

The letter

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Asmae Association
Sœur
Emmanuelle

**PEACE: HELPING 9,000
DISPLACED CHILDREN**

**FRANCE: PARENTAL SUPPORT
FOR VULNERABLE
FAMILIES**





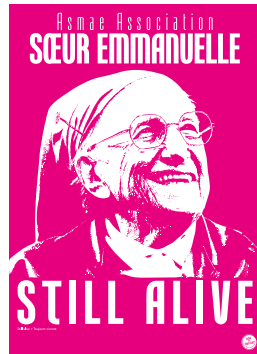
Supporting the most vulnerable children and young people and helping them build better futures, both individually and collectively, in often trying or even deteriorating circumstances, is what Asmae and our partners strive to do every day as we walk “in the footsteps” of our very own Sister Emmanuelle. This duty – the living legacy of our founder – can be felt in every activity, project and programme, some of which you’ll be able to read about in this newsletter.

In Egypt, for example, where Sister Emmanuelle began her work over 50 years ago now, the country is facing extreme inflation, putting massive strain on those living in the most deprived communities, particularly those we work with in Cairo’s rag-and-bone neighbourhoods of Manshiet Nasr, Ezzbet el Nakhl and El Marg. The country is grappling with record inflation of 40%. To give you an idea of the scale, the current rate in the UK is around 4%. Before the economic crisis, a quarter of the population was already living below the poverty line. Spiralling inflation will only lead to increased social vulnerabilities, particularly among children, which our teams must fight to overcome day in, day out. As part of the PEACE programme, Asmae and our partners are implementing a range of protective actions to combat violence against children. The goal is to strengthen and support parents, teachers and communities as we all come together to build protective environments for children. Through the *Cap Jeunesse* and YIEP programmes, we’re working hard to promote access to education, training and employment for young people (particularly those with disabilities). Activities have taken place to strengthen not only the technical but also the psychosocial skills of hundreds of young people who have previously struggled to integrate and find decent jobs.

Finally, we can’t ignore the fact that Egypt is also dealing with a massive influx of over 300,000 Sudanese refugees who have arrived in the Aswan region as they flee the unrest in their home country. Alongside our partner Caritas-Egypt, Asmae launched an emergency response in October 2023 for an estimated duration of six months. The aim is to provide psychosocial and psychological support to 500 children and their mothers who have faced trauma and violence – particularly gender-based violence – during their escape. We will also open up a “safe space”, a secure reception area where children and their mothers can relax in a calm environment, open up about the troubles they’ve faced, and be able to access professionals who can support them, according to their needs.

In Egypt and all our other countries of intervention, these vital day-to-day operations involve a wide range of professionals working in the field. This is only ever possible with your generous support, which is why I want to thank you for your continued interest in what we do!

Christian Blanchard
Director of International Action



15 years on from her death, Sister Emmanuelle takes second place in the rankings of French women who had the biggest impact on the country

On 20 October 2008, Sister Emmanuelle left us just short of her 100th birthday. The embodiment of all things commitment and generosity, transcending borders and religions, she dedicated her life to helping the most vulnerable. An exclusive survey carried out by Odoxa has now revealed that Sister Emmanuelle still occupies a leading place in the heart and soul of France. A figure indissociable from the fight to advance children’s causes, Sister Emmanuelle came second in the rankings of the women who have left the biggest impact on the French, with almost 40% of respondents saying they were particularly moved by her efforts, just after another French icon, Simone Veil (63%). Other recognisable figures including Brigitte Bardot (14%) and Gisèle Halimi (12%) came a distant third and fourth respectively. The most frequently cited memories were her commitment to children and the most vulnerable in society, but also her innate qualities, chiefly her enormous kindness.

Faustine Bollaert, a new Asmae patron



Faustine Bollaert, a well-known French journalist, producer and television presenter, recently became an Asmae patron. In 2023, she travelled to meet those who continue to lead the fight and embody Sister Emmanuelle’s commitments in one of Cairo’s rag-and-bone communities in Egypt. On her return to France, Faustine is more energised than ever to report on the reality of the challenges faced by the most vulnerable children and young people around the world.

“For me, Sister Emmanuelle has always been a modern and inspiring woman. My admiration for her unwavering dedication to the most vulnerable is never ending. I’m thrilled and honoured to be supporting the association she created over 30 years ago. This is a new role for me that’s very close to my heart. As a woman and as a mother, I’m particularly sensitive to the work and the fight that Sister Emmanuelle led throughout her life to protect the rights of children around the world”, explains Faustine.

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AT THE HEART OF THE ACTION

SUDAN/EGYPT EMERGENCY: SUPPORTING REFUGEE CHILDREN AND MOTHERS IN ASWAN

Following clashes between the army and paramilitary forces, Sudan was plunged into crisis between April and August 2023. Amidst all the chaos, vulnerable populations have been forced to leave everything behind as they escape the growing instability. Almost 300,000 Sudanese people have fled to Egypt so far. The journey is perilous. They face a lack of food and water, as well as other risks like human trafficking. In response to the emergency, Asmae began working to improve the situation faced by Sudanese refugee children and their mothers in the Aswan region in October 2023.

Emergency response and providing suitable aid

Many refugees, families, children, elderly people and lone women find themselves homeless and in unfamiliar, scary surroundings the moment they arrive in Egypt. Over 2,000 Sudanese refugee children face obstacles accessing education and see their schooling interrupted.

Asmae began by contacting local and international NGOs with a well-established presence in Aswan to better understand the situation so we could respond to the needs of vulnerable people in the region. Among them, Caritas was already one of Asmae’s partners through another project in Cairo. Most international NGOs were already covering the basic needs of Sudanese refugees, providing things like accommodation, medical services, food and financial support. However, few actions were in place in terms of raising awareness around violence against women and girls and child protection in general, even though displacement events of this nature create very fragile conditions and increased risks for those involved. Asmae decided to strengthen the local and international response in Aswan in October 2023 in partnership with Caritas.



A Sudanese child refugee in the Aswan region

Over 120 children and 400 mothers supported

The main purpose of Asmae’s intervention in the region is to alleviate the stresses and traumas resulting from forced migratory journeys, which are often punctuated by violence, while contributing to the psychological wellbeing of refugee women and children. It’s about raising awareness of the different forms of child abuse and gender-based violence, as well as protection measures, among the children and their families, but also educating host communities about child protection mechanisms.

In this context, a variety of activities have taken place. Almost 400 Sudanese mothers have benefited from sessions to improve their awareness of their rights and how to defend them, as well as how to report abuse.

Over 120 children have taken part in awareness sessions on child protection, events that are designed to help make them aware of their rights and how to defend them. Individual psychological support sessions are also available to both children and parents.

The purpose of this emergency response is to provide a protective framework for vulnerable groups while giving them support that is properly suited to their needs. Asmae has also committed to training partner staff in order to strengthen their capacities in case management and gender-based violence training, which will better protect Sudanese refugee women and children in the Aswan region.



SPECIAL REPORT PEACE

Beneficiaries of the PEACE project taking part in an activity in Egypt

HELPING 9,000 DISPLACED AND/OR VULNERABLE CHILDREN

Asmae's PEACE programme promotes the rights of displaced and/or excluded children and teenagers to education and child protection in Burkina Faso, Egypt, the Philippines and Côte d'Ivoire. Since it was first launched back in 2022, 8,700 children and 2,900 parents have so far benefited from our efforts.

Children's rights: raising awareness among 3,600 children and adults

In Egypt, Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire, we've introduced awareness workshops for both children and their parents. The topics addressed include a child's right to protection and an education, violence against children (physical punishments, neglect), as well as the importance of parental support. The sessions are also an opportunity to help parents understand the value of their children's rights and to deconstruct prejudices around mental health and positive education.

"I suddenly knew I wasn't the only one being abused" Sabah, a 12-year-old girl

During the sessions in Egypt, for example, mothers have been able to share their experiences and discuss the new methods they've decided to adopt based on their newfound awareness. Some who've decided to no longer physically punish their children have gone on to encourage others to do the same. The sessions also benefit children, as Sabah, a 12-year-old girl, can attest. "After hearing the other girls talk about their feelings and the abuse they've faced, I suddenly knew I wasn't the only one being abused. I felt safe and confident to speak out, which made me feel better".

Asmae's teams also run activities designed to help children and young people become stakeholders in the programme. A variety of activities have been introduced in Mindanao in the Philippines, for example, to boost young people's knowledge of their rights and train them in engaging their communities. Two youth camps and a leadership training session have helped these young people set up a range of initiatives, including art exhibitions and meetings to put their rights firmly in the spotlight.

516 professionals supported to better protect children

To better support the needs of vulnerable children and young people, Asmae has set up workshops and training sessions for the professionals who work with those children and young people. In Burkina Faso and Egypt, staff from partner organisations have received training on child protection and safeguarding, as well as case management for children who have been reported as at risk or in danger. The aim of these training sessions is to facilitate communication and support for vulnerable children. The professionals who have taken part in the sessions so far have expressed how they now feel better equipped to listen and understand the problems shared by children. In Burkina Faso, 73 children have subsequently been identified and referred to social services, including 29 who've received support via project funding.

Early childhood at the heart of the programme

The programme also promotes every child's right to education in targeted communities by supporting early childhood professionals. In Burkina Faso, 2,407 children have benefitted from activities put in place by community-based organisations, designed to help children develop their psycho-affective, cognitive and psychomotor skills. Another aim of the project is to improve the quality of activities that

take place in *Espaces Amis des Enfants*, which are dedicated centres for displaced children, as well as capacity-building sessions for staff, particularly in terms of picture books, child protection and engagement techniques. In total, 4,909 children were reached in these centres over the 18-month implementation period.

PHILIPPINES IMPROVING THE LIVING STANDARDS OF THE SAMA-BAJAU

In the Philippines, the PEACE programme is primarily focused on the Sama-Bajau people. Members of this indigenous community often face discrimination. They're particularly impacted by the country's economic situation. The poverty faced by Sama-Bajau families regularly forces children to drop out of school in order to find work to provide for their families. In this context, Asmae is working in collaboration with the local authorities to improve the living standards of Sama-Bajau people with the help of a number of different schemes.

Reintegrating Sama-Bajau into local politics

Asmae has been able to set up some workshops designed to bring the Sama-Bajau community together, alongside the local and national authorities, to respond to the issues identified, including child labour, school dropout rates, ethnic discrimination, as well as online sexual abuse. It's about making up for the lack of access to public services so far. "Before, we didn't know where to turn to ask for help. We were too scared. Our elders beg in order to survive. They don't know where else to turn. If only there'd been a programme like this in their day, their lives could have been so different", explains Bheng, a Sama-Bajau mother who works in a crèche and as part of the support staff on Asmae's project in Batangas City, Philippines.

"Before, we didn't know where to turn to ask for help.
We were too scared".
Bheng, a Sama-Bajau mother



A workshop with Sama-Bajau children

Giving Sama-Bajau children a brighter future

Many Sama-Bajau children can no longer go to school because of the economic situation faced by their families, pushing them into work, despite their young age. Workshops have been set up for those working alongside the children and their parents to raise awareness of children's rights and child protection. Thanks to these workshops, members of the local community, and parents in particular, are becoming aware of the importance of a child's education. "As a mother, I want my children to complete their studies. My children aren't on the streets, they're in school. As Sama-Bajau, we have to commit to our children", Bheng explains. Asmae has also provided technical support in producing a child protection handbook.

Training sessions (notably the "Peace Camp" workshop) have been made available to young indigenous and non-indigenous people in a bid to boost social cohesion, eliminate ethnic discrimination, and help them understand and defend their rights.

The best thing about the PEACE programme is the collaborative nature of the project, alongside the range of initiatives that Asmae has succeeded in establishing among civil society organisations and local authorities, helping to ensure children's rights are being properly applied.

Asmae would like to thank all our partners who contributed to funding this programme: Technip Energies Endowment Fund, Sœur Emmanuelle Belgium, Paprec

ESPACE PETITS PAS IN FRANCE: A PARENTAL SUPPORT UNIT FOR AT-RISK FAMILIES

Since 2020, the Espace Petits Pas (Small Steps Space) team has been running mobile parent-and-child units across northeast Paris, supporting families living in social housing and those at risk. More specifically, a playroom has been made available on a weekly basis at accommodation sites across this part of the French capital, with an anonymous and free welcome guaranteed, without the need to sign up in advance.

A place that has become part of family life

Over 1,000 families and almost 2,000 children under the age of six benefit from this project every year. The units, designed to help build relationships and facilitate conversations, have become safe spaces for families, somewhere they can get away from everyday life.

“It feels good to just be able to play with your kids. I do it at home now, too”.

A father who attends the unit

Even during the summer holidays, children who come regularly say to their parents, “it’s Thursday, today’s playroom day!!”, while parents themselves often arrange their lives around coming to the unit, as one explains: “I knew you were open today, so I decided I’d rather come here than go to the park”. Between June and August 2023, 178 families and 305 children attended our sessions. Seeing families come back regularly over time also demonstrates the usefulness of the project.

Lots of parent-and-child relationships have improved, as parents take some time out to simply play and create stronger bonds with their children. For some parents, it can be a road to discovery. “Actually, it’s great. It feels good to just be able to play with your kids. I do it at home now, too”, one dad tells us.

Bonds and support networks are also created between parents, as they’re able to chat and share thoughts on issues such as education and parenthood. Beyond the units themselves, social workers based in the places the teams visit have observed stronger bonds being forged between parents and their children.

More towns, more beneficiary families

Having proven the usefulness of the project, the goal is now to extend the programme to new partners and more towns in the Seine-Saint-Denis region of northeast Paris. Christelle Adragna, head of the Espace Petits Pas mobile parent-and-child units, explains that “the future revolves around the sustainability and development of these mobile units. In terms of geographic coverage, the aim is to roll out parent-and-child units in other parts of Seine-Saint-Denis. At the same time, we’re working hard to introduce Espace Petits Pas spaces in other cities facing similar challenges”. Alongside the parent-and-child units opened in 2020 in La Courneuve, Pantin, Bobigny, Rosny-sous-Bois and Saint-Denis, new sites have also been opened in Romainville and Blanc-Mesnil. Each unit welcomes a constantly changing roster, with some familiar faces regularly attending, but also new families as they discover the system.

Using play as a way of supporting parent-and-child relationships benefits families and children alike based on feedback and our own observations.

Asmae would like to thank our financial partners: Région Île de-France, Agence Régionale de Santé, Fondation de France, Caisse d’Allocations Familiales, Samusocial and Fondation PMI.



Setting up the playroom before opening the doors to more families. Hôtel Social Facilia in Le Blanc-Mesnil, opened in June 2023.

RAPHAËLLE DEBRUYNE, parental support and inclusive education technical advisor



Pupils in the Picot de Clorivière pre-school class

What were the key aims of the project?

Our main aim, in line with UN Sustainable Development Goal 4, was to ensure that every child can access quality education in fair conditions that promote lifelong learning opportunities. Our project partners support children living on the streets with social and educational reintegration, as well as children living in care. To strengthen the work they do with these children, the first aim of the project involved boosting the organisational skills, governance and fundraising activities of the partners. The second involved boosting the capacities of our partners working to support children in terms of education, parental support and child protection. The final aim was about capitalising on and sharing best practice ideas throughout civil society.

What actions/activities were put in place?

We prioritised awareness workshops and training for educators, facilitators and teachers, in line with the needs of our partners. Non-violent communication, children’s psycho-affective development, active teaching, gender, and classroom management were all addressed. Group workshops drew on a range of Asmae’s learning tools, including Sary Fetsy, Fosavirus and Famille Voyelle, which are all visual aids suitable for pre-school-aged children.

What was your role in all of this?

Technical advisors are like toolkits that our partners can turn to for help. The workshops run by technical advisors are all developed by Asmae, either internally or with the help of external consultants.

How did you make sure beneficiaries got involved?

Children’s needs constantly evolve over time, which requires a “go-to-them” approach and that we take part in partner activities, including outings, nights at temporary accommodation centres, home visits, as well as pre-school classes all the way from registration to home time. We also regularly use examples of situations that the professionals themselves have faced to kickstart workshops, awareness sessions and training sessions. Regular meetings also take place with professionals and their managers, both individually and collectively, to help us fine tune our support as closely as possible to the needs of the children and professionals alike in both the short and medium term.

Between 2020 and 2023, the Mivelatra project worked to improve education and protection among 3,721 Malagasy girls and boys with the support of seven local associations. It targeted vulnerable children aged 3-18 in Madagascar’s third largest city, Antsirabe. A new phase of the project will launch in 2024. Raphaëlle, our parental support and inclusive education technical advisor, spoke to us about her experiences working on the project.

What’s been the impact on the children and partners?

The 26 educators who received support in terms of non-violent communication, adopting a caring authority over children, understanding needs and emotions and, finally, active teaching with positive reinforcement used as an alternative to punishment, have all been able to master and apply a wide range of best practice techniques.

Over the three years of the Mivelatra project, 66 educators received personalised support and 3,721 children and young people benefitted from greater support thanks to the introduction of two new tools/activities.

The professionals involved now find it easier to express any obstacles they face in the real world, without shame, and in the spirit of self-improvement. Constantly reviewing their professional practice has helped them restore their self-confidence and their ability to express themselves.

You can’t put a figure on the trust built between Asmae and our project partners, but it will certainly make it easier for our technical advisors to continue providing support in phase two of the Mivelatra project, which is due to start in 2024.

What’s your fondest memory from implementing the project?

My fondest memory is of a night spent at the Grandir temporary accommodation centre in Antsirabe, where I was able to see the impact of non-violent communication on children first-hand. The educators knew how to manage a disagreement between two children, taking everyone’s feelings into account. The two children involved were able to use emotion cards to express their feelings. One of the educators later confided in me that it was the first time he and his colleague had been able to avoid resorting either to blackmail or punishment, proving that non-violent communication “really works!”.

Asmae would like to thank all our partners who contributed to funding this project: DCI and Illis.

A FANTASTIC MICRO-DONATION SCHEME AND FUNDRAISING JUMPERS FROM OUR LOYAL PARTNER OKAÏDI



Partners of the “Yalla! For Children’s Rights” project since 2019, the ĪDKIDS Group, the ĪDKIDS Action Fund and Okaïdi have been supporting a project to roll out awareness sessions on school bullying and Asmae’s “Children’s Rights Award”.

To help fund the project, Okaïdi set up a micro-donation scheme and began selling specific products to raise funds to mark the start of the new school year last September. The scheme raised €19,932 in total!

How does it all work?

Micro-donations are simply when you round up the cost of your shopping at the till to the nearest whole number. This amount is then donated to Asmae. As for the fundraising jumpers, for every sweatshirt sold, €1 goes directly to the Association.

Thank you Okaïdi for this fantastic effort!

KEEPING SISTER EMMANUELLE’S FIGHT ALIVE

We’re thrilled to be able to share a few highlights from our 2023 donor survey with you.

Just like our last survey in 2021, it’s largely **Sister Emmanuelle’s personality** that draws you to us.

The key areas you’re concerned with are child protection, as well as child wellbeing and access to quality education.

France remains your top priority in terms of where we take action, followed by Madagascar and Lebanon.

Continuing Sister Emmanuelle’s fight is vital to you. Our newsletter is popular across all audiences. Our website, online news and emails are on the whole considered interesting

among those donors who are comfortable in the digital world.

Some of you feel you receive too many messages, while the majority feel they receive enough.

Almost 75% believe it’s in Asmae’s interests to become a Foundation. **The majority of you are prepared to support us by increasing your donation.**

You also want to become active stakeholders by our side, taking part in events and putting us in touch with your friends and family to see if they might support us, too.

A big thank you for all your feedback!

We do everything we can to respond to your requests.

Our donor department can be reached on +33 01 70 32 02 63 or via service.donateurs@asmae.fr.



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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