



Asmae Association  
Sœur Emmanuelle

# La lettre

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# EDITORIAL – HANDING OVER THE REINS AT ASMAE'S MANAGEMENT



Catherine Alvarez



Adrien Sallez

*From 1991 to 2008, Catherine Alvarez was Sister Emmanuelle's closest collaborator. Catherine supported and advised Sister Emmanuelle as she developed Asmae. The Board of Directors and all of Asmae's teams would like to offer her their sincere thanks for her commitment and the progress she made. Under her management, the association went from being a small organisation to an international NGO, recognised worldwide for its projects and expertise. Catherine retired in July 2020 and joins the Board of Directors in September. She was succeeded as Director General on 1 May by Adrien Sallez, who has been working with her for 10 years. Here, we hand over to them for a joint interview.*

## **What is your most striking memory from the 17 years you worked alongside Sister Emmanuelle?**

**Catherine Alvarez:** I remember the visit I made with Sister Emmanuelle to Smokey Mountain in Manila, in the Philippines. It was a huge hill where refuse lorries came to empty out rubbish from the city. Families and children living at the foot of the hill came every day with spiked sticks to salvage anything they might be able to sell.

That image of children and adults trudging through the stinking rubbish all day, risking being sucked into the fermentation holes, is, along with the image of the refugee camps in Khartoum, one of the most appalling things I remember.

At the end of that visit, I went with Sister Emmanuelle to meet the President, Ms. Corazon Aquino, at the Presidential Palace. We asked her what the government planned to do to get rid of this Smokey Mountain and support the families living there to help them find other work and accommodation.

## **What have been Asmae's main achievements over the last 20 years?**

**Catherine Alvarez:** The association started as a very small-scale organisation; today, it has become a point of reference, at the forefront of development methods. It has helped with the structuring of dozens of local associations that now serve as points of reference

in their own countries and are able to take over from us. Alongside these local associations, Asmae has helped the public authorities to become aware of the challenges surrounding education and child protection, and to promote best practices.

## **How do you think needs relating to children and young people have changed?**

**Adrien Sallez:** Inequality is growing, not just within France, but between the countries and regions of the world. Internationally, 11 million children are refugees or asylum seekers outside their own countries, and 17 million are displaced within their own countries. This situation is both tragic and unprecedented. In terms of education, significant progress has been made with regard to accessing school. We now need to make sure that staff are properly trained and that they have the right teaching materials. A particular effort needs to be made to support girls, who are still too often left outside the school system.

In France, the number of young mothers living in poverty with small children continues to rise, particularly in Seine Saint-Denis, where we work on this issue. And recently, the extremely worrying level of exposure children have to domestic violence has increased as a result of lockdown.

On a more global level, wars, poverty, physical and psychological violence and a lack of access to quality education are

still the main factors preventing children from growing up and developing in the right conditions.

## **What challenges does Asmae face in the coming years?**

**Adrien Sallez:** Both in France and overseas, our priority will continue to be responding to the needs of the most vulnerable children. But to make change happen, we need to be firmer in alerting the public authorities and the general public to unacceptable situations. We also need to improve our capacity to adapt to unstable security, political and health situations, such as the one we are currently facing with Covid-19. This involves developing projects quickly, including projects in new territories, and being able to withdraw if necessary after strengthening the capacities of local stakeholders.

We must also continue to improve the quality and impact of our projects, taking their cultural contexts into account. This involves using international texts such as the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, but also adapting to cultural contexts, especially in terms of taking gender-related issues (those specifically affecting girls or boys) into account. Young people's socio-economic integration and getting them actively involved in our projects are also areas we would like to develop.

We are continuing with Sister Emmanuelle's course of action and values while constantly aiming to adapt our projects to changing needs.



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Sister Emmanuelle with two young ragpickers in the Suez Canal (Egypt).

For 40 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

- 48,000 beneficiaries (children and families) through 52 projects in 6 countries
- 730 sponsors
- 37 partner associations
- 128 professionals worldwide
- 38 volunteers

# FRANCE - LA CHRYSALIDE SUPPORT WORKSHOPS FOR YOUNG MOTHERS FACE THE CHALLENGE OF LOCKDOWN

*La Chrysalide is an accommodation and support facility in Bobigny that receives young mothers in difficulty and their small children. They are supported by a team of social workers who help them to develop their parenting skills and reintegrate into society through individual meetings and group workshops. The health crisis has disrupted all these activities. The social workers and residents have had to reinvent their day-to-day lives.*

Throughout the year, the residents of La Chrysalide take part in weekly workshops such as, for example, the cookery workshop. From start to finish, they take responsibility for the organisation, budgeting, purchasing and number of guests. This allows them to learn to assess needs, plan their time, divide up tasks and fulfil all the conditions required to make a meal for guests (selected from among the residents' friends and family).

The various workshops serve as a basis for the social workers' actions to support the young mothers. An educational programme is in place to improve community life and enhance residents' social skills. Support also continues with individual meetings and help for each resident with administrative procedures.

Lockdown put a stop to activities and the residents had to use their imaginations. They used a WhatsApp group to stay in contact with each other, and also with the social workers, who reimagined the activities. So, to replace the cookery workshop, the social workers provided each of the residents with the ingredients to make different recipes. The group, where everyone posted a photo of what they had made, took the place of the workshop during lockdown. Plans are being made to resume activities with new rules to respect health measures. The workshops will be divided into two groups, and some, such as the "Tell us stories" workshop, have been put on hold for the moment. The centre has also been provided with health and hygiene products to protect the residents and their children.

Residents of La Chrysalide during cooking class.



© Véronique Lecomte

# MADAGASCAR – PROJECT FOR EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL INCLUSION OF VULNERABLE CHILDREN IN ANTANANARIVO REACHES ITS SECOND STAGE, IN THE SHADOW OF THE HEALTH CRISIS

According to UNICEF, around 1.5 million Madagascan children between the ages of 3 and 6, or 1 in 4, are not in preschool, and 905,000 children between the ages of 6 and 10 are not enrolled in primary school. Since March 2019, Asmae has been supporting its partners Hardi, Manda and Kozama on a project entitled “Promoting educational and social inclusion of vulnerable children in Antananarivo”. The overall objective is to facilitate children’s adaptation to and inclusion in school in order to prevent drop-outs. The first phase of the project ended recently and has been externally evaluated; the second phase began without interruption, but in the exceptional circumstances of the health crisis.

## A positive assessment

Our partners Manda and Hardi had 137 and 140 beneficiary families in the first phase of the “Promoting educational and social inclusion of vulnerable children in Antananarivo” project co-financed by the French Development Agency. Phase I of the project was evaluated by an independent external contractor, who gave a very positive assessment, saying it was “an approach that is worth pursuing”. Asmae’s work focuses on optimising educators’ and social workers’ skills with the aim of improving children’s literacy and socio-educational reintegration. According to the assessor, Asmae’s technical advisors provide high-quality, appropriate expertise to support educators. The strength of their approach lies in the different stages put in place: first, they provide individual support for each



Distributing food and hygiene kits.

professional; the support then continues in a group format; and finally, a network is formed of everyone involved in the project.

The work carried out has led to the creation of a directory of teaching tools aimed at professionals working with children (games and activities files, training booklets, guides to supporting children), with the objective of promoting social and educational inclusion for vulnerable children in Antananarivo. The assessment also mentions ‘the excellence of a fun educational tool created by Asmae’s teams and distributed nationally: “Sary Fetsy”. This is a game consisting of activities to help develop children’s language, among other things.

Some partners that have become independent are acting as resource partners\* in the second phase of the project.

The end of the project has been affected by the health crisis, so the activities have been focused on emergency responses. Food aid, for example, has been provided to some beneficiaries by our partner Hardi,

which has been distributing supplies. Families are in a difficult situation, because they often rely on daily work and the informal economy. Lockdown has therefore reduced their (already) very low income to nothing.

## Second phase of the project begins against the backdrop of the health crisis.

The aim of the second phase of the project is to provide schooling for 900 extremely vulnerable girls and boys and to make our partners’ work sustainable. Beneficiaries are facing a fragile health, social and family situation.

The launch has been significantly affected by the health crisis, with activities initially focused on emergency responses. When distributing food parcels, the teams noticed both professionals and beneficiaries engaging in high-risk behaviour. Asmae therefore created a training session for professionals from partner associations (Betania and AIC) to teach them how to make families and children aware of the risks of infection and of how to take preventive measures.

Asmae also helped to purchase around 200 masks for the teams and partners, as well as school supplies so that children could continue with their learning.

\* Resource partner: former partners that have acquired solid expertise that they can now pass on to new partners.

Distributing food and hygiene kits.





# LEBANON – PROTECTION NETWORK FOR REFUGEE CHILDREN: EVALUATING OUR WORK TO ENHANCE ITS IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY

*In Lebanon, 82% of Palestinian refugee children are exposed to various types of violence. An increase in child labour, although prohibited by law, has also been observed. In 2013, with many cases of child abuse reported in Palestinian refugee camps, our partner Najdeh, supported by Asmae, set up a child protection network consisting of local and international associations and NGOs. The project has been a success and is currently being evaluated so that Asmae can ensure it is running smoothly.*

The network, which has been very favourably received, has developed over the years, with more and more organisations getting involved. With its expertise and technical specialists, Asmae monitors and supports 5 local child protection networks working to protect vulnerable children through prevention and intervention. Asmae provides support and organisational strengthening for these different networks. This involves running training on child protection and making regular monitoring visits. One of Asmae's objectives with these networks is also to improve their visibility within Palestinian communities. To act against abuse of refugee children in Lebanon, they have launched awareness and prevention campaigns on child protection topics and other associated subjects: prevention of drug use, drug addiction and school violence. They also provide protection services and supplies, as well as a calmer, safer environment for vulnerable girls and boys. To promote integration, refugee children and Lebanese children are brought together for the networks' various activities.

From July 2018, the project was evaluated based on the operation of the networks and their impact on the end beneficiaries: Palestinian children and their families. At the end of this assessment, **136** children and young people and **113** parents had been asked about their feelings



Show for an audience of refugee children.

about the work of the protection networks. **53** committee members were also consulted to help identify specific improvements. Various recommendations emerged

from this consultation. To make the protection networks sustainable and effective, our partner Najdeh and the beneficiaries suggested recreational activities, training (vocational or otherwise) aimed at improving inclusion and integration of communities, and creating shared tools for planning and developing the project.

As regards the other members of NGOs and protection networks, they wanted to review the way the networks communicate with each other and organise more regular meetings between members to improve coordination and maintain a collective synergy.

Support group for refugee children.



# IN AN EMERGENCY, OUR DONORS' ENGAGEMENT AND COMMITMENT SAVE LIVES

*If Sister Emmanuelle were still with us, she would tell us, with her tremendous optimism: "We must win this battle. We will stand firm, we will respond, but we will not abandon the most defenceless!" ».* The Covid-19 crisis has had an impact on the entire world, including Asmae and its beneficiaries. The most vulnerable populations, with whom Asmae and its partners work every day, have been particularly badly affected. Thanks to our engagement and that of our donors, Asmae is able to respond and protect the most disadvantaged communities.

## Protection has become Asmae's priority

From the start of the crisis, Asmae wanted to keep its teams and volunteers safe, introducing remote working for everyone and repatriating expatriate staff who wanted to return home.

Meanwhile, Asmae adapted its way of working to provide an emergency response in order to protect the most disadvantaged against the epidemic, and released a special fund for responding to emergencies. Asmae's responses were diverse: prevention and awareness campaigns, distributing hygiene kits (masks, gel, soap), offering accommodation to families living on the street and distributing food. Our beneficiaries are actually exposed in three ways: they rely on daily work and the informal economy, which is at a standstill, they usually do not have access to running water and soap, and generations live in

very close quarters to one another.

## Appropriate responses based on needs

The needs recorded and expressed vary from country to country, but actions to raise awareness of preventive measures and personal hygiene have been put in place in most. In Lebanon, for example, young people at the centre run by Jafra (one of Asmae's partners) put on a play to explain hygiene measures to younger children in an entertaining way.

In Burkina Faso, the Asmae team provided its partners with prevention materials.

Although our projects in India are coming to an end, our teams have provided special support to our partners in the country, which has been badly affected by the epidemic. Food parcels have allowed children and families living on the street,

particularly in the Philippines and Madagascar, to meet their needs, because lockdown has deprived them of a large proportion of their economic resources. Emergency accommodation has also been found for families living on the street, and many residences have been disinfected.

Telephone helplines have also been set up to provide remote assistance for families in difficulty, particularly those with children with disabilities.

## Maintaining emergency and post-emergency work

Asmae and its beneficiaries are entering a delicate period of transition where the consequences of the crisis are still to be felt. Following the immediate emergencies, the objective is to restart activities gradually, taking the consequences of the epidemic into account. Under these



1176

families have received food support.



1456

families have received hygienes kits.



970

families, including 315 children and young people have received prevention education.



351

families have received financial support.





Cleaning refugee camps, where thousands of families live, with our partner Jafra.

difficult circumstances, our teams are fully mobilised, working every day to ensure that our projects to support the most vulnerable people can continue.

During lockdown, some activities have been put on hold. Welfare centres have been closed and home visits to families have stopped. When possible, we will resume activities, helping our partners to guarantee

the safety of the children and professionals supported and trained by Asmae.

Many private partners, including TechnipFMC, the Fondation de France, *Ouest France*, Laboratoires Expanscience, the regional council of Île-de-France and the Bacardi-Martini group, have supported our emergency work.

Distributing food and hygiene kits in Manila.



## PROJECT STATUS UPDATE

Each issue of the Letter gives us the opportunity to update you on large-scale projects supported by public and private funders.

### **Burkina Faso “Grandir Ensemble” (growing up together), continuous support for children with visual disabilities**

The second phase of the “Grandir Ensemble” project was launched in October 2019 with our partner UNABPAM (Union Nationale des Associations Burkinabés pour la Promotion des Aveugles et Malvoyants — Burkina Faso national union of associations for the advancement of blind and partially sighted people). It is a continuation of a programme launched in 2015 with this partner, which Asmae has been supporting since 2008.

The aim of this project is to improve the quality of screening services and eye care, and to improve access to preschool, for children with visual disabilities.

In Burkina Faso, only 4% of children capable of attending school receive a preschool education, and the figure is even lower for children with disabilities.

Preschool is an important stage in a child's development and growth.

Support for nursery education is the basis for long-term educational inclusion. As Vanessa Konaté Boni, Asmae representative in Burkina Faso, says: “Nursery education is the primary means of combating social inequality in education.”»

The team has been strengthened since phase 2 of the project was launched, in particular with the arrival of specialists in inclusive education, to help us ensure we are taking the best approach to our beneficiaries' schooling.

One of the project's strengths lies in the commitment and diversity of our financial partners, which are of 3 nationalities: the Monegasque Cooperation (Principality of Monaco), the Pro Victimis Foundation (Switzerland) and the L'Occitane Foundation (France).

# 3 QUESTIONS FOR JOËLLE TENEGAL



REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GROUPE  
MEESCHAERT FOUNDATIONS



Joëlle Tenegal

## Why did you decide to support Asmae?

We had already supported Asmae on a trial carried out by the La Chrysalide mother-and-child centre in Montreuil, where young mothers and their children are given accommodation in a halfway-house. Getting involved in the refurbishment of an apartment for one of these mothers seemed like the logical next step; a mum would have a stable, consistent environment in which to see herself in her role with her child.

## What does this partnership bring to the Foundation?

Our corporate foundation selects projects that provide quick, effective solutions to the needs of children under the age of 12, which is an important time in their development. Aside from the quality of the project, this new encounter with Asmae was an opportunity to offer our employees awareness training on children's rights. The workshop, which was very well received, showed most of the participants how little is known of these rights and the level of inequality in their application, even in France.

## Why is the issue of young mothers and their children living in unstable situations an important subject for you?

A child should have a stable environment in which to grow up. Instability, as a result of financial difficulties or family issues, means that mothers cannot be there for their children as much as they should. Uncertainty about the future can cause them to see their children as a burden, and to develop feelings of guilt about not being able to give them everything they need. Permanent accommodation helps to break this chain of events so that the bond with the child can be preserved.

## YOUR TAX BENEFITS WHEN YOU MAKE A DONATION

Every donation to Asmae entitles you to an income tax credit. Asmae is a non-profit organisation recognised to be of public and general interest, which means it is authorised to receive donations and issue a tax receipt.

### Which types of donations are eligible?

- Sums of money (donations, gifts, bequests, life insurance etc.).
- Donations in kind.
- Income that individuals decide to waive to the benefit of associations
- Expenses incurred and waived by volunteers in the context of their voluntary activities.

To take advantage of the tax credit, you will need the association concerned to send you a tax receipt as evidence.



As it does every three years, the "Don en confiance" ("Giving with confidence") label, which is responsible for supervising fundraising, confirmed the renewal of Asmae's label.

### How to calculate your tax credit

**Income tax:** Donations entitle you to an income tax credit equal to 66% of the amount donated, up to a limit of 20% of your taxable income. For example, a donation of €50 entitles you to a tax credit of €33, a donation of €100 to a credit of €66, etc. If the amount of your donations exceeds 20% of your taxable income, the surplus is carried forward for the next 5 years and entitles you to a tax credit under the same terms, except in special cases.

**Corporate tax:** For companies, the tax credit is 60% of the amount donated up to a limit of €20,000 or 0.5% of the annual pre-tax turnover.

**Impôt sur la Fortune Immobilière (wealth tax on real estate assets):** If you are subject to IFI, 75% of your donation to the Fondation Sœur Emmanuelle is deductible from your IFI, up to a limit of €50,000. For example, a donation of €1,000 entitles you to a tax deduction of €750.

Donations collected for the Fondation Sœur Emmanuelle fund Asmae's work.

Asmae is an association formed under the French law of 1901. Recognised to be of public interest and authorised to receive bequests, donations and gifts.

Find all our latest news at: [www.asmae.fr](http://www.asmae.fr)

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