

The letter

N° 135 • SEPTEMBER 2026



Asmae Association
Sœur
Emmanuelle



**STANDING TOGETHER
AGAINST BULLYING
AND CYBERBULLYING**



EDITORIAL



Back to School 2026: Yalla! Against Bullying

This September, we are paying particular attention to the start of the new school year for all children and teenagers. In France, Egypt, Burkina Faso, the Philippines... a new school year means a new class, new teachers and, sometimes, new friends – all of which offer opportunities for every child to learn, develop and flourish.

Unfortunately, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools can also be places where violence occurs between pupils, as well as places where they are exposed to violence perpetrated by adults. Asmae works on both these fronts, but I would like to focus on bullying, a phenomenon that is constantly on the rise and which we – as organisations and the educational community – are tackling, albeit with resources that are still insufficient to prevent situations of suffering and tragedy.

Bullying at school is not a marginal phenomenon: it permeates the daily lives of many families. According to the Odoxa survey carried out in France for Asmae, one in three children has already been a victim of bullying, often in silence. A third of the young people affected do not tell their parents, and in two out of three cases, the abuse goes on for weeks, or even months, before being detected.

There are many forms of bullying, including physical and psychological abuse. Cyberbullying, which is more insidious, affects 14 per cent of families – a figure that is likely to be an underestimate.

How can we tackle the problem more effectively? We need to improve training for adults and continue to raise awareness amongst children. Asmae has therefore decided to create 'La Fresque du Harcèlement', an educational tool and activity that we will be rolling out to children and teachers by the end of the school year to prevent risks and foster kindness amongst pupils.

Wishing you all a great start to the new school year!

Adrien Sallez,
Chief Executive

The protection of children by adults was a cornerstone of Sister Emmanuelle's work. Another of her messages, when she spoke to children and young people during her lectures, was to encourage them to respect one another. Respecting differences in religion, skin color, ways of thinking, and ways of life... by inviting them to see others as a source of richness. In response to Jean-Paul Sartre, Sister Emmanuelle wrote a book with the inspiring title: "Happiness Is Other People."



For 45 years, Asmae has been continuing the work of its founder and upholding her principles

OUR VISION

"A just world that guarantees children the right to live and grow up with dignity alongside their families and within their communities, so that they may become free men and women who play an active role in society."

OUR MISSIONS

- **To promote children's development through a holistic approach.** To this end, Asmae also works to support families, taking their environment into account.
- **To strengthen the capacity of local stakeholders** in child development, reinforce synergies between them and maximise the social impact of their actions.
- **To advocate for children's** rights through awareness-raising and public advocacy.
- **To experiment, replicate and disseminate.**

ASMAE IN FIGURES

- **63,300 beneficiaries**
- **10 countries** of operation
- **82 partner** organisations
- **161 professionals** worldwide
- **36 volunteers**
- **15,435 donors**
- **45 years' experience** in the field

Quarterly newsletter published by Asmae – Association Soeur Emmanuelle; SIRET: 347 403 156 000 40; APE: 8899B; Address: Immeuble le Méliès, 259-261 rue de Paris, 93100 Montreuil; Tel.: +33 (0)1 70 32 02 50; Fax: +33 (0)1 55 86 32 81; Website: www.asmae.fr; Email: infos@asmae.fr; Chair of the association and Editor-in-Chief: Catherine Larrieu; Editorial board: Adrien Sallez, Lizanne Danan, Janna Chouchane, Pierre Villelongue and Hugo Sanchez; Photographs: © Asmae; Layout: Stéphanie Poche; Printing: Imprimerie Vincent, September 2026 Legal deposit, September 2026, ISSN 1254-2865



GIVING TEENAGE GIRLS A VOICE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

In the Indian Ocean region, adolescent girls still grow up in an environment characterised by significant gender inequalities, which limit their access to protection, education, healthcare and civic participation. In response to these challenges, the “Pour des adolescentes FORTES !” (For POWERFUL teenage girl!) aims to foster a new generation of agents of progress by supporting local organisations and placing teenage girls at the heart of social transformation.

A context characterised by significant inequalities

In Madagascar, the Comoros, Mauritius, Mayotte and Réunion, young girls face persistent inequalities. Limited access to education, early marriage and pregnancy, geographical isolation and low participation in public life are all obstacles to their empowerment.

These difficulties are exacerbated by deeply entrenched discriminatory social norms. Although legal frameworks exist, their implementation is often inadequate, limiting their real impact on the lives of adolescent girls.

A collective response to support teenage girls

In light of these findings, the “Pour des adolescentes FORTES !” programme was designed to support feminist organisations and movements in the Indian Ocean region. As Juliette Gayet, Asmae’s Gender Integration and Programme Monitoring Officer, points out: “Our main objective is for teenage girls to become genuine agents of change, capable of making their voices heard on their own situations and difficulties. More broadly, the programme aims to improve their living conditions and advance equality in the targeted areas.” Four major challenges have been identified and form the core of the programme: active citizenship, access to education and vocational training, combating gender-based violence, and respect for sexual and reproductive health rights.

Comprehensive support to foster local initiatives

To address these challenges, the FORTES programme is implementing several complementary measures:

- Financial support through the establishment of three funds aimed at organisations, youth movements and local networks
- An incubation scheme combining technical guidance and thematic support to enable these organisations to sustain their work, make their voices heard and increase their impact;
- Opportunities for meetings and discussions to share experiences, strengthen solidarity and take collective action



Fanasina Manitra, a slam poet, opened the programme's launch ceremony by placing the dreams of teenage girls from the islands at the heart of the discussion.

Putting teenage girls at the heart of change

What truly sets the programme apart is the role it gives to the young girls themselves. They are key players in the programme. Aged between 11 and 18, they are involved at every level of the programme's governance. This approach transforms the dynamic: initiatives are no longer simply designed for them, but with them. Their needs, ideas and priorities shape the actions that are implemented.

Funded by l'Agence française de développement, the programme is run by a consortium of international organisations: ECPAT 360, Asmae – Association Sœur Emmanuelle, ASCOBEF (Comorian Association for Family Welfare) and IPPF (International Planned Parenthood Federation)



Children participating in an awareness workshop

TALKING ABOUT BULLYING DIFFERENTLY: ASMAE'S INNOVATIVE APPROACH

Every year, the Asmae team works with students to lead workshops on preventing harassment and cyberbullying. Organized as part of the “Yalla! For Children’s Rights” program, these initiatives raise awareness among nearly 12,000 students, from preschool through high school. This year, the teams developed a new tool: “The Bullying and Cyberbullying Fresk” Project Manager Plume Proux discusses this initiative.

■ What does this fresk consist of?

The Bullying and Cyberbullying Fresk is a participatory tool designed to promote a better understanding of the various forms of bullying, whether verbal, physical, relational, or reactive. It also helps identify the roles played in these situations—victim, harasser, as well as those who assist, reinforce, or witness the behavior—to better understand group dynamics.

■ Who is it intended for?

It is intended for young people ages 10 and up, with an accessible approach that encourages discussion and group brainstorming.

■ What is the benefit of this type of activity?

The fresk helps raise awareness of the consequences of bullying, which are often numerous and long-lasting. It also provides concrete information on the resources available to take action or seek help, such as the toll-free number 3018 (in France). The participatory format is a key tool for encouraging discussion among young people and helping them engage with the topic.

■ How does the workshop actually work?

The tool is based on three narrative scenarios inspired by real-life situations: Noam, 12, who faces bullying at school because of his grades; Sarah, 14, who is being bullied at her sports club; and Chloé, 15, who is experiencing cyberbullying after a photo was posted on social media. These stories allow participants to relate to the characters and explore the dynamics of bullying in various contexts. Each story is discussed in depth and then shared with the group to provide a comprehensive overview of the situations, their consequences, and the available resources—particularly the appropriate responses to adopt.

■ What does the future hold for this fresk?

The fresk was designed to be widely shared: once trained, participants can in turn lead workshops, particularly within teaching or educational teams. The goal is to make this tool easily adaptable so that prevention efforts can be expanded.

Financial partners: Okaidi, IDkids, and the We Act For Kids Foundation, alongside Clarins, Mille et un Repas, and Merymu.



Nana Bowat, a civic service volunteer, leads a classroom session

THE YALLA PROJECT FOR THE 2025–2026 SCHOOL YEAR

- **11,170 students** reached
Of whom **5,092** were educated about children's rights and **4,885** about combating bullying.
- **85 children** reached in **hospital settings**.

"I think this workshop is helpful because there are people who don't know certain things, and we can recognize ourselves in others and understand what's wrong"

Juliette - 5th grade - Paris

"Someone once told me I was terrible on YouTube in a very rude way."

Joseph - 5th grade - Marseille

"I've learned a lot, and I know what it's like to be bullied—it's very sad."

Assia - 5th grade - Saint-Etienne

ASMAE LAUNCHES "YALLA!" FOR HOSPITALIZED CHILDREN

In 2026, Asmae launched a pilot phase of its "Yalla! for children's rights" program in pediatric wards. Hospitalized children are often cut off from the prevention initiatives carried out in schools, even though hospitalization can exacerbate their isolation, increase their exposure to cyberbullying, and complicate their return to the classroom.

To address these challenges, Asmae adapts its educational tools to the hospital setting and offers participatory workshops on children's rights, gender equality, and the prevention of bullying and cyberbullying.

An initial pilot program is being conducted with our partner, the Jean Chevrier unit at Saint-Maurice Hospital.

Its goal: to enable every child, regardless of their treatment journey, to understand their rights, express themselves freely, and prepare calmly for their return to school.



A fourth-grade student during an awareness workshop

BURKINA FASO: TEACHERS UNITE TO ENRICH CHILDREN'S EARLY LEARNING

In a preschool classroom in Burkina Faso, children raise their hands, interact with one another, and enthusiastically describe the images presented to them. Behind these moments of learning lies a large-scale initiative underway in ten provinces across the country to improve the quality of preschool education.

How can we best support young children's early learning? This is the central focus of the AF2P project (Improving Training for Preschool Professionals), which brings together educators, educational supervisors, and preschool administrators around a common goal: ensuring that children have a learning environment tailored to their needs.

The Yam Wekre Picture Book: A Tool for Early Discoveries

Thanks to a direct partnership between Asmae and the Ministry in charge of National Education, nearly 800 early childhood professionals and preschool supervisors participated in training sessions focused on using the "Yam Wekre" picture book. Designed to support young children's development, this educational tool offers activities that encourage expression, observation, and interaction.

Beyond introducing participants to this tool, these training sessions allowed them to share their experiences and best practices. *"The atmosphere and working environment were truly excellent. We hope that this type of training will be expanded to the entire province and will also include public and private institutions that were unable to participate,"* said one teacher.

To facilitate practical use in classrooms, Yam Wekre picture book kits were produced and distributed to more than 300 preschool institutions, including Early Learning and Preschool Education Centers, Bisongo, and crèches. In many of these institutions, these resources address a significant need for educational materials.

In the classrooms, professional practices are evolving

Once the training sessions were completed, Asmae and the early childhood education inspectors supported the teams through four rounds of pedagogical supervision. These visits provided an opportunity to observe how the picture book was being used in daily activities and to support teachers in adapting it to their needs.

Gradually, new practices are emerging. Teachers are increasingly using participatory approaches and relying on the picture book to structure sessions, encourage discussion, and adapt activities to the children's pace.

Changes are also noticeable among the children; educators are observing more active participation on their part. The activities promote verbal expression, hands-on exploration, and peer interactions—essential skills for preparing children for entry into elementary school.

Building Sustainable Momentum

To ensure these advances are sustained over the long term, key players in the sector are continuing their efforts. A workshop brought together various early childhood education stakeholders to discuss the conditions necessary for a wider distribution of the "Yam Wekre" picture book. These discussions helped identify the needs of preschool programs and the strategies likely to sustainably improve the quality of learning.

This initiative is also supported by education authorities. During an advocacy meeting held in July 2025, the Ministry in charge of Education praised the project's relevance and recognized the value of the "Yam Wekre" picture book as an educational tool.

Across the ten provinces involved, this initiative demonstrates the commitment of education professionals to providing young children with increasingly favorable learning conditions from the very beginning of their educational journey.

Project funding partners: European Union
(via Enabel – Regional Facility for Teachers in Africa).



Children using the Yam Wekre picture book.

IVORY COAST: WITH J2A : THE YOUTH IS ACTING FOR ITS FUTURE

In northern Ivory Coast, many young people grow up with limited prospects. Faced with difficulties in accessing education, the weight of social norms, and economic constraints, young people often find their ambitions stifled. Through the "J2A : Youth acting for their future" program, implemented by Asmae and its partner, the National Association for the Assistance of Children at Risk (ANAED), young people are building their life plans and developing their professional integration.



:Young people training in carpentry.

Regaining self-confidence to build their future

For many participants, the first change is an internal one. The young people receiving support regain confidence in their abilities and discover that they can take control of their own paths.

"We're dealing with a segment of the population that didn't expect to have any opportunities for integration. They saw themselves as on the margins of society," explains Patrice N'Guessan, project manager for training and professional integration at Asmae Ivory Coast. Today, he continues, "they see that there is a network of people who care about them, and that has sparked a shift in their mindset."

On the field, the teams observe this transformation every day. "I see young people who are very committed and ready for change," says Ms. Traoré, director of ANAED.

Choosing Their Own Path Despite the Weight of Social Norms

This renewed confidence is accompanied by a greater ability to make decisions. In a region where parents often play a decisive role in career choices, J2A : Youth acting for their future provides a space for young people to reflect and express themselves.

"We've offered a training and career integration program to young men and women whom we've identified as needing to become more independent in career matters—in other words, young people who want to choose their own path," emphasizes Patrice N'Guessan.

The program allows them to explore different opportunities, identify their aspirations, and build their career plans.

For Ms. Traoré, this approach marks a significant shift: *"We're implementing a program with a new vision regarding youth participation, making them active agents in their own development and transformation."*

As a result, the young people feel heard and valued: "These are young people whose opinions matter," she concludes.

Overcoming Gender Stereotypes

The program also places special emphasis on gender equality. In certain sectors, gender stereotypes continue to strongly influence career paths.

"The gender dimension is a key issue," notes Patrice N'Guessan. In particular, the project enables young women "to pursue careers that have long been considered 'men's jobs.'" Some have thus chosen careers in plumbing or electrical work. The teams also raise awareness among boys so that they can consider careers traditionally associated with women. This openness broadens the range of possibilities for every young person, regardless of gender.

Sustainable Solutions for the Future

Finally, J2A : Youth acting for their future aims to raise young people's awareness of environmental issues. *"Young people today are aware of the decline in rainfall in our regions,"* observes Ms. Traoré. Many are eager to experiment with new, more environmentally friendly farming practices.

The ANAED center plans to develop its own vegetable garden at a later stage, in order to expand learning opportunities to include green careers related to sustainable agriculture.

Financial partner: *Agence française de développement*

TOWARD NEW FORMS OF PHILANTHROPY: BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS TO SUPPORT YOUTH

Given the scale of social and educational challenges, traditional funding models are reaching their limits. At Asmae, a new dynamic is emerging: partnerships among private funders committed to high-impact programs. The goal is clear: to secure the financial resources needed to enable young people to build their futures, access tangible opportunities, and achieve their aspirations.

This approach is based on a convergence of interests. On one hand, companies seek to give meaning to their commitment and to rally their employees around projects that embody values and drive impact. On the other hand, on-the-ground actors identify fundamental—and often complex—needs that require solid, well-planned funding.

The initiative in the Ivory Coast with the J2A :Youth acting for their future program illustrates this trend. Under the leadership of the country office, an alliance of private donors is currently being formed. The EDF Foundation, whose teams traveled to visit the project, as well as the Bouygues Foundation—which is involved both at its headquarters and through its local subsidiary—have already joined this effort. Other partners may follow.

Beyond funding, a new way of cooperating is taking shape: more collective, more strategic, and deeply rooted in the realities on the ground. This promising mobilization serves young people and their life plans.

PHILIPPINES: A FIRST STEP TOWARD LOCAL BASIC RESEARCH

Next October, Clémence will complete her international volunteer assignment in the Philippines, carried out as part of a partnership with the Catholic Delegation for Cooperation (DCC). This initiative highlights the importance of international volunteering in supporting the development of Asmae's projects in the field and strengthening ties between local teams and headquarters.

During her assignment, Clémence played a key role in structuring communication activities and in the initial stages of fundraising efforts. In particular, she helped improve action planning, content production, and project promotion, while laying the groundwork for outreach to institutional

and economic stakeholders. This work, carried out in close coordination with local teams, provides a solid foundation for building partnerships across the country.

Building on these lessons, Asmae decided to take the next step by establishing a dedicated resource development function at the local level. This initiative is reflected in the gradual creation of a team of Grant Officers. The first recruit, Naroum, has thus joined the team in Egypt to help realize this ambition. This decision marks a major shift: moving from a model of ad hoc support to the sustainable establishment of expertise, as close as possible to the challenges and partners on the ground.



Asmae Association
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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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