

The letter

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Asmae Association
Sœur
Emmanuelle

**THE YOUTH FOR CHANGE PROJECT:
A PROMISING SECOND PHASE
FOR THE FUTURE
OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE**

**YAM WEKRE: A CHILD-FOCUSED
EDUCATIONAL TOOL**





IN A WORLD OF UNCERTAINTY, SISTER EMMANUELLE'S MESSAGE IS ALL THE MORE IMPORTANT

We live in an era of crises, but also of hope. This was how Sister Emmanuelle saw the world, believing that action and solidarity were the only possible ways to address the challenges we face. Her energy continues to guide us today.

As crises generate even greater need on the ground...

Children are the first to be affected by armed conflicts, climate events, health crises, and insecurity, affecting entire regions and the communities who live there. These crises have multiple consequences, and often form an obstacle to children's physical, cognitive, social and emotional development, as well as their socio-economic integration into the world they are part of. By way of example, Unesco reports that 250 million children are not receiving an education, even though this is a fundamental right.

...public funding is falling drastically in France and around the world

The French government cut €2.1 billion from its international solidarity budget for 2025. What consequences will this have? 17 million children will be deprived of support and guidance in their access to education. Despite growing needs, global humanitarian funding for education has dropped for the first time in over ten years.

Asmae is mobilising on two fronts: on the ground and vis-a-vis public authorities

The quality of our projects has evolved, in order to fully address the reality of the needs of children and young people in highly varied contexts. Our mobilisation is compelled by the children themselves, who, through their strength and vitality, remind us every day of how important it is to fight for their future. In addition to direct action, we are also intensifying our participation in NGO networks and coalitions, who are lobbying public authorities to implement the Rights of the Child.

Your support gives us the means to take affirmative long-term action

The spirit of Sister Emmanuel is the vital, humanist energy that drives us to take action for the most vulnerable in our society. It expresses the desire to create a more just world. It is the driving force behind our actions. In this context of widespread uncertainty, this spirit swells our hearts and strengthens our limbs. As our cherished donors and institutional partners from the public and private sectors, you also benefit from this energy: it bolsters your commitment to children, and to Asmae. Journey with us as we stand side by side, fully mobilised for the long haul. Our children and young people are calling for our help.

Adrien Sallez,
Director General



For 44 years now, Asmae has been continuing the work of its founder and remaining 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** using a global approach. To achieve this, Asmae also works to support families, taking their environments fully into account.
- **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

- **62,550 beneficiaries**
- **8 countries** of intervention
- **47 partner** associations
- **180 professionals** worldwide
- **31 volunteers**
- **15,565 donors**
- **44 years of experience** in the field

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AT THE HEART OF THE ACTION

PROJECT YALLA! PAS DE DROITS POUR LES CLICHÉS ("YALLAH! NO PLACE FOR STEREOTYPES"): WHAT IF MY DREAM IS TO BECOME A SCIENTIST?

74% of women stated they had never thought about a career in a technical or scientific field⁽¹⁾. In light of this observation, and with the support of the Île-de-France Region, Asmae has launched a new workshop aiming to deconstruct gender stereotypes and encourage high school students to pursue their chosen careers. In this article we take a closer look at the project launched in February 2025, with insights from Lynda Lourdessamy, head of the Yalla ! For children's rights project at Asmae.

Asmae has maintained a long-standing commitment to gender equality. Can you tell us more about this?

For the past 10 years, the project entitled *Yalla! For children's rights* has been raising awareness among children and teenagers, from pre-school to high school, about their fundamental rights and the issues of bullying and cyberbullying.

In France today, 28% of engineers are women, who make up only 35% of the pure sciences workforce in universities.

It is therefore essential for the Asmae teams to position gender equality as a central focus of our work, in alignment with Article 2 of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child and Non-Discrimination. It falls naturally within the feminist heritage championed by Sister Emmanuelle.

Can you explain the new module: Yalla! No place for stereotypes developed by Asmae?

Given that 74% of women state they have never thought about a professional career in a scientific or technical field, the Asmae's work on gender equality has been expanded via the launch of scientific workshops focusing on women's access to scientific and technical careers, as well as pathways to excellence. Designed as spaces for free expression for high school students (boys and girls included), these interactive workshops will enable collective reflection, and help to deconstruct stereotypes at the same time. Sessions begin with the Asmae teams leading a debate. They present certain statements, such as "girls do not perform as well in scientific subjects," and the students can then take a position and debate this assertion. The debate leaders feed the discussion with historical, statistical and contextual considerations. After that, in order to enlighten the students about the role played by women in major scientific discoveries, there's a quiz that shows how women have changed the course of history in medicine, astronomy and programming.

Why is it important to hold these workshops? What are the goals?

Even today, certain sectors and careers continue to be perceived as more appropriate for a certain gender. This creates gendered careers, which are vectors of inequality. With these workshops we're guiding high school students towards their own awareness of this issue.



Workshops discussing women's access to scientific and technical careers, as well as pathways to excellence

Yalla! No place for stereotypes aims to reduce gender inequality by encouraging young women to think about scientific and technical careers. By providing them with role models and the tools to deconstruct stereotypes, young people can take action at their own level for a fairer and more inclusive society.



This project is supported by the Ile-de-France Region. We also thank our financial partners: Clarins, the We Act For Kids and Okaidi endowment funds, the Technip Energies endowment fund, Mille et Un Repas, Aplim, and the Ville de Montreuil. Asmae holds an accreditation from the Agence du Service Civique.

(1) 2024 "Annual Report on the state of sexism in France" published by the Senior Council for Gender Equality (Rapport annuel 2024 sur l'état des lieux du sexisme en France - Haut Conseil à l'Égalité entre les Femmes et les Hommes).



Young people getting involved in the "Youth for Change" programme in Burkina Faso

YOUTH FOR CHANGE PROGRAMME A PROMISING SECOND PHASE FOR THE FUTURE OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Youth for Change is an innovative programme aiming to improve living conditions, education and integration for young people in six of the countries in which Asmae is active: Burkina Faso, Madagascar, Egypt, the Philippines, Lebanon and India. The project's second phase aims to accelerate the impact of these initiatives in order to promote independence, occupational integration and personal fulfilment for young people in extremely vulnerable situations.

A programme serving the needs of young people

Having evaluated the success and challenges faced during the first phase of the programme, which enabled structural actions to be implemented, the Asmae teams decided to reinforce these actions in five key countries, and to deploy the initiative in a new country: India.

A second phase to bolster the progress achieved and expand the project's impact

The second phase of the **Youth for Change** programme pursues its initial objective by developing and intensifying operations in several key areas. Asmae intends to boost access to quality education for disadvantaged young people. In order to achieve this, young people benefit from orientation initiatives and registration for professional training, helping to provide inroads into the careers they seek to pursue. Studies of sectors with positive employment rates have been carried out in certain countries, enabling young people to orient themselves towards high-demand professions. The project also seeks to provide upskilling for teachers, administrative staff and educators in order to strengthen the protective environment for young people.

One of the most innovative aspects of this project lies in its approach to supporting career access and integration. The goal is to create solid bridges between skilled young people

and local companies, tapping into Asmae's network of local partners. Partnerships with companies and local economy stakeholders have been established in order to promote recruitment, or the creation of economic activities that generate revenue for young people.

Alongside this, training in communications, emotional intelligence and decision-making is also offered to help young people to become responsible and independent individuals. Workshops for the development of soft skills, personal development and leadership are also held in order to boost young people's self-confidence and capacities for action and involvement. Young people's participation in the programme is highly encouraged, through actions involving training and peer awareness, or the implementation of initiatives within schools and communities, or even through advocacy.

The second phase of the **Youth for Change** programme focuses particularly on the most marginalised young people, including those who live in highly vulnerable situations such as disadvantaged neighbourhoods or isolated rural areas.

Finally, **Youth for Change** places gender equality as a central priority, and implements actions designed to encourage young women and girls to get involved. This includes combating gender stereotypes, promoting education for girls and helping all young people to access the careers of their choice, regardless of their gender.

Focused actions within six countries

In Burkina Faso, the complex political and security situation increases young people's vulnerability. Phase 2 has seen the number of target schools increased from 6 - 12, as well as the implementation of various activities such as the re-opening of youth clubs, special assistance courses, coaching for teens and targeted support for teenage students in difficulty. 187 young people who are members of youth clubs have received training in subjects such as the dangers of drug and alcohol consumption, early teen pregnancy, abandonment of education and gender-based violence. These awareness initiatives were then replicated within educational establishments, reaching some 3,721 young people. At the same time, almost 1,300 community members also increased their awareness of these issues through cinema-debate workshops organised by Asmae's local partner. Moreover, in 2024 six social workers in schools had already received training in key topics pertaining to child protection. Six more will follow suit in 2025, as will around a hundred teachers over the course of the project.

In Madagascar, one of the poorest countries in the world, the unemployment rate is particularly high, especially among young people. **Youth for Change** offers young people access to jobs or revenue-generating activities, while simultaneously strengthening their capacity for integration. In order to achieve this, a study led by Asmae enabled researchers to identify the sectors with the highest employment rates, such as textiles, ICT, terrestrial transport and logistics, as well as the tourism sector.

As a result, around a hundred young people benefited from career orientation initiatives via career workshops, visits to companies and participation in employment forums. Around forty of these young people went on to sign up to professional training programmes, in order to boost their profiles and access their preferred careers.

Alongside this, six youth clubs were established thanks to Asmae partners: Graines de bitumes, Gazela and HAFA. Each partner supports two clubs, one dedicated to gender issues and the other to citizenship.

Egypt has a young population, and faces considerable challenges in terms of career integration. In phase 2 of the project, the Asmae teams are working in association with both schools and youth centres. An study was undertaken to examine the integration of gender and disability issues, as well as overlapping issues between the two. Asmae Egypt has been collaborating with the Egyptian Ministry of Youth and Sports in Beni Sweif, in order to boost the skill sets of staff and management at two youth centres. In total, almost 120 professionals from the public education sphere and youth centres will receive training by the end of 2025.

In the Philippines, training courses delivered in 2024 helped improve understanding of gender issues, as well as management of cases involving violence, for directors of educational institutions, guidance counsellors and school staff. Young people also received training in leadership and children's rights. Secure spaces were set up in these

institutions, where seven youth centres also received new equipment. These achievements help foster a protective environment for young people. In 2025, these spaces will enable peer-based educational activities to be set up, and will offer safe spaces for discussion and exchanges for young people. These centres are overseen by school staff who have themselves received training in child protective and gender issues, in order to facilitate communication, organisation and mobilisation of these spaces. In total, 4500 young people will benefit from peer awareness initiatives over the project's three-year duration.

In Lebanon, the situation is critical. In September 2024, as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict intensified, it became impossible to pursue training programmes and activities in the north and south of the country due to rising security risks. In the south of Lebanon, near Saida and the Ain al Helwe camp, Asmae's operations were disrupted. As a result, activities such as training in life skills, entrepreneurship and developing the advocacy toolkit were postponed pending the effective observation of the ceasefire signed in November 2024. The decision to suspend operations was taken by Asmae Lebanon and its two partners, Nahnoo and Naba'a, in order to guarantee the safety of both staff from the organisations and the communities who benefit from these activities.

Despite this instability, in 2024 around forty young people did complete professional training courses. This meant forty young people who received support in their career orientation and the definition of their career projects.

In India, our local partner Arunodhaya's prior experience in providing digital training and community mobilisation was a key factor in driving the project forward and making it a success. The organisation's community foundations and its network of educational institutions ensured that a large number of students signed up to receive occupational training delivered by Arunodhaya's training centre. By the same token, its employer network facilitated student job placements, and new employers were also identified. The contacts established with companies such as Omega Healthcare and Altimetrik, as well as with academic institutions, were highly effective in organising visits and boosting young peoples' socio-professional skill sets. Over the next semester, this network will be further developed and best practices will be documented.

A project that carries hope for young people

The second phase of the **Youth for Change** programme represents a decisive step in Asmae's commitment toward young people. By boosting access to education, promoting occupational integration and supporting independence, this programme plays a crucial role in offering young people a real chance to change their futures. **Youth for Change** equips young people with the skills they need to actively contribute to creating a better future for their societies.

With thanks to our financial partners: the French Development Agency, Air France Foundation Transatlantic Endowment fund, the Sancta Devota Foundation, Mille et Un Repas, Technip Energies, and the GEOY Endowment fund.

PHILIPPINES: AMPLIFYING SAMA BAJAU VOICES THROUGH OUR ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY.

In 2024, Asmae carried out an ethnographic study of the Sama Bajau people in the barangays ⁽¹⁾ of Kasanyangan and Arena Blanco in Zamboanga City (Philippines), in order to gain a clearer understanding of their living conditions. The primary objective of this study was to examine how this marginalised community exercises – or is prevented from exercising – its "Right to the City", a concept that encompasses access to urban spaces and resources, as well as participation in decision-making processes. This study also highlights the socio-economic and cultural challenges faced by the Sama Bajau.

Historically, the Sama Bajau are a nomadic seafaring people. Many of them have been forced to live on land due to armed conflicts, relocation policies and natural disasters. Despite their deep roots in the Philippines' maritime history, their presence in urban environments is often characterised by insecurity, exclusion and discrimination. Today, Asmae is one of the few organisations that works directly with this community in Zamboanga and Batangas.



Dakila, a young Sama Bajau woman.

Our team of 12 volunteers is well-integrated into the community, having built up a bond of trust over several years. The study provided an opportunity to collect qualitative data on the daily lives of the Sama Bajau, highlighting the experiences of families living in precarious conditions.

The ethnographic approach made it possible to identify several major issues affecting the Sama Bajau, notably their social marginalisation and political invisibility, impeding their representation and influence in urban policies. They live in unstable conditions, often in temporary dwellings made from salvaged materials, without access to basic infrastructures such as potable water or electricity. Their economic situation is fragile, based essentially on fishing and informal trade. Moreover, their lack of legal recognition and access to social services exposes them to exploitation and abuse. Finally, although they remain attached to their identity, the Sama Bajau must adapt their cultural practices to an often-hostile urban environment, which entails far-reaching transformations.

As an organisation committed to defending the rights of children and vulnerable populations, Asmae is using the study's findings to orient its operations to their benefit.

Working from these findings, and alongside the Sama Bajau community, the Asmae teams will be able to:

- advocate for more inclusive urban policies, taking the needs of the Sama Bajau into account;
- design specific initiatives focusing on education, healthcare, accommodation and economic development for this community;
- foster their independence by making the Sama Bajau more aware of their rights, and helping them to organise in order to take their place within the urban landscape;
- mobilise stakeholders such as local authorities and partner NGOs in order to facilitate the implementation of sustainable solutions.

This ethnographic study gives the Sama Bajau a voice, and provides Asmae with solid resources to support this community in defending their cause, and improving their living conditions in Zamboanga City.

With thanks to our financial partners: the French Development Agency, and a major private donor.

(1) Historically, the term barangay refers to a community made up of 50 - 100 families. The barangay is the smallest administrative unit used in the Philippines.

PHEAS: PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AGAINST BULLYING AND SEXUAL ABUSE

In 2025, Asmae is passing a new milestone and reinforcing its long-standing commitment to children and young people by launching the Prevention and Protection Policy against Bullying, Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (PHEAS) – a crucial policy designed to prevent and combat these serious issues. In doing so, Asmae is seeking to promote a safe and healthy working environment for our staff and partners, and the people we support through our programmes. PHEAS is based around 3 fundamental principles: non-discrimination and equality, observance and protection of human rights, and the "do no harm" principle, which requires humanitarian and development workers to minimise any harm that their presence, support and services might unintentionally cause to beneficiaries and their environment.

YAM WEKRE: A CHILD-FOCUSED EDUCATIONAL TOOL

Developed by Asmae in Burkina Faso, the Yam Wekre picture book resource is an innovation. It enables the spread and appropriation of a fun, participative teaching style implemented by pre-school educators, aimed at children aged 3-6 as well as those in primary school. Made up of 312 images broken down into 29 pedagogical categories, this picture book is adapted to the local context, which facilitates its appropriation by both educators and children. To find out more, we interviewed Saleymata Gadiaga, Head of Operations and Partnerships at Asmae Burkina Faso.



A child taking part in activities organised by Asmae in Burkina Faso

How does this tool address the training needs of the 3-6 age range?

This child-focused tool addresses a pressing need for training tools. Its use creates an environment conducive to quality learning, which also contributes to child protection. The Yam Wekre picture book reinforces their development and puts children at the centre of their learning through their active participation. Its motor development and psycho-social activities enable children to develop language and psycho-motor, interpersonal and cognitive skills. It also helps detect instances of children who are at risk or in danger. The picture book is a source of motivation. It makes activities appealing and ensures solid acquisition of skills, develops imagination and creativity, and leads into semi-concrete activities.

What makes this learning method particularly suitable?

Various learning methods can be applied when using the picture book. They are adapted to the children's level, as well as to their social environment. Group work makes it easier to accommodate small and large groups. Participative learning involves children in the learning process, while the "fun" approach lets children acquire skills through play. Several transverse approaches are taken into account, notably the gender-neutral approach which ensures the involvement of both boys and girls, and their non-stereotypical representation within the picture book. The inclusive approach reinforces universal inclusion for children, with a focus on disabled children. These teaching methods are suitable for both emergency situations and developmental contexts, regardless of the age of the children or their living situation, in order to optimise learning outcomes.

Yam Wekre underwent its first round of development from 2015 - 2018, and was co-funded by the French Development Agency. How are you pursuing its further development and standardised use in Burkina Faso?

The Yam Wekre picture book went through a trial phase, expansion phase and general roll-out, each lasting three years. In this context, Asmae developed a mechanism for the tool's distribution, working closely alongside the State to ensure its long-term success. The development of the standardisation strategy was led and delivered by the State, along with the strategy for training professionals in the use of the tool. The structures covered now include early learning centres and pre-schools, Biscongo (community preschools) and crèches, and the deployment has expanded from one to six regions between the trial phase and the standardisation phase. A new upscaling phase for the tool is now being funded by Enabel and the EU, in order to cover new zones and train more professionals in its use.

How many professionals and children have been able to benefit from this learning approach?

To date, almost 669 professionals have received training under the PPEE project, along with a further 173 people (including 95 women) under the PEACE project. 42,753 children, including 21,465 girls, have benefited from the picture book through the PPEE project, while 12,390 children (including 5,468 girls) have benefited from the picture book as part of the PEACE project.

With thanks to our financial partners: ENABEL and the European Union



DID YOU KNOW?

SISTER EMMANUELLE IN 4 KEY DATES

Learn how Sister Emmanuelle, an iconic figure of generosity and solidarity, committed herself to improving the living conditions of the most vulnerable in society.

• 16 November 1908



Madeleine Cinquin is born in Brussels, Belgium. She grows up in a comfortable family. At age 6, her world is upended as she witnesses her father's death by drowning, but is powerless to help. Later, she will describe this as the event that brought her closer to religion.

• 1971



Having spent her life teaching well-off children in Turkey, Tunisia and Egypt, as she nears retirement Sister Emmanuelle begins working with the rag-pickers of Cairo, who live in extremely precarious conditions. She goes to live among them, and works to improve their everyday lives - particularly of their children.

• 1996



Having been made an Officer of the Legion of Honour in 1996, Sister Emmanuelle is promoted to Commander in 2002 by President Jacques Chirac, before being made a Grand Officer in 2008. Throughout her life, she never ceased calling upon national leaders to provide funds and aid for the most disadvantaged, working tirelessly to improve their living conditions.

• 20 October 2008



At 99, Sister Emmanuelle passes away, leaving behind a legacy of generosity. She worked to ensure that every child could grow up with dignity. Asmae, the association she founded, continues her work to protect and educate vulnerable children all over the world.

TOGETHER, WE CAN CHANGE THE LIVES OF THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN: UNDERSTANDING BEQUESTS AND LIFE INSURANCE

Imagine a world in which every child had the chance to grow up in good health, surrounded by love and with access to quality education. This is the dream that Asmae-Association Sœur Emmanuelle has fostered for decades. Founded by an extraordinary woman, Sister Emmanuelle, this humanitarian organisation fights every day to make this dream a reality. Today, we need your help to continue this essential mission.

What is a Liberality?

A liberality is an act of pure generosity; a heartfelt gesture that allows an individual to transfer a portion of their estate to a noble cause. The benefactor can expect that children all over the world find the haven of peace they deserve in the Asmae-Association Sœur Emmanuelle. Whether it is through a donation, bequest, gift or life insurance, a liberality in any form is a statement of love and solidarity. They can change lives.



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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