

The Letter

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Asmae Association
Sœur
Emmanuelle



MULTI-COUNTRY:
A LOOK BACK ON A YEAR OF “PEACE”

FRANCE:
FIGHTING AGAINST BULLYING



EDITORIAL

The support of our donors is essential in the current climate of economic uncertainty.



We're extending our work to the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire where needs are immense.

Despite the difficult economic outlook globally, the support of our donors and financial partners means we're able to undertake new projects in the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire. As the world's leading exporter of cocoa, the country is seeing GDP growth (+2% in 2020 and +7% in 2021), but the human development index (HDI) remains low (162 out of 190) and the challenges faced by children and young people are significant. The preschool education rate is very low at just 10%, while more than 85% of children experience violent disciplinary methods from an early age. A third of 15-29-year-olds are not in education, employment or training. In-depth research carried out by our teams based in Burkina Faso and head office confirmed the relevance of launching new projects in 2023 in the Khorogo region in the north of the country. Not far from the border with Burkina Faso, this is a region where education and child protection needs are particularly high but where few stakeholders work to support local initiatives. We will gradually intervene in three areas: child protection, disability, and the socio-economic integration of highly-vulnerable young people.

In France, against the scourge of bullying in schools, the "Yalla" team has been fully mobilised
As you'll be able to read in this edition, our "Yalla! For Children's Rights" team have boosted their range of interventions in school environments thanks, in particular, to the creation of a new tool, the "bullyometer". Faced with increased incidents of bullying among children and the tragedies this can lead to, pupils and teachers alike have approved of our interventions, which allow children to assess the quality of their relationships and prevent risks.

Emergency aid for Ukrainian families fleeing the war, our support reaches over 2,000 people

Thanks to your commitment, we've been able to take part in the Ukraine Emergency Fund with the Caritas France Foundation. Several projects have been supported in Moldova and Ukraine. Over 2,000 people have received food supplies, emergency accommodation and hygiene kits, including children, women, older people and sick people. Thank you for your invaluable support.

Happy reading!

Adrien Sallez,
Director General



Sister Emmanuelle surrounded by children in the Philippines.

For 43 years now, Asmae has been continuing the work of our founder, always staying true to 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 firmly in mind.
- **To strengthen the capacity of local stakeholders** working in the field of child development, improving synergies between them and maximising their social impact.
- **To champion children's causes** by raising awareness and speaking out.
- **To experiment, expand and share information.**

ASMAE IN FIGURES

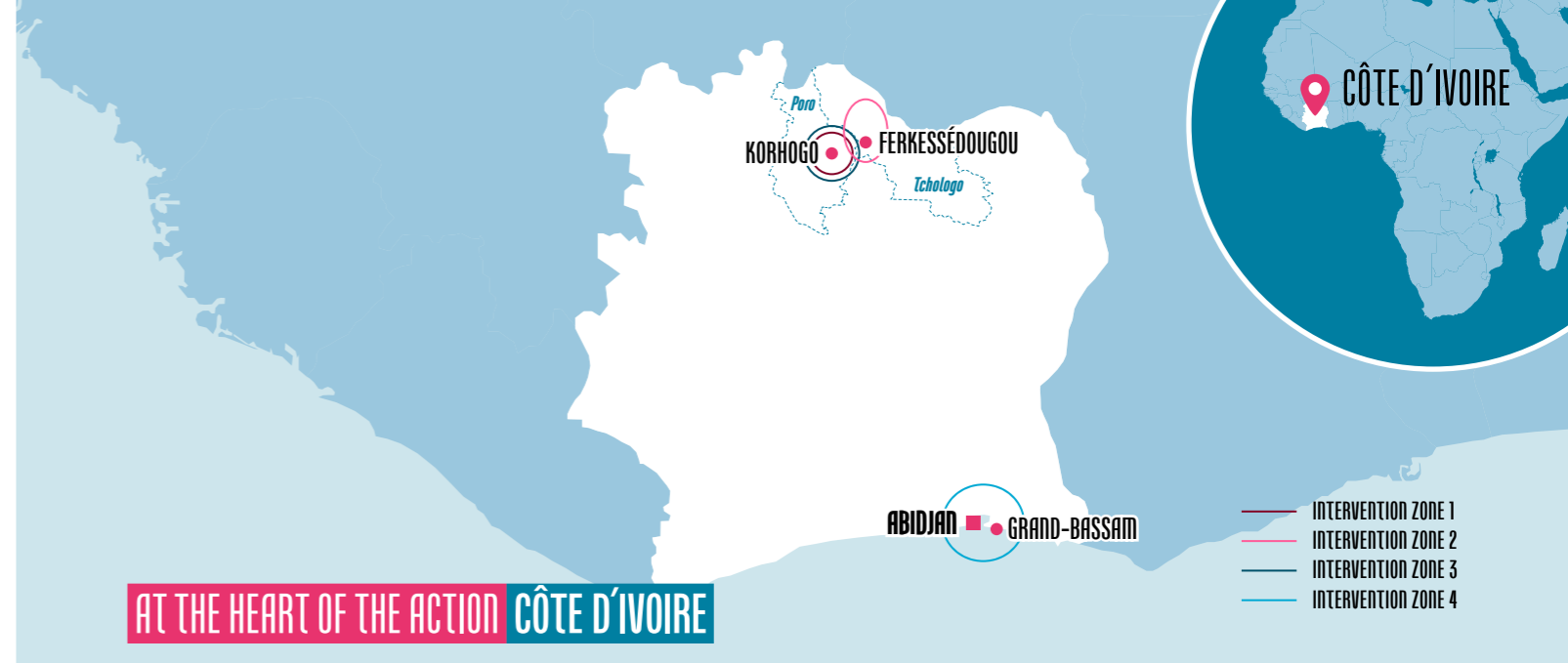
- **39,300 beneficiaries** (children and families) through **24 projects** in **7 countries**
- **52 partner** associations
- **133 professionals** worldwide
- **36 volunteers**
- **23,129 donors**

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AT THE HEART OF THE ACTION CÔTE D'IVOIRE

ASMAE EXPANDS ITS OPERATIONS IN A NEW COUNTRY

From 2023, Asmae has been developing its operations in Côte d'Ivoire in order to meet the needs of children and local populations living in extremely vulnerable situations. In 2022, two studies and several exploratory missions were carried out to refine our understanding of the context and meet stakeholders in the region, as well as future partners. The Asmae team visited Abidjan and Korhogo, a city found in the country's northern Poro region (one of our targeted areas of intervention). In the Poro and Tchologo regions, Asmae is planning to launch a protection project aimed at the most marginalised children, as well as a socio-professional integration project designed for young people in the city of Korhogo. Interventions close to Abidjan on the topic of inclusion are also in the planning.

A backdrop of poverty and acute inequalities in targeted areas

Particularly high poverty levels have been observed in the Tchologo and Poro regions (northern Côte d'Ivoire), affecting 65.6% and 51.6% of the respective populations, against a national level of 46.3%, with serious socio-economic and gender inequalities. Côte d'Ivoire is home to more than 5.5 million adolescents, i.e. over 20% of the total population, and the youth unemployment rate is 25%*. Furthermore, according to MICS5**, almost nine out of ten children are subject to violent disciplinary methods from an early age.

Protecting children against multiple dangers

This project is part of the multi-country "Protecting Children Affected by Conflict or Exclusion" (PEACE) programme. It aims to identify children in need and refer them to protection and psychosocial support structures. An early intervention system will be put in place in the various districts of Korhogo as part of our awareness-raising activities, screening and referrals, in order to identify children at risk or in danger. These will be children in significant need of protection, including abandoned children, children from high-risk families, child trafficking victims, etc. The project then aims to roll out interventions in border areas (Tchologo) in order to identify and support Burkinabe refugee children and those from host families. High-quality psychosocial support and/or psychological care will be offered to the children.

Training and socio-professional integration for young people

The aim of this project is to empower young people and give them access to training in order to encourage their socio-professional integration. It targets 100 highly-vulnerable young people facing difficulties finding work in the city of Korhogo. In order to ensure their proper socio-professional integration, the focus will be on the quality of training by adding a psycho-social support component and modules around "life skills". Vocational careers guidance activities will also be introduced for those in high-risk situations, in accordance with a focus on gender equality. Our partners' professional skills will be strengthened on the following topics: careers guidance, gender, participatory learning, "life skills" and psychosocial support. Boosting our partners' organisational strengths is also in the planning, alongside support with fundraising. Asmae will also work to build links between socio-professional integration stakeholders and companies to help young people into the world of work once their training courses are complete.

*Young people within the Côte d'Ivoire jobs market. A ticking time bomb about to go off? CAIRN
**Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 5, UNICEF



The Asmae team and the Mayor of Korhogo during their visit.



SPECIAL REPORT

Sama-Bajau children at school (Philippines).

PROTECTING CHILDREN AFFECTED BY CONFLICT OR EXCLUSION (PEACE)

In 2021, UNICEF reported a record 22.8 million internally-displaced children. Conflict, violence and natural disasters were the main causes and disrupt children's access to education. It was in this context that Asmae launched the "PEACE" programme in 2022, designed to benefit over 8,000 children in three countries: Burkina Faso, Egypt and the Philippines. It was extended to Côte d'Ivoire in 2023. The programme aims to promote respect for the rights of displaced or excluded children and adolescents to education and protection.

Burkina Faso: the deteriorating security situation affects the launch of the project

The intensification of terrorist attacks in our teams' and partners' areas of intervention marked the start of the programme. This resulted in a rapid increase in the number of displaced people in the country, with almost 2 million displaced people recorded by the end of 2022. Demonstrations have also taken place in several parts of the country in protest against persistent attacks. Faced with such security and political instability, Asmae's teams and partners were given training on international humanitarian law, security, as well as behaviours to adopt in the event of danger.

Asmae have been helping me since I fled my village a year ago with my parents because of the attacks by armed groups. Asmae does a lot for me: we play, we learn to read, count and even sing. Before, I was just alone at home with my mum. I didn't go to school and I didn't have any friends to play with, because I didn't know the town. Now, I can play with my new friends and forget the suffering in our village. I'm happy every day because of the activities that the leaders run in my neighbourhood. Mummy and daddy come to find out how to look after us better at the awareness sessions.



Paloma
8 years old, Burkina Faso

The project works to improve access to and the quality of early childhood development services. The "Yam Wekre" teaching tool has been made available on *Espaces Amis des Enfants* sites (which host displaced children) in order to improve their psychomotor, cognitive and language skills. At the same time, community intervention takes place by running activities, such as fun workshops and book clubs. The purpose is to entertain, but also identify and support children at risk or in danger. We've also offered financial support to the most vulnerable families as part of this project. One year on, 660 children have benefitted from these activities in Burkina Faso.

Philippines: boosting support for Sama-Bajau children and young people

The PEACE programme has been rolled out in the Philippines with the Sama-Bajau people, who were forced to leave the island of Mindanao where they come from due to conflict and the development of mining projects in the area. A fire spread through the Sama-Bajau settlement in January 2022, just as the programme was launched. Asmae released emergency funding to allow essential products to be distributed and psychosocial support to be provided. The families affected by the fire have now returned to their temporary homes and are awaiting relocation.

The project aims to promote the rights of children from this ethnic group and strengthen the capacities of the community in general to implement projects with civil society and governmental organisations. To do so, training on children's rights has been put in place with tribal councils and local authorities alongside advocacy work to address the causes of the displacement and statelessness of Sama-Bajau people. Asmae has also developed school kits to provide tools and support for the educators of younger children.

I often come to the El Wahaa centre for the activities that Asmae runs with Life Vision. There was a sports day back in December. I really enjoyed the games we played and all the activities. That day taught me that nobody is allowed to touch me, except my mum and dad, and that they shouldn't hit me. I've also learned about climate change and that we shouldn't throw anything in the sea or on the ground and that we should keep our environment clean. The activities I do at the El Wahaa centre help me learn lots of important things, which I'm trying to teach my friends.



Naël
8 years old, Egypt

Egypt: combatting violence against children in ragpicker communities

The "Safer Environment for Children in Cairo's Deprived Neighbourhoods" programme aims to strengthen social services and protection mechanisms for marginalised children living in ragpicker communities.

A study looking into community dynamics with a focus on child protection issues has previously been carried out. It showed that violence against children is a common issue. Indeed, it is widespread and committed by both parents and teachers alike. According to UNICEF, 93% of children between the ages of 1 and 14 have suffered physical or psychological violence. Harassment of children is the second most common type of violence, before sexual harassment. Several testimonies gathered as part of the study are alarming, in particular, one from a father who told us: "I broke my son's leg because he was late for a family errand". The study's conclusions confirm the relevance of the "SEC" project.

1,200 children and 600 parents have been targeted by the programme. Awareness sessions have brought together 270 children and are an opportunity to communicate key messages on the rights to education, protection (particularly against violence and sexual abuse) and a healthy environment. The reporting processes available are also communicated during interventions.



I've learned a lot since I came across Jeunes Solidaires pour la Paix (JSP). At first, I was very shy when expressing myself and interacting with others, but now I have more and more confidence in myself. At peace camp, I had the chance to be one of the youth leaders and I feel very proud to have done that. I proved to myself that I'm not just another school dropout. When we started the 30 day challenge, we faced many difficulties and misunderstandings, but we still helped each other. At first, we wondered if anyone would actually listen to us, or if people would take part in our activities, but in the end we saw how the activities were fun and interesting for young people.

John
23 years old, Philippines

Asmae would like to thank our partners who contributed to funding this programme: Technip Energies endowment fund, Sister Emmanuelle Belgium, Paprec.

YALLA! FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS FIGHTING AGAINST BULLYING

In France, more than one in ten pupils aged 8-11 are the victims of bullying. And the trend isn't bucked when starting secondary school either, with 10% of those students also affected. Given the scale of the problem and its consequences, the "Yalla! For Children's Rights" project team has taken on the issue in the form of a new awareness module. It particularly focuses on the importance of the rights to protection and privacy. It was launched as part of the 2022 Yalla Tour, during which 3,850 pupils were educated across 15 different French cities.

Understanding bullying, its seriousness and its consequences

Through sessions tailored to all ages, the children are encouraged to better understand bullying and cyber-bullying situations, how serious they can be, as well as the roles involved: bullies, the bullied and witnesses.

"The intervention clarifies what bullying really is and its devastating effects"
A teacher at a school in Nantes

95% of teachers surveyed said they believe the sessions have helped pupils better understand what bullying is and its consequences. One teacher at a school in Nantes testified that *"the intervention clarifies what bullying really is and its devastating effects, furthermore, it sheds light on the punishments it can lead to"*. The methods used are interactive, including theatre performances and roleplays, *"which promotes discussions on the topic and allows victims to speak out. It's a significant preventive opportunity, giving the pupils a real voice"*, explains a teacher from Mans.



Raising awareness of the dangers of bullying.

ZOOM ON THE "BULLYOMETER": A TOOL FOR RAISING AWARENESS OF THE DANGERS OF BULLYING

Given out in class and accessible online for free, the "bullyometer" is a barometer that lists various relationships, from healthy to violent. Various situations are explored through discussions where children talk about their relationships with their friends and classmates. This allows pupils to identify any inappropriate behaviour. It takes the form of a bookmark and is also available online at yallapourmesdroits.fr.

Our thanks to our financial partners: Clarins, the We Act for Kids and ID KIDS action funds, SC Johnson and the Technip Energies endowment fund.

Preventing dangerous situations and finding solutions collectively

The Notre-Dame de Grâce School hosted our team in Maubeuge and was particularly engaged in the intervention.

"A pupil attempted suicide due to suspected bullying"
Grégory Laboureux
Headteacher

Grégory Laboureux, the school's headteacher, spoke to France 3 who came to report on the intervention, explaining *"a pupil attempted suicide due to suspected bullying, although it hasn't yet been officially established. But it affected us all deeply... We take our share of responsibility in this type of situation and we've taken steps so that it never happens again"*.

"It's vital they understand they absolutely have to speak to a trusted adult"
Asma Kafi
Head of the Yalla Project

The purpose of these sessions is to help children react to dangerous situations. *"It's vital they understand they absolutely have to speak to a trusted adult if a danger arises and also that every child has a role to play, sometimes simply by listening or being sympathetic"*, explains Asma Kafi, Head of the Project. Involving children in solutions they can put in place on their level is also one of the key focusses of the sessions: shifting from a passive to an active witness, comforting a pupil who has been made fun of, or electing class representatives as "bullying monitors". One pupil from a school in Vitry said *"these solutions will help me react to bullying better"*.

PHILIPPINES COMBATTING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

As part of the "Cap Jeunesse" programme, which is part of the "GRACED" project, Asmae works to strengthen the responsibility of local authorities in the fight against sexist/gender-based violence. It also involves improving the capacities of young people by making them stakeholders in eliminating this violence within their own circles. Jhelo A. Balbaera, who runs a student association in a partner college of a partner school, spoke to us about the importance of the project.

What actions are available to young people? Who takes part?

To address and prevent gender-based violence (GBV) in schools, in the home and within online communities, capacity-building activities are available to student representatives. They're trained to plan and carry out prevention campaigns and peer-to-peer awareness sessions in their schools. GBV forums are also organised on a local and national level to help young people understand the importance of this issue. Children and young people are very enthusiastic about the idea of learning more about gender and GBV because these issues are rarely addressed on the school curriculum. They're concerned, because the majority have experienced at least one form of gender-based violence, particularly at school, either as victims or witnesses. They also highlight the fact they feel powerless when witnessing violence, not knowing where to report it.

Why is it so important to involve young people in these activities?

It's important to involve young people because it's their fundamental right. Young people – as the holders of rights – have the capacity to plan and take proactive action on the issues that affect them. Peer interaction is an effective approach in youth development programme activities, as young people listen more to those who are the same age, share the same background and who share the same interests.

How do you get institutional leaders involved?

Improving the accountability of institutions is one of the goals of the "GRACED" project, which is why we work closely with government bodies, such as the Ministry of Education, as well as local authorities. We've organised capacity-building training sessions for these bodies with the aim of establishing GBV re-



Jhelo A. Balbaera, Head of the Supreme Student Association (Manilla).

ferral mechanisms, as well as case management. Our advocacy work helps develop long-term collaborations with institutions. By highlighting the results of the GBV study, which includes evidence of the lived experiences of pupils, school authorities have identified certain recommendations and have also expressed their desire to continue their collaboration with Asmae to address and prevent GBV in schools.

What's your hope for the future?

My personal hope is that everyone can be treated equally and accepted by everyone. I also want our school to treat every pupil equally.

Asmae would like to thank our partners who contributed to funding this programme: French Development Agency, Mille et un Repas and the Sancta Devota, Valoris, Air France and Sawiris foundations.

BURKINA FASO FULFILLED EARLY CHILDHOODS

Asmae continues to work in Burkina Faso on the "Fulfilled Early Childhoods" project, which was launched back in August 2021. The aim is to strengthen access to and the quality of early childhood development services through complementary actions involving both institutional and community stakeholders. Over 7,800 girls and boys aged 0-6 years old have been supported by the 105 child development structures that benefit from this programme. The "Yam Wekre" teaching tool, a picture book developed by Asmae and our partners, helps to improve the children's psychomotor, cognitive and language skills. It is made up of illustrative cards that address educational topics related to everyday life. At the same time, community intervention takes place by running activities, such as early learning workshops and book clubs.

Asmae would like to thank our partners who have contributed to funding this project: AFD, the Monégasque International Cooperation Department (DCI) and the Société Générale Foundation.



Beneficiaries of the project using the Yam Wekre tool.

ACTING TOGETHER



3 QUESTIONS FOR SOEUR EMMANUELLE BELGIUM CHRISTOPHE ETIEN, SOEUR EMMANUELLE BELGIUM'S DIRECTOR



What is Sister Emmanuelle Belgium's mission?

Our mission is to support projects focussed on women and children who find themselves in vulnerable, excluded and risky situations. We act primarily through education to improve their living conditions and help them develop within society. It also involves financial support: we raise funds in Belgium and redistribute them to our projects.

What's the nature of the collaboration between Asmae and Sister Emmanuelle Belgium?

In November 2021, I heard that Asmae was launching a project in Egypt and that we could take part as a donor. And that's exactly what we did! With Adrien Saliez, Asmae's Director, we've been out in the field, visiting the project, which is something that really strengthens our collaboration. I've also just taken part in a board meeting in September to explain the model differences between our associations.

Do you have any strong memories of your trip to Egypt that you can share with us?

Lots, but the slums are always a shock. Even though they have permanent housing today, as well as water and electricity, it's always a shock when you go back. The *zabbalines* go out and collect rubbish and there are bins everywhere. The smell is indescribable. I also met Sister Sarah for the first time. I read one of her books again this summer where she talks about her meeting with Sister Emmanuelle and her journey with her. The other highlight was part of the project in Mokattam. Our partner, Life Vision For Development, has a centre called the Oasis, which is run by girls who all come from the slums. You can feel their driving role and the examples they set for young people and for mothers. They're truly there to make a difference, and they have a firm grasp on it! It's all very interesting.

THE SOLIDARITY SHOP: GIVING DIFFERENTLY



Get your own Yalla t-shirt just like Mouhamad, our Accounting Manager :)

There are lots of different ways to support associations these days, from financial donations and memberships to voluntary commitments and even donations in kind. Thanks to our on-line solidarity shop, our donors can now purchase products created in tribute to Sister Emmanuelle.

To help keep the memory of our founder's fight alive, pursue her efforts and help Asmae develop our work, the shop is a place where you can buy t-shirts bearing Sister Emmanuelle's image, masks with the Asmae logo, and even books retracing the life of our founder.

Discover the online store at
<https://www.asmae.fr/fr/boutique-solidaire/>
or scan the QR code!



Asmae Association
Sœur Emmanuelle

Asmae is an association formed under the French Law of 1901.
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