

The letter

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Asmae Association
Sœur
Emmanuelle

**CAP JEUNESSE: HELPING
10,000 YOUNG PEOPLE INTO WORK**

**IVORY COAST:
CELEBRATING OUR FIRST YEAR
IN THE COUNTRY**





MIXED EMOTIONS FOR CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S FUTURES

At the time of writing this editorial, we can rightly rejoice in what we've achieved together. In line with our mandate, our work has benefitted even more children and young people, helping them grow up with dignity and become free young men and women. This means they'll be able to play their part in building a fairer society. But at the same time, our gaze is fixed on events in Lebanon, where the situation continues to deteriorate.

In South Lebanon, our teams are now providing an emergency response

The armed conflict between Lebanese Hezbollah and the Israeli army had already seen over 90,000 people displaced by mid-March, including a large number of women and children, and that was before the war between Israel and Hamas spilled over into the country. Faced with such urgent needs, particularly in the south, our teams have refocused their efforts in the field of education and have begun handing out emergency kits for families. Milk for the children, alongside hygiene kits and blankets. The international community is struggling to bring about a ceasefire between the warring parties, so we need to redouble diplomatic and humanitarian efforts if we're to emerge from this chaos and provide those living in the region with the help they so sorely need.

Worrying signals as France reduces international development funding

As the number of crises around the world continues to grow and children's access to their fundamental rights continues to decline in many countries, the €742 million cut to the international development budget announced by France's Finance Minister on 18 February 2024 appears to signal the country is rowing back on commitments made by the French President as far back as 2017.

Whether they relate to security, society, health, the climate, or anything else, these crises – which primarily impact women and children – mean we all need to redouble our efforts, from charities and NGOs to government bodies, international institutions, the business world and citizens. Everyone has a role to play, and Asmae strives to lead by example by working in the field and joining coalitions of stakeholders with a more political vocation.

In this context of operational uncertainty, both political and financial, your support and generosity are powerful forces we can leverage to fight against the crises and injustices faced by children and young people, both in France and in our other countries of intervention.

On behalf of all the Asmae teams, I want to thank you wholeheartedly for your ongoing commitment to supporting the most vulnerable children around the world.

Adrien Sallez
Director General



For 43 years now, Asmae has been continuing the work of its 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

- **75,800 beneficiaries**
- **8 countries** of intervention
- **45 partner** associations
- **148 professionals** worldwide
- **39 volunteers**
- **21,100 donors**

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AT THE HEART OF THE ACTION

YALLA! FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS: TACKLING PROBLEMS AT SOURCE

School bullying – and the dramatic consequences it can lead to – has hit the headlines in recent months here in France. The country's Prime Minister Élisabeth Borne called for a "nationwide mobilisation" when unveiling an intergovernmental plan to fight this scourge. Schools are increasing their efforts when it comes to prevention, but to really tackle the problem at source, we're rolling out some practical preventative actions.



A class on bullying in a French primary school

Making space for open dialogue to understand bullying and be able to react in the face of danger

Since 2014, the "Yalla! For Children's Rights" project team has been working with children in schools to raise awareness of the topic of children's rights. Two years ago, Asmae developed and incorporated a specific module within the project on combatting bullying and cyber-bullying by focusing on children's rights to protection and privacy.

"Yalla" involves age-appropriate sessions and interactive teaching methods, such as drama and role plays, and even debates between the children.

"On the whole, the children understand bullying, but on a superficial level"
Plume Proux, Project Manager

This way, the children take in the key information they're lacking.

Project Manager Plume Proux explains that *"on the whole, the children understand bullying, but on a superficial level. There are many areas where they need more. They also sometimes have trouble realising that they themselves are being bullied"*.

The children are guided towards a better understanding of bullying situations, the individual roles involved (the bully, the bullied, and bystanders) and ways of preventing more dangerous situations from escalating.

Plume adds, *"just because we're only a witness, that doesn't mean we can't do something. We all have a role to play. If you're the target of bullying, you have to tell an adult, a friend – don't stay silent. When you're a bystander, try and talk to the victim, help them understand that it's not their fault"*.

Dialogue and trust are at the heart of the programme. *"If the children have experienced something like this themselves, it can push them to open up about it. Sometimes, pupils talk to us about their experiences at the end of the session"*, explains Echata, a volunteer working on the project.

Equipping children to deal with cyberbullying from a very early age

New legislation came into force in France in 2023 setting the age of maturity in the online world at 15. Yet we know children use social media well before that. That means they're exposed to the risks of cyberbullying. As Plume explains, *"one in four high school pupils has been affected by cyberbullying, and we're now seeing more and more primary school-aged children coming forward with stories of their own. Parents and school staff often feel helpless, because they're typically not quite so familiar with the online world"*.

"The more of your private life you reveal on social media, the easier you are to target".
Emma Ciccarelli, volunteer

Over the course of the sessions, the activities are designed to get pupils to question their use of social media and the dangers and violence they might encounter on it. Project volunteer Emma Ciccarelli says, *"we see the vast majority of the children sharing many aspects of their private lives, and the more of your private life you reveal on social media, the easier you are to target. Children need to be aware of that, but we also need to equip them to make better choices online to protect themselves"*.

The sessions have proved to be effective. 98% of teachers surveyed said they believe the sessions have helped pupils better understand what bullying is and its consequences.

Asmae works with the backing of France's Civic Service Agency. Financial partners: Clarins, the We Act for Kids and Okaidi action funds, SC Johnson, the Technip Energies endowment fund, Aplim and Mille et Un Repas



SPECIAL REPORT: CAP JEUNESSE

Young people in Lebanon learning mechanical skills as part of Cap Jeunesse

SUPPORTING 10,000 YOUNG PEOPLE INTO WORK

Today's younger generation carry the future of our societies on their shoulders, but they also face numerous challenges that could jeopardise their rights. 20% of young people worldwide aren't in either education, training or employment, which only serves to increase their vulnerability. It's in this context that we've been running our multi-country Cap Jeunesse programme over the past three years. It's about ensuring vulnerable young people can play a role in society and find work, while promoting their rights to education and protection. The first phase of the project wrapped up with some promising results as we head into the second phase in our five countries of intervention: Burkina Faso, Madagascar, Egypt, the Philippines and Lebanon.

Boosting young people's socio-professional integration and strengthening their right to protection

With the rollout tailored to the institutional, socio-economic and cultural context of each individual country, Cap Jeunesse has contributed to getting young people back into school or work over the past three years. Over 10,000 young people have benefitted from bespoke support from the professionals trained as part of the programme. Designed to be as efficient as possible, this pathway designed for young people includes several stages focused on developing their professional skills. This has translated into 900 young people being able to take part in workplace visits, receiving support from a guidance counsellor, and even participating in sessions on different career options and essential professional skills. Supporting young people with disabilities as they enter the world of work is also at the heart of the project. In Egypt, these young people often face discrimination and exclusion from the education system. Professional integration support sessions have helped 41 young people in a similar situation.

To consolidate our protection work focused on young people, we've been supporting our partners by training local teachers and professionals in terms of raising awareness and referring those who are more at risk. In all, 116 professionals working in protection have benefitted from these training sessions. They've received help with supporting, identifying and referring young people who are deemed to be at risk or likely to become so. Almost 19,000 parents and members of the community have also been reached as part of the awareness activities across all our countries of intervention.

Thanks to the referral systems put in place, 401 young people have been successfully identified and directed to the help they need. 1,701 young people also received bespoke psycho-social support in the Philippines, Burkina Faso and Lebanon.

Encouraging young people to stand up for themselves and take action

"Autonomy is the ultimate objective to which everyone aspires" was how Sister Emmanuelle put it, and it's that same guiding principle that drives the multi-country Cap Jeunesse programme, which aims to increase young people's power so they themselves can become agents of change. Training in civic engagement and how to implement community initiatives took place for 825 young people in the first phase of the project, which saw 400 of them go on to develop their own citizen and community activities. For example, in Burkina Faso, a youth club has been set up in each of our six partner secondary schools, welcoming new members at the start of every school year.

Second phase of the programme: a broader scope

The next phase of the programme is an opportunity to broaden the scope. As India becomes the latest country to join the programme, 120 young people there will receive training in IT or English and, in some classes, will be able to attend awareness workshops, particularly looking at the challenges around gender-based discrimination. The second phase of the project is also launching with the aim of developing engagement among young people, with a particular focus on gender, inclusion and citizenship.

TESTIMONIES from our programme beneficiaries

"Thanks to Asmae and their partner, *Graine de Bitume*, I've been able to experience amazing things I'd never have thought possible before. The *Cap Jeunesse* project has taught me some valuable lessons and helped me gain self-confidence. Now, I'm no longer afraid of planning a career with a big company. I've gained my independence. When I was looking for an internship, I found it hard because of all the admin involved, but the support of our mentors encouraged me to push through. With patience and determination, I found my way. In five years' time, I want to open my own shop specialising in selling wigs and I want to be my own boss".

Fithayanah, 17
A project beneficiary in Madagascar



Yempabou, 19
A project beneficiary in Burkina Faso

"Asmae and their partner, *CEATS*, taught me about lots of different things, like sexual violence, the dangers of drug addiction and the effects of antisocial behaviour. With their help, I've been able to raise awareness among my peers, too. Before, I was withdrawn, scared of making mistakes, so I stopped myself from expressing my real feelings. Thanks to the *Cap Jeunesse* project, I've learned to express myself better, to communicate with my peers, my family and the people from my community, which is crucial to becoming a good future citizen. I know that as young people, we have inner strengths that we're not putting to good use. Now, with the confidence I've gained, I see myself going far, with a brighter future and dreams I want to achieve".

"Thanks to the training from Asmae and their partners, I've learned that we, as young people, are capable of big things. We're agents of change in our own right, and we're capable of inspiring and supporting one another. I remember those early sessions – we started with just a pencil, a piece of paper and a mind full of "what ifs...". Now, what we imagined is about to come true and have a positive impact on the lives of lots of people. It proves that nothing is ever hopeless. There's always a way forward, especially when we act together as one".

Neil, 18
A project beneficiary in the Philippines



Financial partners: the French Development Agency, the Sancta Devota, Valoris, Air France and Sawiris foundations and Technip Energies.

IVORY COAST: A LOOK BACK ON OUR FIRST YEAR OF WORK

Over the past year, we've launched our first two projects in Ivory Coast. In a complex social and economic landscape for young people, we've been working to promote their professional integration, while also strengthening access to quality early childhood services and interventions. **Rozenn Coraud Kiendrebeogo**, who oversees the implementation of our efforts in the country, takes a look back on both the successes and challenges of the first year there.

What's the situation in Ivory Coast as Asmae gets started?

With over 5.5 million teenagers, a third of whom aren't in either education, training or employment, the situation in Ivory Coast is worrying. The majority of teens and young people say they've suffered physical, emotional or sexual violence in their childhoods. Boys are more exposed to physical violence, while girls more often face emotional and sexual violence. More specifically, they face harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation and forced marriage. The deteriorating security situation in the Sahel region – particularly in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger – is forcing many people to move towards Ivory Coast, some of whom are school-aged children. Particular categories of children, such as those with disabilities and street children, are seeing their rights violated.

What are the two projects being rolled out in Korhogo?

The first – PEACE – is designed to quickly identify children who are at risk, victims of violence, and those who are particularly vulnerable or have a disability. Working closely with our partners, we organise early intervention within the communities themselves. These sessions begin with presentations to raise awareness of topics such as violence against children, parental neglect, as well as certain needs related to child development. We then arrange activities to help identify the children most in need. We also organise chats with parents. After these sessions, social workers begin to support the children (and their families) who have been identified. The second project – Young Agents of Change for the Future – is being rolled out with the help of our partner, ANAED. The aim is to identify young people aged 14-25 who have either never been to school or have dropped out, so that we can offer them training and support towards getting a job and avoiding gender discrimination.

What outcomes have been achieved in the first year?

2023 saw the launch of our operations in Ivory Coast. We recruited a team made up of our Administrative and Finance Manager, as well as two project managers. We opened an office in Korhogo. We got the entire administrative and finance system up and running... We also held some capacity-building activities on child protection, our early intervention system, as well as case management for our protection stakeholders in Korhogo. 23 people received training in total. Our first live activities working with beneficiaries began in January 2024.

What memories have stuck with you the most?

The strongest memory from 2023 for the entire team has to be when we first moved into our premises back in November. After 18 months of preparation work, the moment finally arrived to make our launch official! It was a chance for Asmae – and us – to start a brand-new adventure, supporting the development and well-being of children and young people in Korhogo.

What's next for Asmae in Ivory Coast?

In 2024, early intervention work will take place in Korhogo alongside our partners to offer children and their families the social support they need. At the same time, young people are in the process of signing up for training with our partner ANAED. Asmae, ANAED and the local Youth Employment Agency will work hand-in-hand to give young people quality training and strengthen their psycho-social skills. Our population movement research is also leading us to consider starting up activities in Ferkéssédougou, a town now hosting large numbers of asylum seekers. Finally, we hope to develop a protection project aimed at supporting children with disabilities, putting inclusion at the heart of our efforts for greater social justice.

Financial partners: the French Development Agency



A sewing workshop taking place as part of the Young Agents of Change for the Future programme.

PHILIPPINES: PROTECTING AND SUPPORTING THE EDUCATION OF MANILA'S STREET CHILDREN

In a metropolitan area with somewhere in the region of 3 million homeless people, the city of Manila is thought to have the most street children in the world. To deal with the issues caused by such vulnerability, for six years now, we've been running a project aiming to improve the social inclusion of Manila's street children.



A snapshot of a drama workshop organised by Clowns Sans Frontières

Promoting the right to education and encouraging street children back into school

In the Philippines, the lack of legal documentation, negligence among some parents, poverty and even peer pressure have all been identified as obstacles to many street children's education. Through our local partners, we're supporting a number of activities to help get children back into school. 584 children have so far benefitted from these alternative education sessions, which promote the pupil's autonomy. The children have improved their capacities for learning, which in turn has helped remove most of the obstacles standing in their way, such as a lack of motivation or fear of discrimination, which have prevented them from accessing more formal education. We've helped to enrich this alternative education programme, which now includes 16 modules, including basic literacy, numeracy and child protection. In total, 92 children – most of whom were at risk of dropping out of school, and 29 weren't in school at all – have been helped back into the classroom. These children and young people have benefitted from a variety of services, depending on their needs.

Raising awareness of the right to protection and strengthening young people's capacities to be active citizens

Street children are the most vulnerable when it comes to health and protection risks. To alleviate the situation, three youth organisations were set up with the help of our partners.

"Thanks to the training, I've gradually built up my self-confidence"
Maria, 17

To increase the capacities of young people in topics as varied as leadership, gender and advocacy work, specific support has been put in place. "I've been taking part in Asmae activities for over two years now, and thanks to the various training sessions, I've gradually built up my self-confidence" explains Maria, a 17-year-old who took part in the project. The training involves coming up with awareness campaigns on the rights of young people

living on the streets to protection, particularly through art. With the help of our partner **Clowns Sans Frontières**, eleven young people were able to benefit from training over the course of a two-week artistic workshop. Because of these activities, young people have become more aware of their rights and have realised that a fresh start is possible.

Financial partners: the French Development Agency

ZOOM SUR

3 QUESTIONS FOR JEANNE VÉRONIQUE Education/Child Protection Technical Adviser

What is Asmae's child protection policy?

It's a set of standards, mechanisms and procedures adopted by Asmae that we continuously work on to prevent and respond to situations likely to undermine children's rights, safety and well-being.

How is it implemented?

Implementation begins by sharing it with the Asmae teams – and any other individuals or organisations involved in our work, whether temporarily or in the long term – as well as with the people our teams support. It also involves training and assessing the performance of our teams, partners and target audience, as a way of ensuring the fundamentals are there. Our goal is to encourage changes in attitudes, which, in turn, can lead to the adoption of practices much more favourable to child protection and well-being.

Why is it important for an organisation like Asmae to have a child protection policy?

First and foremost, it's a question of being consistent with Asmae's ultimate mission: protecting children. Then it's part of a wider contribution to our collective responsibility as a society to child protection. Ultimately, it's the responsibility of all humanitarian organisations to comply with the humanitarian principle of "do no harm", which means these organisations have to take steps to ensure nothing they do will harm a child's safety or well-being.

THE HACHETTE LITERACY FOUNDATION SUPPORTS ASMAE'S "FULFILLED EARLY CHILDHOODS" PROJECT IN BURKINA FASO

What's the nature of the collaboration between Asmae and the Hachette Literacy Foundation?

The Hachette Literacy Foundation is supporting the rollout of Asmae's "Fulfilled Early Childhoods" project in Burkina Faso. The goal is to facilitate access to education and protection services for over 10,000 children aged 0-6 (and particularly displaced children). To help develop the children's language skills through reading, the Foundation is supporting the rollout of our *Yam Wekré* picture book teaching tool across 600 partner sites, which also receive training on how to use it, in four regions of Burkina Faso.

How does this partnership align with the goals of the Hachette Literacy Foundation?

The Hachette Literacy Foundation was founded on the principle that access to reading and writing should be an opportunity and a right for us all. As part of its annual call for projects, the Foundation supports organisations in both France and abroad. They work in the field to promote reading, writing, and the French language more generally, among a wide variety of different groups, particularly those who never had the opportunity to learn French at school. By supporting Asmae, the Foundation hopes to reaffirm its desire to promote reading from a very early age.

OPT FOR A REGULAR DIRECT DEBIT AND HELP US MEET THE NEEDS OF VULNERABLE CHILDREN OVER TIME

It takes years of care, education and love to give a vulnerable young child the best chance of succeeding in life. Supporting us in this mission over the long term is hugely beneficial for the children. With regular support, you can help secure our projects in the longer term, giving children the time and space they need to rebuild their lives.

A regular direct debit is beneficial...

FOR YOU:

- Support our efforts in the long term.
- Receive annual tax benefits.

FOR US AND OUR PARTNERS:

- Together with our partners, we can give our projects more time to bed in, thanks to your secure support in the long term.
- It helps us save on management and fundraising costs, which take away valuable resources from our work.
- It benefits the environment, by reducing the amount of donation forms we have to send out.

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