

# 1979-2008

---

In May 1979, the Articles of Association of a new organisation in Altea were approved: Asociación Emaús, initially made up of important local figures. Juan Alvado Pérez was appointed Chairman at the first meeting of its Board of Directors. Its primary objective: "... to provide shelter and support to young and elderly people in difficulties. Education and training of people...".

September, 1979: Rosario Moncho and Pascual Pontevedra took in the first children referred to them by **Caritas**, the **Superior Council for the Protection of Minors of Alicante**, and **Local Authorities** of the district. They were incorporated into a nascent **Asociación Emaús**, which was provided with the house where its founder, Francisco Nadal Ivars, was born. This is the time when the **Los Hermanitos** children's home was born.

Children between three and sixteen years old fill the house with the sounds of childhood. They came from broken families, unable to provide for their basic needs, subsistence and support.

Los Hermanitos provides the children with nutrition, hygiene, clothing and adequate shelter. They collaborate with the town of Altea and various funding associations. They received a small amount administrative support from the help of countless groups of volunteers that represented almost every country in Europe.

After Pascual and Rosario came, others including Pepe (el Parroyo) Maruja Marqués, Jean Michel Darthus, Yves Mazzocco, Paco Alemán and many more joined the cause under the name of Emaús. With this sound team of people, Francisco Nadal had the support he needed to launch the project.

The group of children from Emaús quickly became known in the neighbourhood. Accompanied by supervisors, they took walks in the streets and joined schools and local activities.

After their main physiological needs had been taken care of, the next priority was Education and Training as well as the primary objective to reunite the children with their families. It was essential to have a common structure between social work, families and town councils, so that each case could be evaluated once the crisis situation had stabilised.

At the time, such structures within the field of social work were poor. Despite the 1978 constitution, autonomous competency had been awarded in matters relating to social security. This was the catalyst for Transfers from the Juvenile Sector in 1985 and the first Social Services law in 1987.

Gradually, this process forged the framework for the protection network for Family, Children and Youth. The town council then created its own municipal support structures for individual and/or co-operative services so that the work begun by the Emaús Association in those locations could be continued.

This is how Primary Care Services was formed in the municipalities, to prevent family breakdown purely for reasons of lack of basic care. The profile of the Los Hermanitos children evolved and manifested other educational requirements over three levels.

Until then, the care had been primarily for boys. Out of necessity, this was balanced to support the mix. And thanks to the generosity of Antonia Pérez Such and her husband Francisco Izquierdo Bayo, a new structure was formed, El Hogar de Niñas El Verdader, which began its activities on 15 February 1985, continuing until 1992 when it merged with Los Hermanitos, founding the Comarcal Altea Residence which was the Refuge Centre for Altea Children.

In addition to cases of basic nutritional and care problems, there are also others involving emotional aspects and/or neglect. The child is separated from its parents because of a serious risk due to the surroundings and family events. The “family” is not a valid structure for the child and, after a study by the corresponding experts, an administrative step is taken to protect him, taking over guardianship, if necessary. This is therefore an administrative proceeding, not a court proceeding, supervised by the Public Prosecutor for Minors office that ensures the child’s rights are upheld.

Although the profile of the minor under protection has changed, the initial problems have not disappeared, however there are now new added problems, which in earlier times would not have required specialist treatment. Manifest conditions and behavioural disorders are exacerbated and addictions to narcotics and other psychotropic substances, as well as the abuse and use of prescription drugs that are easily available. Solvents, glues, volatile hydrocarbons and a multitude of variants that extend throughout all social strata among groups of young people, have a seriously detrimental effect on the behaviour of young people and adolescents.

At the beginning of the 1990s, the economic situation on the Costa Blanca was going through a delicate period of the “tourism boom” that had started 25 years earlier. There was a sudden recession in the hospitality and construction industries, which was felt in all areas, both economic and social.

The services sector, the most important in the province, went through a serious crisis, especially on the coast. A large part of the population, mainly those who had emigrated from more disadvantaged parts of Spain, suffered directly from the consequences of this economic recession. This meant that whole families, workers of humble origin, became unemployed, which had a severe effect on the most fragile social structures.

Unemployment, the precarious economy, young couples with children, single mothers without the support of close family, lacking educational models for children at the gates to adolescence. Determining factors that were to define the children and young people who would become subjects of administrative protection during the coming periods, and would occupy the Emaús centres.

The profile of the child is therefore changing. The means, both material and personal, must adapt to new needs, with new services.

Emaús takes the lead, adding the elements required and proposing solutions to the demand for care from the Government. The staff providing direct care are as professional as possible, Social Workers, Teachers, Psychologists, etc. An educational team is formed for taking action with the young people and children. Intake structures appropriate for the demand are

also contributed, and alternative programmes are proposed to internship, living in standard family structures.

It is Emaús from where the concept of the social action unit begins, at provincial, regional and European level. For this they pool their efforts which they make available to the Public Organisation to accelerate the care provided and work on prevention. Thus, with these proposals, first AIME (Association of Institutions for Minors) came into existence, in which all the non-governmental organisations in the province currently working in the Social Action field with minors belong.

But this action cannot be only the work of efforts of good will and requires a specialization in the sector. Emaús provides the corresponding training, and works with AIME on the need for a Collective Labour Agreement to be accepted by the administration through Subsidies, Coordination and Grants to the organisations supplying the care programmes. AIME thus becomes the employers' APIME (Professional Association of Institutions for Minors), today with the majority of the institutions in the Autonomous Region of Valencia, urging the union organizations to prepare this agreement. This has subsequently been achieved, despite initial resistance.

From social and family nuclei with the problems posed, the profile of the young person receiving care corresponds now, to an adolescent with anti-social and disruptive behavioural patterns. A young person who has **nothing to lose** because **he has nobody**.

A stage begins during which the child is separated from the family unit by protective measures, because of a lack of conditions, adequate means or neglect, but in which he was just one more member of the group, at a time when he is playing a starring role in a conflict in the family which has already disintegrated, broken down and devalued.

On many occasions it is the family itself that asks for the help of social services to remove the child they cannot control and even fear, especially in the case of lone single mothers with adolescent children, abusing their parents, their environment and the families with whom they live. Their behavioural difficulties, mental disorders and need for special clinical and therapeutic care increases.

The new educational policies and the reconsideration of violations committed by young people by the **Youth Court of Alicante**, is causing protection centres to take in mild offenders to highlight the protection rather than merely punitive element of protection. Los Hermanitos became the **Residencial Comarcal Altea (District Residency Altea)** in 1992, with the aim of territorializing the service throughout the province, and providing cover to the towns in the Marina Baixa.

It was with this aim that Emaus took in its first youngster referred from former Centro de **Reeducación Granadella (Granadella Re-education Centre)** with a semi-open regime, but integrated in the current conditions of our facilities, with the approval of the aforementioned court, and even at its request.

Little by little, both the young people's disease and the added problems of a user with heavy educational and re-educational needs became more evident, and Emaús continues to provide satisfactory alternatives, extending this work to other autonomous regions proposing cases for which they are unable to find a satisfactory solution.

Professionalism, added to the exacerbated commitment on the part of the Educational Team, has made the Association's service to minors a very highly considered option for young people requiring maximum monitoring and care. "Special places" were created, cared for by professionals from our organisation, mainly at the **Residencia Juvenil Montahud (Montahud Juvenile Residency)**.

Thus, the resources are multiplied, and with them concepts appear that are not accepted by the majority of official centres, but which are a need and at the same time a reality for Emaús, Equality and respect among people, regardless of religion, sex, race or culture. Projects for independence although they are minors, tutoring young people who will soon be leaving the institution and must be taught to stand alone. Rupture Programmes, specialising in foster parents, participation in all areas, the concept of the Educator in his functions and tasks, accompanying and guiding the Young Person in his process of becoming a Person, as a fundamental member, essential in the gears of society.

But this evolution will also impact Public Administrations that gradually add and strengthen their Basic Teams at the Town Halls. This means the **Minors and Families' department** deals with cases of mere primary need, with grants aimed at stability, both in terms of finance and care by an appropriate team of social workers, educators and psychologists.

All this, together with the general evolution of society peculiar to our times, the so-called "Web Generation" as well as intercontinental migratory movements, and the economic situation in our province, have created the current profile of children, young people and families that we care for today at the Minors Department at Emaús: The Asociación Los Arcos de Altea, with its Minors' Shelters and Non-residential care programmes, and the **Residencia Infantil de la Fundación Relleu** (Relleu Foundation Children's Home), which broke away from Los Arcos to concentrate its activities on younger children, the elderly, the disabled and Training.

## **ASOCIACIÓN LOS ARCOS DE ALTEA. ITS RESOURCES AND PROGRAMMES.**

Since Asociación Emaús decided in 1999 to form a legal organisation with the elements constituting its departmental structure, it has been the Asociación los Arcos de Altea, with its Minors Department, that has specifically continued with the activities in this field and in its different areas.

Currently, Asociación Los Arcos de Altea, has **six residential shelters**, spread out throughout the Marina Alta and the Marina Baixa.

**“Altea”**: Former area residency for the Marina Baixa. Originally Los Hermanitos de Emaus. It was a bastion and starting point for our organisation’s social work activities. Three educational groups of eight children and young people are today occupying a building authorized for thirty. Among its residents are children referred for the development of their educational project, such as initial intake and evaluation processes, directly supporting the work of the Reception Centre for the Province of Alicante.

**“La Mar”**: Located in Alfaz del Pí, it is Emaús’s most recent acquisition and, with six authorized places, is the site of its residential programme for the youngest children.

**“Polop”**: Cares for an educational group comprising eight boys and girls in Polop de la Marina.

**“Ifach”**: Located in Calpe, where working and school programmes are combined. Certified for eight places.

**“Benissa”**: With ten places, it is home to a group of boys and girls aged between six and eighteen.

**“El Verger”**: Gives cover to an educational unit, living together in identical conditions for a group of young people.

The Asociación de los Arcos de Altea is responsible for **publicising** programmes for **intake** and education of these sheltered **families** and later training, in the Marina Alta, Marina Baixa, L’Alocoiá and El Comptat areas,

currently working on **monitoring and technical support** for the catchment in all its towns, to which a large part of L'Alacantí has been added. It is intended to monitor and provide technical support to 70 cases during the year 2006.

Among the punishments set out in Law 5/2000, there is a provision for serving in an open setting, with Supervised Freedom and Community Service the most common measures in the programme for young offenders in the towns in the Marina Alta, as well as Altea and Benidorm with an average in excess of **100 cases per year** over the past few years.

Pioneers in the philosophy of the **“Rupture Places”**, “Los Arcos has won the trust of organisations from several autonomous regions and communities in the educational programmes it has developed, using “rupture” in all its areas and facets as a strategy within the young person’s educational process. For this purpose, during this year, agreements have been signed and renewed with **Aragón**, as well as with the French departments in **La Correze** and **Finistere**.

In the higher climbs of the district you will find the **Aula de la Naturaleza Tárbená**, where programmes are run for both leisure activities and environmental volunteerism, as well as others for people requiring more personal educational care. There are adapted pre-employment workshops in a quiet environment, far from outside interference.

Altea Town Hall has commissioned Asociación los Arcos, year after year, with running the “Pre-Employment Social Integration Workshop” (**Taller Prelaboral de Inserción Social (TAPIS)**). Young people from the town and the district, with mild disabilities work and learn to obtain different school qualifications, as well as social and working habits that enable access to the standard world of work and society.

Asociación Los Arcos de Altea has an **Educational and Auxiliary staff team** comprising 81 people, who provide services to more than 200 children, Young people and families, making it one of the most important non-governmental organisations (NGO) in the Autonomous Region of Valencia.

The **Board of Directors** of the organisation is made up of the founder members of Asociación Emaús, as well as managers from different associations in the group. The president is Mr Fco. Nadal Ivars.

Likewise, the **Technical Team** is made up of the supervisors of the programmes, residential units and educational projects. Thus all interests and activities of the organisation are represented.

In Altea, on 12 January 2008