone or in groups, left to fend for themselves or begging. We thought it was a good idea for there to be a place somewhere for them to go where they had a chance to play games, do activities and take their minds off things.

What do you think a company that supports Asmae can get back in return?

What advice would you give to other companies that would like to support Asmae?

I always have trouble imagining what a company has to "gain" by supporting a cause. I find that the support is a reward in itself, particularly when the cause is sound, as it is in the case of what Sister Emmanuelle did for children. After years of teaching, she wanted to do things that worked to combat poverty. And she had tremendous success, both in Cairo and elsewhere. In a way, Sister Emmanuelle is a great "brand", if I can put it like that: a strong guarantee for any company or patron that wants to make a commitment.

"Love is stronger than death"

My spiritual testament, Sister Emmanuelle (2008)

"Love is stronger than death": that is how Sister Emmanuelle began her spiritual testament, which she passed down to all of us, with the mission to continue her fight.

By leaving a legacy to Asmae, you will be helping to build a fairer world. Contact our legacies, donations and life insurance spokeswoman:

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