

The letter

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Asmae Association
Sœur
Emmanuelle



FRANCE:
1 YEAR OF ESPACE PETITS PAS!

MADAGASCAR:
EMERGENCY



EDITORIAL

Crises in Lebanon and Madagascar: Asmae's teams are mobilised



Should you use your scant family resources to eat or pay for school? In Madagascar, thousands of families are facing this terrible dilemma, because the health crisis has extended the school year, thereby increasing school fees. So that parents don't have to make that choice, and to prevent large numbers of children dropping out of school, we are helping families by distributing food and health kits. The savings made mean that parents are able to fund their children's school fees. This is vital, because we know that, once schooling has been interrupted, it is almost impossible to pick it up again.

In Lebanon, the economic crisis that has struck the country is one of the worst the world has seen since 1850, according to the World Bank. The national currency has lost more than 90% of its value against the dollar, and according to the UN, 78% of the Lebanese population currently live below the poverty line. After a long period of school closures because of the epidemic, and in the face of rising school fees, we are taking action there, too, to support the social and professional integration of young people facing creeping impoverishment.

In these very difficult socio-economic contexts, we aim to preserve access to basic means of subsistence. But beyond basic needs, our mission is not to allow either the education of children or the integration of young people to be sacrificed. Each situation and each context calls for a tailor-made response, developed and carried out jointly by Asmae and our local partners, usually with the involvement of the public authorities. These are key factors for ensuring that our actions are sustainable and therefore have a long-term impact.

Your generosity allows us to act in a crisis.

Since the health crisis began, we have witnessed the incredible generosity of our donors. Our teams have been able to carry out emergency work in all our countries of intervention, and we can now see that this commitment is unwavering, which allows us to be there in areas facing new emergencies, such as Lebanon and Madagascar.

Thank you for your generous support and the solidarity you have shown us; it is vital.

Adrien Sallez,
Director General



Sister Emmanuelle, surrounded by young Egyptian girls
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**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 achieve 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.**

ASMAE IN FIGURES

- **51,500 beneficiaries** (children and families) through **30 projects** in **6 countries of intervention**
- **22,000 donors**
- **39 partner** associations
- **108 professionals** worldwide
- **40 volunteers**

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EMERGENCY AID FOR COMMUNITIES IN MADAGASCAR



Distributing supplies

“Right now, we’re looking for something to eat.” Emma, Asmae beneficiary

This is why **Asmae’s teams have been mobilised to help families.** In the face of this harsh reality, it is more than necessary for us to come and offer support. *“It’s quite difficult because right now, we’re looking for something to eat. We have four children to support at home. Three of them are school age, but we can’t send them to school”,* explains Emma, a resident of Nanahazana and Asmae beneficiary as part of the Ankizy project.

The school year had to be extended, leading to an increase in school fees of about 32 euros per family, or 150,000 ariary. The risk, therefore, is that these children will no longer be able to go to school. *“My son is afraid of having to leave school and he asks me all the time if he’s going back or not. He repeats the question over and over again. [...] I haven’t got the means to enrol him”,* adds Emma.

“The idea of my children not going to school makes me sad.”
Patricia, mother

Patricia, a mother from Nanahazana, has the same concern. *“I have three children and two of them are at the centre run by Asmae’s partner, the AIC. But I can’t pay their school fees because I still haven’t got the money. [...] The idea of my children not going to school makes me sad.”*

This is the context in which Asmae **launched emergency action to help 453 families** living in extremely unstable conditions, distributing supplies and hygiene kits on a weekly basis throughout September. With the money they saved as a result, parents were able to pay the additional school fees, and avoid having their children drop out of school.

In total, 2265 people benefited from this action. The “supplies kits” consist of rice, legumes, oil, sugar, corn powder and koba aina (a food supplement), and the “hygiene kits” contain soap and masks.

This support is in addition to the actions already carried out by our partner teams in the field, such as **raising awareness of preventive measures to protect against the virus and its variants.**

All of this work has been made possible by Asmae’s donors. All the teams would like to offer them their sincere thanks. Asmae and its partners always appreciate the many gestures of support offered by its donors in a crisis.

“What I would like the most is for our life to go back to normal and work to pick up again so that we can eat better and go to school.”
Emma, Asmae beneficiary

KEY FIGURES

24 million inhabitants in an area of almost 590,000 km² (French Development Agency)

OVER 90% of the population live on less than 2 dollars a day (French Development Agency)

500,000 children under the age of five will be malnourished by April 2022 (UNICEF).



SPECIAL REPORT BURKINA FASO

WORKING TOWARDS A MORE INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR PARTIALLY SIGHTED PEOPLE

The “Grandir Ensemble” (growing up together) project began in Burkina Faso in 2019 for a period of 2 years. It aims to provide early screening for visual impairments through appropriate support for children between the ages of 3 and 6. It also involves improving inclusive preschool education. The objective is to change teaching practices in schools to respond to the specific needs of partially sighted children. This scheme has already produced results for visual disabilities, and will continue with a new phase of the project, now including other types of disability.

An awareness and screening campaign

The first phase of the project was essentially based on awareness campaigns. Six awareness-raising sessions, based on different approaches, were held with medical professionals specialising in eye conditions from the Centre National de Lutte contre la Cécité (CNLC — National Centre for Combating Blindness). The main area of intervention is located around the École des Jeunes Aveugles (EJA — School for blind children) in Ouagadougou.

Two initiatives to raise awareness were implemented on the same day. First, shows to raise awareness, using the “forum theatre” technique, are being put on by theatre companies. This kind of event is very well received by communities. It is often used in rural areas, but is also highly effective in urban locations. The company is part of the Association pour le Développement des Personnes Handicapées Visuelles (ADPHV — Association for the development of people with visual disabilities). It has experience in raising awareness of the stigmatisation experienced by partially sighted and blind people. **Second, the public are able**

to visit the CNLC’s mobile unit to have their children screened. The unit is a van equipped with ophthalmological equipment. Reaching out to children to carry out screening is a key element of the project’s success. A lack of time or resources means that many parents are not able make the trip to a specialist health centre.

All of these initiatives make it possible to help children from particularly vulnerable homes. Based on the recommendations of an external evaluation, the project was redesigned between the end of phase 1 and the start of phase 2 in October 2021. **Community outreach will continue, but will now include other types of disability.**

Maintaining operations in a pandemic

Despite a global health crisis that could have put a stop to activities, the objectives set were achieved. The mobilisation campaigns on preventive measures were a great success. Of the 918 people given awareness training, 543 were children. **With screening, we have been able to reach 568 people,**



Preschool children from the École des Jeunes Aveugles at playtime

including 353 children. Asmae's teams and partners in the field also provided additional aid while carrying out this work, as Ilboudo, mother of 5-year-old Salomon, who is in the final year of preschool at the EJA, attests: "We have been beneficiaries of the Grandir Ensemble project for a year now. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have also had help from the project with donations of supplies. I personally received milk, oil and rice. That helped us to get through lockdown".

A more inclusive education

Since 2015, Asmae has supported the École des Jeunes Aveugles in promoting preschool education for children with visual disabilities. This included **opening a pilot inclusive first-year preschool class that welcomes partially sighted and blind children as well as sighted children.** This initiative is continuing with the Grandir Ensemble project and its second phase.

To prepare children with visual impairments for attending school, numerous activities have been set up. These include early learning activities and activities to develop cognitive and social skills and abilities. Gradually, the children develop behaviours such as collaboration, mutual support and solidarity. That is what Ilboudo has noticed in her child: "His schooling

has helped him to become more socialised and prompted a big change in his behaviour. We had a long weekend with a public holiday, for example, and he was very happy at the idea of being with his classmates again. My child's future is secured thanks to the education he is getting. Disability is not an obstacle. [These children] need to be supported, encouraged and monitored from start to finish".

With a view to moving towards a more fully inclusive environment, other types of disability related to hearing, motor and mental impairments are now taken into consideration in the implementation of activities.

The mother of a child with a motor disability who attends the EJA explains: "Since my 5-year-old son has been going to school, there have been many improvements. He goes out with his walking frame now, whereas before he stayed glued to me at home".

Early intervention is a sustainable strategy for a more inclusive society. Children's personalities are shaped in a diverse environment and they develop a sensitivity to the needs of others.

Asmae would like to offer its sincere thanks to its partners, the Pro Victimis Foundation, the L'Occitane Foundation and the Monegasque Cooperation, for their financial contribution to this project.

LEBANON: EMPLOYABILITY: A MAJOR CHALLENGE FOR YOUNG REFUGEES IN LEBANON

Following the Beirut port explosion on 4 August 2020, and with the COVID-19 pandemic still rife, Lebanon has been plunged into one of the biggest economic, social and political crises in its history. This is the context in which Asmae's teams in the field and our local partner Najdeh are continuing with their commitment to help young refugees from camps in the Bekaa region with their socio-economic integration.

An aid project aimed at young people

This project, which began in November 2020 for a period of one year, is called "Supporting the socio-economic integration of vulnerable young people" and benefits 105 young people aged between 15 and 25 from 3 different camps and groups. **The objective is to improve their employability by strengthening their professional skills and level of autonomy.** 80% of the people involved in this project are women. Access to training and employment opportunities is more limited for women than it is for men.

A certificate recognised by the national Ministry of Education

The training takes place at the Wavel, Saadnayel and Bar Elias camps. A study of the labour market was carried out during discussions with the beneficiaries. This meant that the most relevant training to provide could be determined in advance. Training is offered in numerous fields, such as interior design, accounting, online marketing, telephone repair, photography, and manicure and hairdressing. Each course lasts 3 to 4 months. **A certificate recognised by the national Ministry of Education is issued to every newly trained young person.** Asmae's teams, in collaboration with their partner Najdeh, also make an additional contribution by allowing every newly qualified person to make use of their network of national and international employers.

Boosting self-esteem for better progress

As well as acquiring or improving professional skills through specific training, the project will help beneficiaries to build up personal skills, such as self-esteem, interpersonal communication and conflict resolution. These social competences are an additional asset for young people, and the skills they acquire help to increase their chances of finding a job or even starting their own business.

The regular income the beneficiaries have when they get a job will help to improve their living conditions, and consequently their socio-economic situation more generally. In the face of an uncertain economic future, this will help to increase a feeling of security and confidence in the future.

Bringing together beneficiaries of different nationalities

The unique thing about this project is that it includes beneficiaries from several geographical backgrounds. This diversity results in cultural exchange, better understanding of others and the creation of strong interpersonal relationships. With this behaviour, the young people will help to strengthen trust among all refugees, and more widely within the Lebanese community. In short, this initiative is helping to reduce social tension, and therefore create a better sense of community.

Asmae would like to offer its sincere thanks to the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs' Crisis and Support Centre for its financial support of this project.



Vocational training course at the Saadnayel centre

ZOOM SUR BENEFICIARY TESTIMONIAL



Yara El Jechi, 19, Palestinian national

"My name is Yara El Jechi. I am a 19-year-old Palestinian national. I live in Saadnayel, and there are very few employment opportunities here. There was a welcoming atmosphere at the centre. There were people of different nationalities. We were like brothers and sisters. This interior design course gave me the opportunity to start my career straight away. With the income I had, I was able to take care of myself more. This type of project helps make dreams come true. Its value should not be underestimated."

FRANCE: ONE YEAR OF ESPACE PETITS PAS!

In 2020, as a continuation of its projects in Bobigny, Asmae relaunched a mobile parent-and-child unit. The aim of this initiative, known as “L'Espace Petits Pas” (small steps space), is to go to families staying in halfway-houses in Seine-Saint-Denis. The mobile unit started by going to two halfway-houses, and an emergency shelter for women with children in La Courneuve. The team has a mobile play kit, allowing them to quickly transform a room made available to them into a play area. Asmae looks back on how the project has evolved since it began a year ago.



A child living in a halfway-house that is one of the partners of the project in Bobigny

A key element of the project: consistency and adaptability

Since its launch, families have been there for every visit of the parent-and-child unit. This means that **503 families and 854 children have benefited from the project**, including 176 new families and 262 new children in 2021. The regularity of the sessions is one of the keys to its success. Stepping through the door of the unit, even if it is at the place where they are staying, can actually be intimidating and is not always easy for families. “Knowing that we are there every week, on a set day and at a set time, means that we can build up those bonds of trust with parents. They get to know us, and we get to know them too”, explains Christelle Adragna, Project Coordinator. The idea is also to create bonds outside the unit, she adds: “Even if families can’t come every week, we always have contact when we are at the halfway-house, a chance to talk outside the unit”. A parent adds: “I’ve been coming for a year. I can speak freely. I feel respected.”

Several evaluations have been carried out with the partners of the project. Based on what was observed and in order to

adapt to families’ needs, it has been possible to modify some areas of intervention. Play room resources have also been pooled between the two social structures in La Courneuve so that more families can attend and a bigger play area that is more suitable for the activities on offer can be provided.

A range of progress... with more to come

An initiative will soon be launched to improve the motor skills of young children affected by cramped living spaces: “les Aventuriers et les Explorateurs des Petits Pas” (the adventurers and explorers of small steps). **A commercial vehicle will be used to store equipment used for free movement: the “bougeothèque” (movement library).** Play sessions based on children’s sensory and motor exploration will be held.

Other areas for development are also being studied, including limiting screen time and the possibility of bringing books into the housing facilities, and even directly into the residents’ rooms. There are also plans to diversify the parenting support work to offer families staying in the accommodation a wider choice: parent-and-child workshops, support groups etc. **In terms of geographical coverage, the objective is to deploy the parent-and-child unit in other towns in Seine-Saint-Denis.** To do this, a second team will need to be created. A partnership formed with the Groupement Abri has therefore been consolidated. This group brings together two associations working in Seine-Saint-Denis in the health and social sector: Main tendue and L’hôtel social. The aim will be to have a parent-and-child unit visiting their housing facilities. In addition, a partnership with a community centre in Pantin and a halfway-house housing almost 250 families is currently being developed.

FRANCE: SISTER EMMANUELLE GATECRASHES THE FRENCH PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

It’s been the same manifesto since 1980, with a single slogan: let’s help children and young people to become free men and women!

Asmae has decided to get involved in the French presidential campaign, with its own candidate and its own manifesto. At its heart is Sister Emmanuelle’s tireless fight for youth and childhood all around the world. At the end of 2021, therefore, you might have seen Sister Emmanuelle’s face in a poster campaign all over France, as well as in the press and on digital channels.

This campaign was able to use free advertising space. A big thank you to our partners: Mediatransports, Vue en ville, Insert, JC Decaux, Ko’leur, in-store média, Exterior Media, Imediacenter.





David Le Forestier

2 QUESTIONS FOR DAVID LE FORESTIER

DIRECTOR GENERAL FONDATION SANCTA DEVOTA



FONDATION
SANCTA DEVOTA

The Fondation Sancta Devota supported our “Ankizy” project in Madagascar. The project offers sustainable access to education for children who live on the street, who have significant learning difficulties or who are dropping out of school. We had the pleasure of interviewing David Le Forestier, Director General of the Foundation. He explained how the partnership was set up and how this commitment fits in with the Foundation’s values.

What are the Fondation Sancta Devota’s missions?

The Fondation Sancta Devota is a private non-profit organisation in Monaco. In line with its core values of solidarity, respect, kindness and dignity, it works to support partner associations with development aid projects. The aim is to make meaningful improvements and sustainable changes in the areas of education and environment, principally to benefit vulnerable young people.

You support Asmae’s work with disadvantaged children in Madagascar. How does this partnership fit in with the Foundation’s position?

Being involved in the work on educational and social inclusion for vulnerable children between the ages of 3 and 12 led by Asmae in Madagascar in 2020, by providing financial support for the production, distribution and sharing of teaching tools for schools, gives meaning to the Foundation’s commitment. With its holistic approach, the project gives these beneficiaries a chance to access schooling, grow up in dignity and build a better future for themselves.

But above all, the partnership with Asmae was a human experience, with attentive teams capable of forming bold new alliances.

BEQUESTS, GIFTS, LIFE INSURANCE



Catherine Alvarez

Catherine Alvarez was Director General of Asmae from 1991 to 2020. She is now a member of the Board of Directors and continues to act as our spokeswoman for bequests, gifts and life insurance. Working alongside Sister Emmanuelle for 17 years, she dedicated all her energy to our founder’s fight and to children’s causes. Today, she is answering our questions about her relationship with Sister Emmanuelle and her current role.

You were Director General of Asmae for many years and had the opportunity to spend time with Sister Emmanuelle. What did you learn from her?

She had a very positive attitude. She was absolutely determined; she would stop at nothing to overcome obstacles. And if people were in need, she would work furiously to help them. She would never give up; she always went the extra mile. And she did it all with joy and a lot of humour.

How is your new role a continuation of your commitment?

It was completely natural for me to want to continue doing charity work for the association. My having worked and spent time with Sister Emmanuelle means that I can speak more easily to our donors about her work and the importance of their gesture in continuing that work with the most deprived children.

“All over the world, our teams work with skill, patience and strength so that our children can grow to have healthy bodies and minds (...). Every day it is a pleasure to see these children grow up with the best attributes to help them become upstanding men and women.” Sister Emmanuelle

Asmae’s teams work every day to continue the mission Sister Emmanuelle set for herself throughout her life. Beyond that, she was constantly reminding us that “Love is stronger than death”, and that we all have the power to act in that regard.

**Contact our bequests, gifts and life insurance spokeswoman: Catherine Alvarez / +33 (0)6 75 89 04 76
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Asmae Association
Sœur Emmanuelle

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.



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