



Centre Amane

2019 Annual
Report



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A Message from the Director

2

Achievements at a Glance

3

Our Mission, Ethos, & Methodology

4

Our Services: 5

Individual & Family Social Services

National ID Registration & Legal Aid

Women's Support Group

School Support & Extra-Curricular Activities

Health Monitoring

Outreach

A Holistic, Family-Centered Approach, A Case Study

17

Staff, Board, and Partners

19

The authors would like to thank the FAPE and MCT staff who shared their time to provide valuable feedback on the evaluation of 2019. Specifically, the social workers and director of Centre Amane who were willing to share their experiences, expertise, and knowledge on all aspects of the Centre. So too, the MCT Development Officer and Committee for their support in polishing the finished product, and the MCT Coordinator for translating the final report into French. We would also like to thank our partners for translating the final report into Arabic.

Centre Amane would also like to thank the many generous individual donors who contributed to FAPE and MCT in 2019 and the grants provided by our major funders:

pennyappeal





A Message from the Director:

In 2019, an 8-year-old child told me, “I want to die, I don’t want to stay in this life.” Later that year another child was found sleeping on the roof of the centre because he felt safer there than at home. 2019 was the year the team learned **the difference between feeling safe and being safe**, and how we can best respond to children’s physical and emotional needs for safety. It was a year of achievements, challenges, ups and downs, laughs, and tears. A year of growing a great team who always worked in the best interests of the children when faced with difficult decisions. In 2019, we strove to ensure all stakeholders in child protection (children, families, Centre Amane, key partners) were fully integrated and involved in the diagnosis and analysis of the issues – finding solutions and applying them together.



2019 was the year the team learned the
difference between feeling safe and being safe

The team of 8 staff at Centre Amane has done a tremendous job, working day and night, with a smile the whole time. Arriving at work, I was always greeted with smiles regardless of the day’s events. Their compassion was shared among those they worked with, providing hope to children and their families through their actions and the happiness of their eyes. As the director of Centre Amane, **I witnessed the overwhelming dedication of our team, who on many occasions would work tirelessly to ensure a child was safe.** They insisted that all the children needed support and that we had a duty of care and were required to act on that responsibility. Thanks to the strong partnership between MCT and FAPE, one team across Morocco and the UK came together to support each other and engage their unique strengths and expertise. Without their collective engagement our achievements would not have been possible

The journey Centre Amane has taken since 2010 has been to build its capacity little by little – **shwaya bi shwaya**. We have had ups and downs, faced some resistance from our local partners, both public partners and NGOs, as the work is hard, and people were not always satisfied with what we set out to do. 2019 was the year we were able to capitalise on this work, and reforge and strengthen our partnerships with the education department, health department, sports clubs, courts, and various child protection actors throughout Morocco.

Children face many challenges not only in Taroudant, but throughout Morocco. Our main objective remains to advocate and work towards **a complete, accessible, and integrated child protection system Morocco**. The important lessons we learned from our experiences at Centre Amane were shared with other child protection actors in 2019, because only through collaboration can we achieve our common goal. We, the Moroccan government, NGOs, and all citizens must unite and get involved to protect all of Morocco’s children.

Slimane Amansag

ACHIEVEMENTS AT A GLANCE 2019

88

PEOPLE RECEIVED SUPPORT

Centre Amane's social service support includes school support, social services, ID registration, and more...

109

ID REGISTRATION CASES

27

ACTIVE CASES

8 new cases were opened and **4 were** closed.

49

PARTNERSHIPS

with local, regional, national, and international child protection actors.

25

WOMEN

participate in our weekly women's support group.

41

CHILDREN

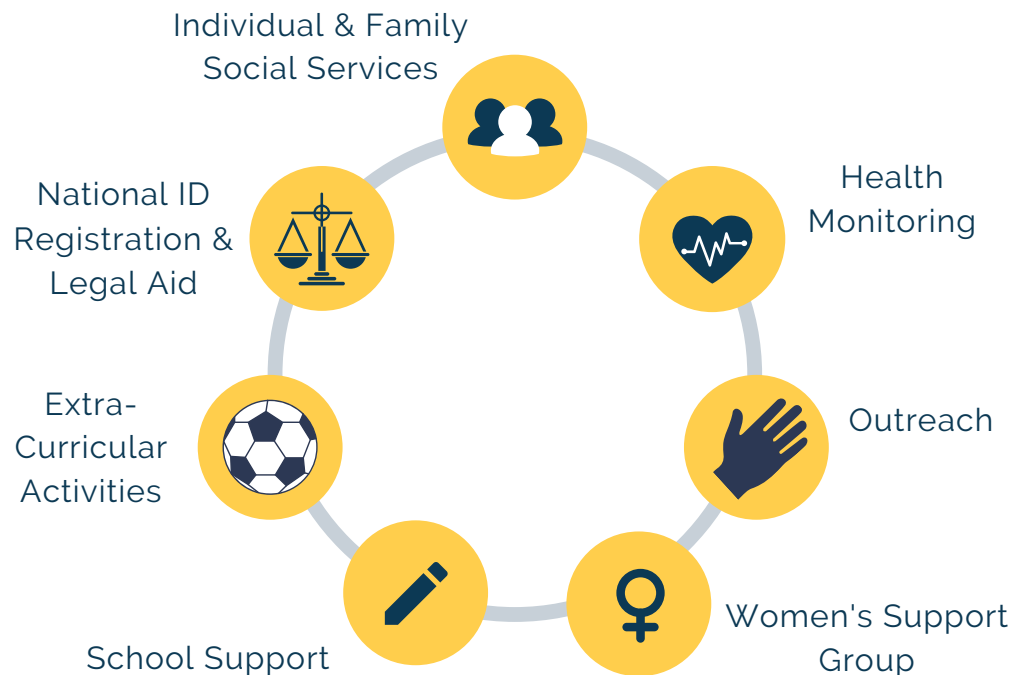
receive school support in our centre.

**data from 2018-2019*

OUR MISSION & ETHOS

Centre Amane's primary objective is to support vulnerable children living in Taroudant by providing **holistic social support services** to children and their families. Rather than focusing solely on "the child", the social work ethos of Centre Amane is to work with the family. This is the approach the Centre takes with its beneficiaries – **one step at a time, and together at every stage.**

OUR SERVICES



The **above services are in no way exhaustive.** The Centre performs **many unpredictable and informal actions that are equally impactful** – e.g. There are shower facilities at the centre where social workers are available to help younger children shower. This means children are able to be indirectly monitored for signs of neglect or abuse and ensure any health issues such as hair lice and skin infections are treated.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The 2019 evaluation draws from the reporting materials of each of the centre's services to understand the effectiveness and ways each service contributes to the centre's primary objectives. Staff of Centre Amane also collaborated in a **participatory monitoring and evaluating** exercise which enabled the centre to develop and update its reporting materials.

Individual & Family Social Services



Centre Amane supports families in difficult circumstances in order to ensure that they have the capacity to care for their children independently. In this way, Centre Amane fulfils its original fundamental mission of **deinstitutionalisation** through **gatekeeping** practices. We keep families together by ensuring that they have the support required for them to stay together. Therefore, **each case at Centre Amane always involves the whole family.**

de•in•sti•tu•tion•a•lis•a•tion

'Deinstitutionalisation' involves the transformation of services to ensure that children are able to live with their families, or in family-based or family-like care in the community. It typically involves strengthening child protection and care systems and ensuring universal access to education and healthcare

(Lumos, www.wearelumos.org/faqs/)

gate•keep•ing

A recognised and systematic procedure to ensure that alternative care for children is used only when necessary and that the child receives the most suitable support to meet their individual needs.

(UNICEF, 'Making Decisions for the Better Care of Children' p3, 2015)

53

CHILDREN

23 | 30
GIRLS | BOYS

8

MEDIAN AGE

54%

INCREASE IN REPORTS



More Hours

Formerly, Centre Amane was open for 5 days a week. However, staff at the centre identified that beneficiaries who are in moments of crisis or work during the work week were either unable or found it extremely difficult to attend the centre during these hours. In response to this need and demand, **we ensured that there was a social worker on the Centre premises every day, 9am-6pm.**



Closed Cases

Closed cases indicate successful completion of a child's individualised social care programme and that their home life remains stable. Before closing the cases, social workers ensure a well detailed and smooth transition through the creation of long-term life-plans. This year we **closed 4 cases**, most notably an eight-year case (pg.17), thanks to the effective delivery of ID Registration, a women's group, extra-curricular integration, school support, and health interventions.

Maryame Mazzaourou

Social worker specialising in children under 12 years



I come into contact with children who experience many different difficult circumstances; suicide, varying levels of street connection, sexual abuse, physical abuse, family problems, neglect, and identity problems. Many cases require a lot of energy and sometimes it may take months before you feel your work is having an impact. However, I ensure every child receives the care and support they require. My role entails performing:

- **Individual sessions:** helping children understand their situation, convey their problems and overcome their psychological situation through discussion and reflection
- **Follow-up support:** monitoring the child's social and psychological situation, legal support, health coordination, preparation, integrating into other services, strengthening self-confidence, and reconciling with other children, their family, and the local community
- **Finding solutions together:** ensuring they are psychologically stable, successfully integrated into school, open to playing with other children and society, and that their behavioural development is progressing.

I feel that my task has a great impact on the development and life of the children with whom I work. I get to see children grow, develop, play, and become happy in themselves and within their social environment.

National ID Registration & Legal Aid



The lack of an official identity card affects almost every aspect of the lives of unregistered Moroccan children. They are assigned to a lifetime of secondary citizenship, and unable to access social services to which they should be entitled to by birth; such as education, social and health services, employment, and the ability to travel overseas. **Since the inception of the Birth Registration project in 2012, Centre Amane has supported 348 people to acquire their birth registration.**



109

ID CASES

54%

INCREASE IN
CASES FROM
2018

Case Study: Reuniting a Mother and Son

Background: Mohammed was a 12-year-old boy who had not seen his biological mother since the age of 6. He lived with his grandparents and was not registered at birth. As a result, he could not access medical care in times of emergency and was at risk of not being able to enter high school in the coming year. He had been a beneficiary of Centre Amane since 2010.

Intervention: The team at Centre Amane was able to locate Mohammed's mother who lived in a city 300km away. The social worker explained the situation to Mohammed's mother and supported her throughout the birth registration proceedings in the local courts. Centre Amane was able to successfully register Mohammed, and consequently enrol him in high school. The centre also organised his mother's transportation to Taroudant so she could be reunited with her son for the first time in 6 years. Since then, the centre has facilitated weekly video calls between Mohammed and his mother. Although the 10-year case is now closed, the centre is still helping to organise future excursions for the mother and son in 2020.

Hamid Id Belaid

Social worker specialising in ID registration



“

I.D. registration is one of the essential rights in the UN convention on the rights of the child. Many rights and advantages result from I.D. registration such as studying, medication, and civic participation. Morocco is not an exception; therefore many bills have been issued that guarantee the right of having national identity registration. But, many obstacles appear when we discover complicated cases which can't be solved following regular conventions: e.g. there is an allotted time a child must be registered, and many families and single mothers do not register their kids in the determined time.

Many cases are in difficult circumstances (e.g. social issues, divorce, childbirth out of wedlock) and I need to follow many avenues to accomplish my objective of enabling children to receive "Civil Status". My role at Centre Amane entails supporting cases by helping them in gathering necessary documents and following their files in collaboration with governmental officials and court employees. ID registration is a source of hope for cases in difficult situations, and I feel privileged to be able to contribute to the creation and fulfilment of that hope.

Women's Support Group



The women's group consists of weekly meetings with mothers who are beneficiaries of the centre. All participants have the opportunity to select their choice of discussion topics. Topics include; parental responsibilities, managing children's behaviour, health and hygiene, contraception and sexual health, and how to be engaged in their children's education. The positive impact of attending and participating in the women's group is evident in many of the social work successes of 2019.

25

REGULAR
PARTICIPANTS

75%

ATTENDANCE
RATE, 6%
INCREASE FROM
2018



Women Supporting Women

15 interviews were completed with women who were beneficiaries of the centre and part of the women's group. The interviews explored the experiences and needs of each woman. Some key findings include:

87%

of the women were
illiterate

47%

are single
mothers

63%

regularly left children
unsupervised

The experiences
shared in the
women's project
help ensure that
our services are
informed by the
needs of our
beneficiaries.

Fatima Ait Bella

Social worker, Women's Project Coordinator



“In my role with the Women's project, I have always made it my task to help women overcome very difficult situations in their lives, the lives of their children, know their rights and obligations, and know the services offered by the state and how to access to these services. **I have been able to see women improve their self-confidence, autonomy and responsibility as mothers caring for their children, and their capacity to be involved in their children's lives.**

There have been many different cases at the centre in 2019. Some women were sex workers, regularly begged, or forced their children to beg and as a result were heavily stigmatised in the community. Some women were also at risk of abandoning their children to the local residential centre. **Many of the women were survivors of, or currently experience, physical and sexual abuse and had attempted suicide.** As a consequence, they had lost hope in life and lost sight of their goals. Some women had started consuming hashish and alcohol to cope, and being able to have **honest conversations about these topics without any judgement** was extremely helpful in producing empathy for others and for themselves.

It was so beautiful to be able to support these women to renew their confidence in themselves and in their children. It was wonderful to be part of the new lives these women chose to invest in and support them to be empowered in their decisions .

School
Support



Extra-
Curricular
Activities



238

**AVERAGE
HOURS/YEAR
CHILDREN SPEND
IN THE CENTRE**

1.2%

**IMPROVEMENT
IN GRADES**

✓ More than just grades

School provides stability in children's lives. Our school support service consists of two inter-dependent services:

- working with each child's teacher to understand their **individualised needs** and to develop plans for their education.
- providing a **safe space** for children to play and thrive and allow children to benefit from our tutoring service for 4 hours each day: 2 hours in the morning and 2 hours in the afternoon.

⚡ Power of Sports

In 2019, we developed new partnerships with sports instructors and coaches to provide children membership in karate, judo, and football organizations. We have observed how sports equip children with increased:



Self-Confidence



Well-Being



Teamwork Skills



Malika El Alaoui

Education Officer

“I see the positive effect of my work as the education officer in the ways the children's overall happiness and investment in education improves. It makes me truly love my work as I am able to see directly the positive impact I am having on a child's life. This occurs when:

- I help a child to complete their homework and help them with their revision before exams by encouraging self-reliance and independence.
- I see the joyous faces of children when they see me make my visit to their schools. They are proud of their achievements and are excited for me to enquire about them and hear of their improvements.
- I share in their happiness when supervising them during activities at the centre and take them to local attractions in Taroudant.

My work not only has an impact on the children but also has an impact on me. When I get to see the happiness in children at these times, I forget that they are children experiencing difficult situations, and I am amazed at the way in which their self-confidence is renewed and to see their faces blooming again.



“I see how participation in extra-curricular activities improves children's education and boosts their self-confidence and self-esteem.

Mohammed Rida Lagroubi

Social worker, extra-curricular officer

A woman wearing a black hijab and a light blue surgical mask is seated at a desk, working on a computer. She is wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt with three pink stripes on the sleeve. Her hands are wearing white gloves as she types on a keyboard. In the background, there is a large white office machine, possibly a copier or printer, and a glass of iced tea on the desk. The image has a purple and orange geometric overlay in the top right corner.

Health Monitoring

Monitoring the health of all beneficiaries is a major task of Centre Amane. Social workers connect and often accompany beneficiaries to medical practitioners. Centre Amane has maintained and strengthened its relationship with 7 doctors in Taroudant, an increase from the 4 medical professionals associated with Centre Amane in 2018.



11,400^{MAD}
**ANNUAL
MEDICAL
COSTS**

103
**TOTAL
MEDICAL
VISITS**

6
**TOTAL
DENTAL VISITS**



Ensuring Citizen Health Benefits

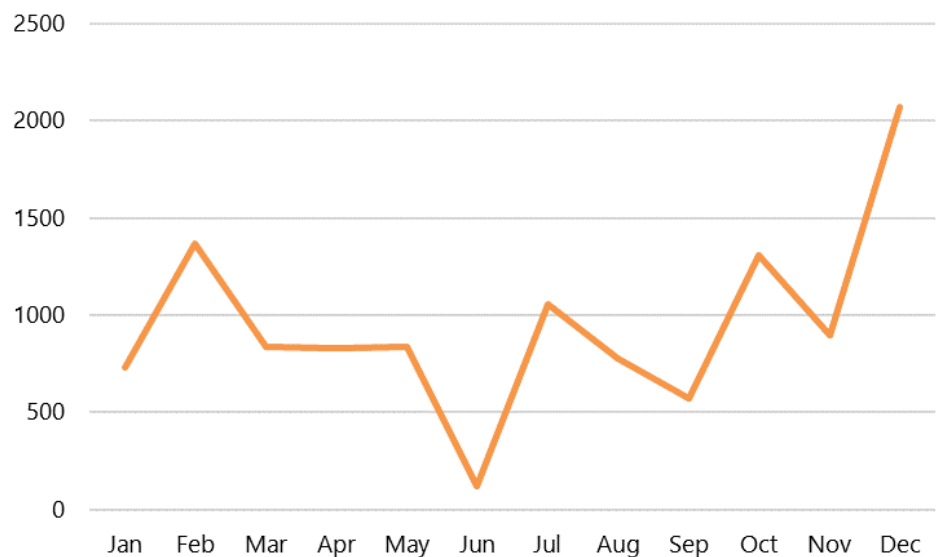
The first stage in the health support service offered by Centre Amane entails ensuring beneficiaries are insured through the free national government health insurer RAMED. When beneficiaries are insured they are able to receive medical assistance for free or heavily subsidized. In 2019, 21 of the families at Centre Amane were insured, a **24% increase from 2018**.



Building Trust

The health service entails building **trusting relationships**. The strength of these relationships proved **life-saving** when the Centre experienced 2 separate cases of attempted suicide. It was our social workers who were the first to be notified by the individuals of their attempts. Our close relationships with individuals and local medical professionals enabled our social workers immediately to be able to work with the hospital to provide the care each individual needed.

Health Costs



Increased medical costs in December correlates with **inadequate heating, insulation and a lack of warm clothing amplifying an increase of illnesses** typically seen in colder seasons. The Centre also experienced several medical emergencies in 2019 which increased its costs:

Skin
Infections

Psychiatric
Care

Tuberculosis
Treatment



HEADCOUNT STUDY

Over a period of four months, Centre Amane social workers, international experts, and our in-country programmes officer collaborated to develop a headcount study. The study's aim was to gain a better understanding of street-connection for children in Taroudant in order to inform our outreach programme.

The outreach programme derived from our first headcount study conducted in 2014. As a consequence of the study's findings, social workers patrolled zones in Taroudant identified to be frequented by street-connected children.

For our 2020 study, we chose a respondent-driven sampling (RDS) method. This is where a portion of a population is chosen as seeds in the study and provided coupons to give to their peers, who in turn are recruited into the project, and provided with the same coupons. The methodology of this study was chosen to enable

researchers to understand the relationships between participants, and furthermore the prevalence of child street-connection in Taroudant.

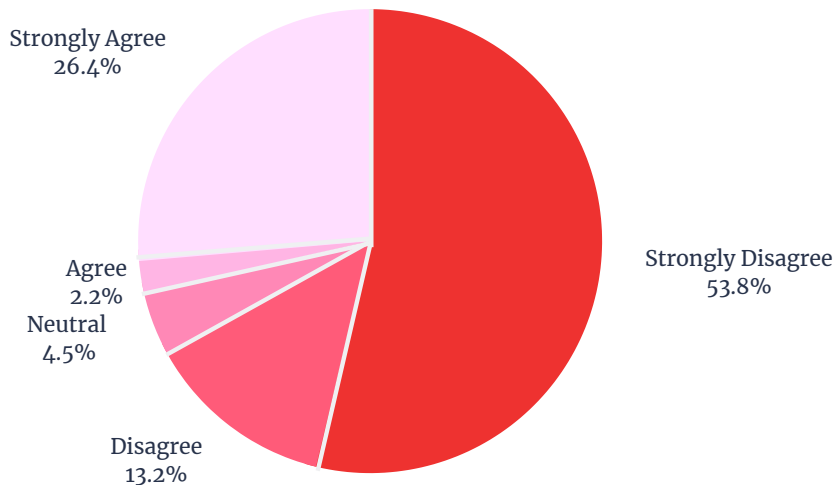
The study also exemplified the power of **participatory action research**. Firstly, by design each participant was directly involved in the study's success. Secondly, a pamphlet was given to each participant to give to their parents and caregivers detailing our centre's services. Therefore, while the study's aim was to inform the outreach service, it also actively engaged in outreach.

The project enabled us to gain valuable insight into the social network and environment of the children at the centre (*see figures*). Furthermore, it has reaffirmed the importance of Centre Amane's services and helped with its original imperative to inform the outreach programme.





Outreach



I FEEL SAFE WHERE I SLEEP

A prevalent theme in the study was children's perceptions of safety and how they responded to avoid or cope with violence. The majority of children who reported unsafe sleeping conditions listed their reason as fear of abuse. When choosing a sleeping place however, children felt too exposed and susceptible to similar violence if they remained in the street. Despite the physical danger, children choose precarious places such as roof tops and rubbish dumps to protect themselves from dangerous social situations.

WHAT'S NEEDED MOST

When asked what they wanted from an NGO, all children said they wanted school tutoring and clothes. Many children attended with foot injuries or infections due to lack of footwear and hygiene.

WHAT WE PROVIDE

Needs for medical attention, hygiene, school tutoring, and clothes affirmed the support services offered at the centre.



64%

expressed that drugs were easy to access.

< 10

the ages of nearly half of the participants

90%

ranked their mother as the person they feel closest to

CASE STUDY

FAMILY AND CONTEXT:

Zeina, a single mother, worked long hours on a farm in the day and would come home tired and unable appropriately to care for her children, Billal (13) and Layla (11). Without childcare, Billal and Layla were unsupervised and would spend most of their time on the street - increasing their vulnerability to exploitation and danger.

Billal's academic performance was well below the rest of his peers and he struggled to complete his homework and stay motivated during school. He was at risk of repeating his school year and would verbally and physically attack other children and staff. Due to his experience of neglect, he suffered from low self-esteem, found it difficult to speak up effectively, and have confidence in his ideas.

Layla was extremely attached to her aunt, Chayma. However, like Billal, this attachment was amplified by her mother's neglect and inability to fulfill her parental responsibilities and duties. Layla and Billal also displayed signs of physical abuse, regularly attending the centre visibly upset after they had been physically disciplined by their aunt or mother. Layla's low self-esteem hindered her academic performance and socialization with other children. As Layla was entering puberty, she struggled to understand the changes in her body and identity without the proper support from her mother or aunt.

Chayma was the aunt and the main caregiver of the children. After Zeina was found to be unable to assume an active role in her children's lives, social workers decided it was in the best interests of the children to work with Chayma. However, without the ability to afford proper medical treatment, Chayma used hashish in efforts to relieve severe chronic back pain. Chayma's pain and frustrations would often manifest into physical and verbal aggression towards the children.



INTERVENTIONS :



School Support: Both children were provided with intensive school support. The education officer and social workers regularly met with each child's teacher and they worked together to ensure the children were able to catch up to their peers. Billal was able successfully to complete elementary school and began secondary school in September.



Women's Project: Chayma was integrated into the women's group and regularly attended meetings. She also attended trips to local attractions with other women and commented on how these small acts made her feel valued, respected, and part of a community. Chayma was also able to draw on the other woman's experiences and knowledge to reduce her smoking and change her approach from disciplining the children through aggression.



I.D. Registration: As both children had different fathers, they also had different surnames. The social workers identified that sharing the same surname would help foster a sense of family, unity, and belonging for the children. The centre has started the proceedings with the court to match their surnames and we expect to complete this process in 2020.



Health: The centre procured Chayma the funds to buy the medication required for back pain and reduce her hashish smoking. Layla also benefited greatly from working closely with the social worker who specialises in working with children under the age of 12. In these sessions with her social worker, Layla learned about coming of age topics such as body development, body autonomy, and consent.



Local Partnerships: Billal nominated himself to give a speech at our partner's event at the local residential centre – Lalla Lamina. Billal spoke before a room of children about the benefits of studying, reading, and education – exemplifying a dramatic shift in Bilal's self-confidence and the effectiveness of the team's social work interventions.



Extra-Curricular: Billal was placed in a local football team and both he and Layla attended full-contact Karate classes three days a week. The children's sports coaches and social workers noted a significant change in the children's behaviour and self-esteem – with both children never missing a training session. Their time spent in sports programmes provided supervision which limited their time on the street.

Thank You

to our Staff, Board & Committees



Fatima Ait Bella

Social Worker, Women's Project
Coordinator



Maryame
Mazzaourou

Social Worker, Children under 12 years



Hamid Id Belaid

Social Worker, ID Registration



Mohammed Reda
Lagroubi

Social Worker, Extra-Curricular Officer



Malika El Alaoui

Education Officer



Hasna Ben Arreg

Office Administrator
*I love working in a great team
while contributing to the
protection of children.*



"Lalla" Zahra Aabid

Caretaker, Beloved "mother" of Centre
Amane

*I enjoy caring for the children and
being part of the wider family at
Centre Amane.*



Slimane Amansag

Director



MCT Board &
Committees



FAPE Board &
Leadership

...and to our Partners

Formal and informal partnerships are an important resource for Centre Amane. Forming relationships with key child protection actors is vital in being able to coordinate across sectors and

institutions. Without a formalised child protection system in Morocco, partnerships are a way Centre Amane can ensure children do not get lost between the many different child protection actors in Taroudant:

Association Ensemble avec les Enfants: members of this French association visited the centre and performed games and activities with the child. They also generously donated money to pay for the children to have an excursion to the beach and to the local swimming pool.

La Maison Anglaise: is a British ecolodge that provides accommodation for English retirees in Taroudant and facilitates activities and donations with their guests.

Core Youth Service: an Irish youth service who travelled to Taroudant and performed many activities with the children. They also included a bicycle mechanic and his trainees demonstrated the ways to build and maintain bicycles in a workshop for children from the Centre. The group also generously donated 16 bikes for the children at the Centre.

Just Ask: an Irish youth group who consisted of a builder, and his apprentice. They partnered with local Moroccan volunteers who worked to improve the roof of the centre; adding an awning to allow children to play on the roof, handmade games and activities for children to use, added selective hand painted artwork for the children, and renovated the kitchen to allow cooking and barbecues on the roof.



25

MOROCCAN ASSOCIATIONS

all within the broad description of child protection, family, and women's support services. Centre Amane was able to create a link between these associations and our contacts in government when there were cases in need of a range of support.

13

GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES

government ministries and departments, courts, legal representatives, police, politicians (local mayors and local/national legislators), and corrections facilities.

8

MEDIA

newspapers, digital and television media, press union

**from 2018-2019*

